

Silent Night—A Copenhagen Story

IT WAS AN unhappy day for flora and fauna alike. The President of the United States had arrived in Copenhagen, bearing a new ruling from his Environmental Protection Agency that declared carbon dioxide a pollutant. So thorough were the preparations for the summit, that all the animals for hundreds of miles around had been gagged to reduce CO₂ emissions, and stoppered at the other end to contain the methane.

At a nearby hothouse, the flowers lamented. “They have taken away the gas of life,” moaned a marigold. “My children cannot breathe at all,” cried a blue bonnet. The animals were unhappy too, but there was little they could do. Their strength was failing them.

A little mouse, so tiny that the climate enforcers had not noticed him, was still free. He scampered up the steps of the hotel, into the great conference hall where the delegates were meeting— But all was silent. They had forgotten, that they too needed the oxygen that only the plants could supply.

Emboldened, the little mouse scurried back to his family. “It’s not just us! They have silenced themselves,” he shouted. One of his brothers came up with a plan. In an instant the little mouse had freed his larger brother from his bindings. Soon the others were free as well. Next, the quick-thinking brother mobilized his sharp-toothed clan to begin gnawing away the gags from all their brethren. Soon the mice had liberated the other species, as well—all but the cats. But, so great was the spirit of joy and brotherhood in the whole animal kingdom that the felines, on pledge of a 24-hour truce, were freed as well.

In Copenhagen, some of the delegates were beginning to stir. One of them took the podium. “I think we may have gone too far,” he proclaimed. Not everyone could hear him.

Laurence Hecht, *Editor, 21st Century Science & Technology*
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