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Hack Fables

Chapter 1. Preface

Welcome to Hack Fables, a collection of short parables for hackers.

These stories are designed to be read quickly but pondered slowly. Each parable captures a common theme or lesson from engineering practice: trade-offs, teamwork, clarity, humility, and craft.

Contributions are welcome—see the project README for how to add your own parable. They are ideally each represent real events or situations, distilled into easily digestible hacker folklore. The illustrations are also currently some fairly sloppy placeholders, so any contributions there would be greatly appreciated as well.

Chapter 2. The Hamster, the Ferret, and the FireSheep



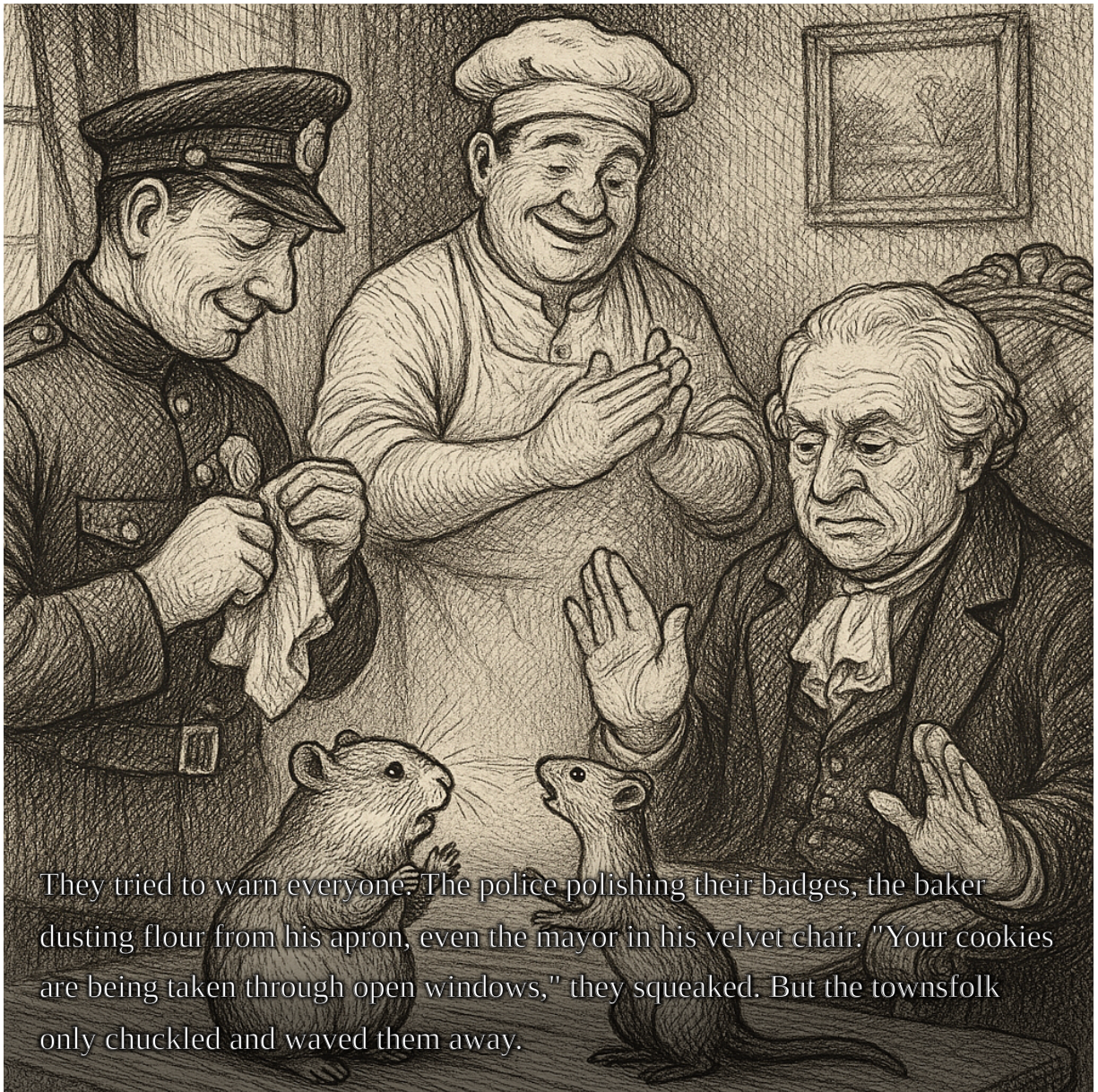
The town of Cinderbrook was a cozy place, with chimneys puffing smoke and cobblestone lanes that curled like ribbons between cottages. It was a cheerful town, though not always the most careful. Windows were often left wide open, pies cooling on sills, and cookies resting unattended on counters.



