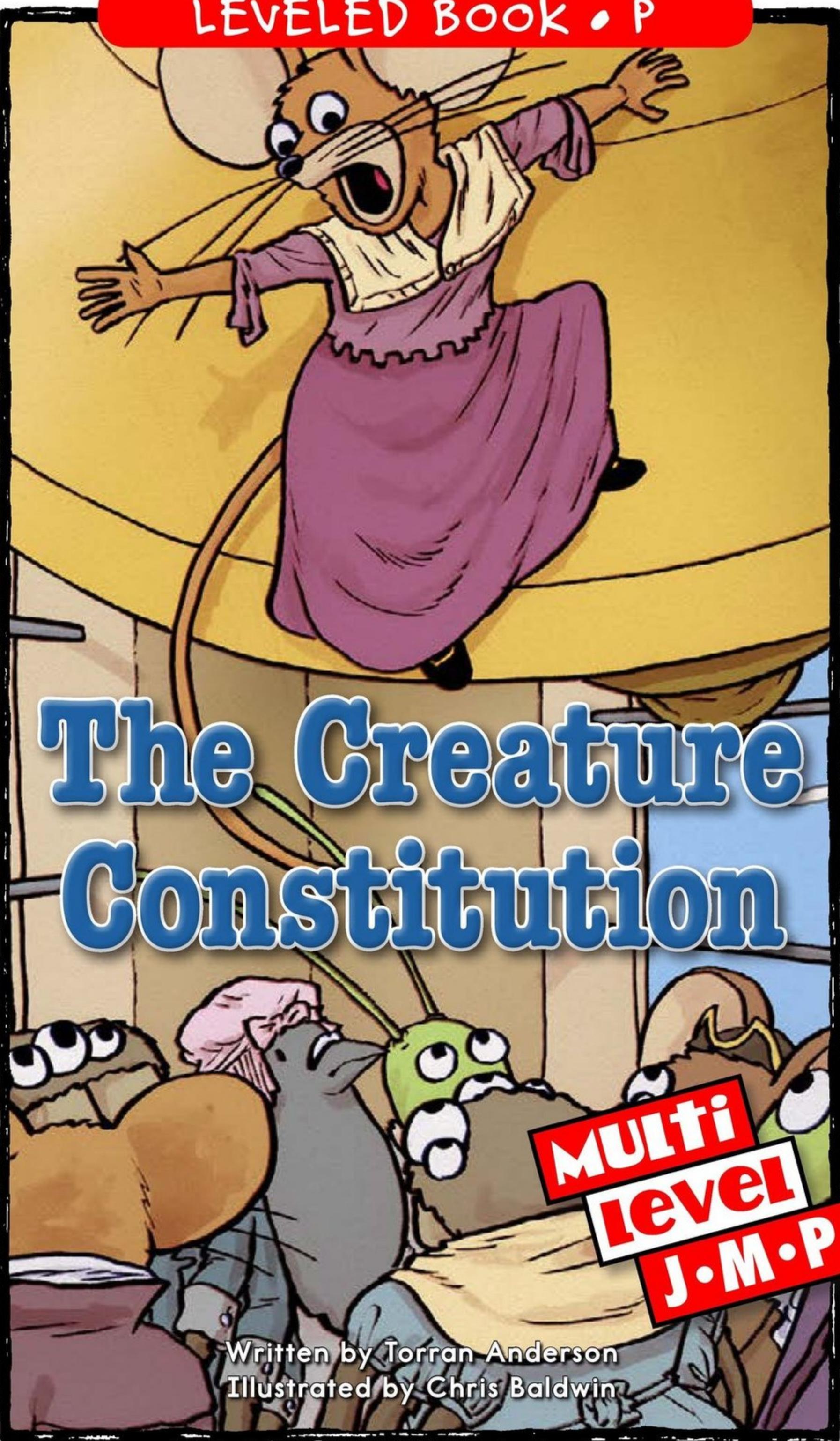


LEVELED Book • P



# The Creature Constitution



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Illustrated by Chris Baldwin



## Independence Hall Philadelphia, 1786

None of the creatures in Independence Hall were able to sleep. Every night, the mice in the basement tumbled through the spiders' webs. The spiders pursued the mice, screaming at the top of their lungs. The crickets in the closets kept everyone awake with their all-night chirping. Early in the morning, the pigeons in the clock tower started singing. They woke up anyone who managed to catch even a few moments of sleep. All the animals were exhausted and **miserable**.