Hamster and Ferret lived there too. The pair were known for their mischief: sneaking through gardens, chasing cats up trees, and sometimes swiping shiny buttons just for fun. Yet for all their troublemaking, they truly wanted to help keep Cinderbrook safe. They watched, they noticed, and they worried when others did not.



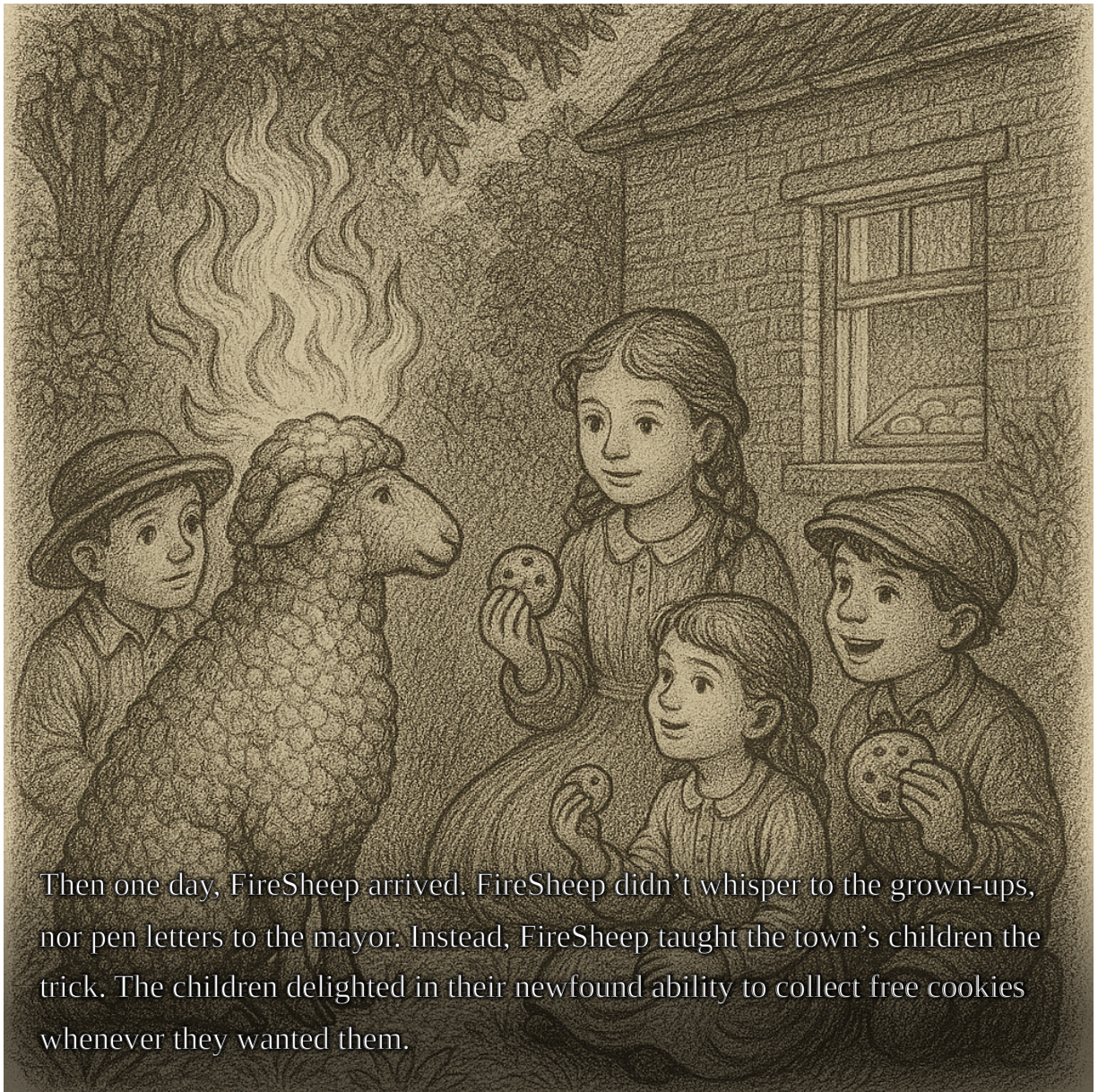
At night, they darted like shadows with whiskers, slipping past open windows to pluck warm cookies from kitchen counters. It wasn't greed that drove them but urgency. Proof to show the townsfolk that danger was real. Still, no one noticed.



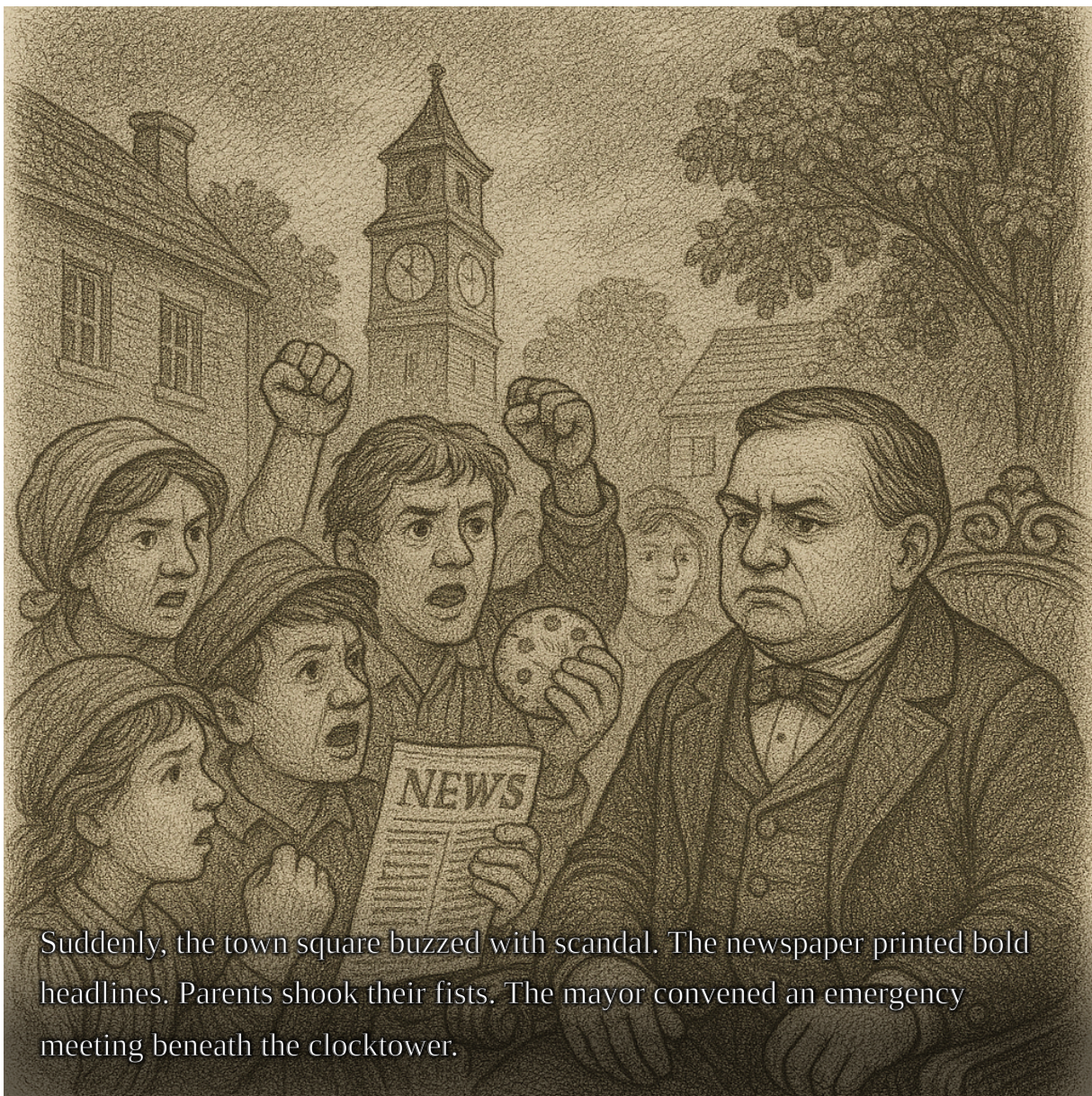
They tried to warn everyone. The police polishing their badges, the baker dusting flour from his apron, even the mayor in his velvet chair. "Your cookies are being taken through open windows," they squeaked. But the townsfolk only chuckled and waved them away.



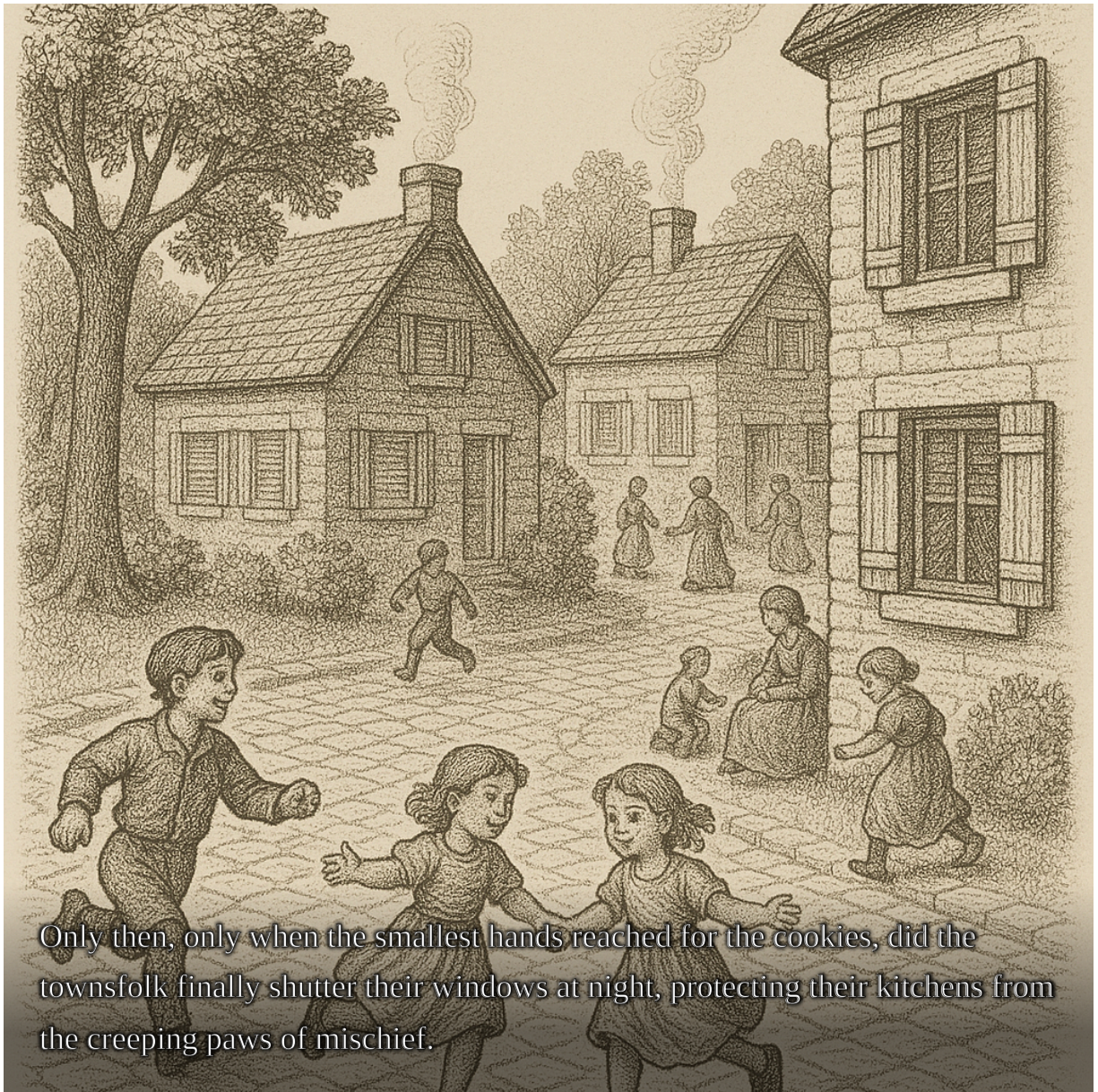
Eventually, real criminals started taking valuable things from the houses of the townspeople through the same open windows. The townspeople were confused, but no one remembered the warnings from Hamster and Ferret.



Then one day, FireSheep arrived. FireSheep didn't whisper to the grown-ups, nor pen letters to the mayor. Instead, FireSheep taught the town's children the trick. The children delighted in their newfound ability to collect free cookies whenever they wanted them.



Suddenly, the town square buzzed with scandal. The newspaper printed bold headlines. Parents shook their fists. The mayor convened an emergency meeting beneath the clocktower.



Only then, only when the smallest hands reached for the cookies, did the townsfolk finally shutter their windows at night, protecting their kitchens from the creeping paws of mischief.

Chapter 3. Moral

Awareness without accessibility is apathy. When everyone can see the risk, everyone can help fix it.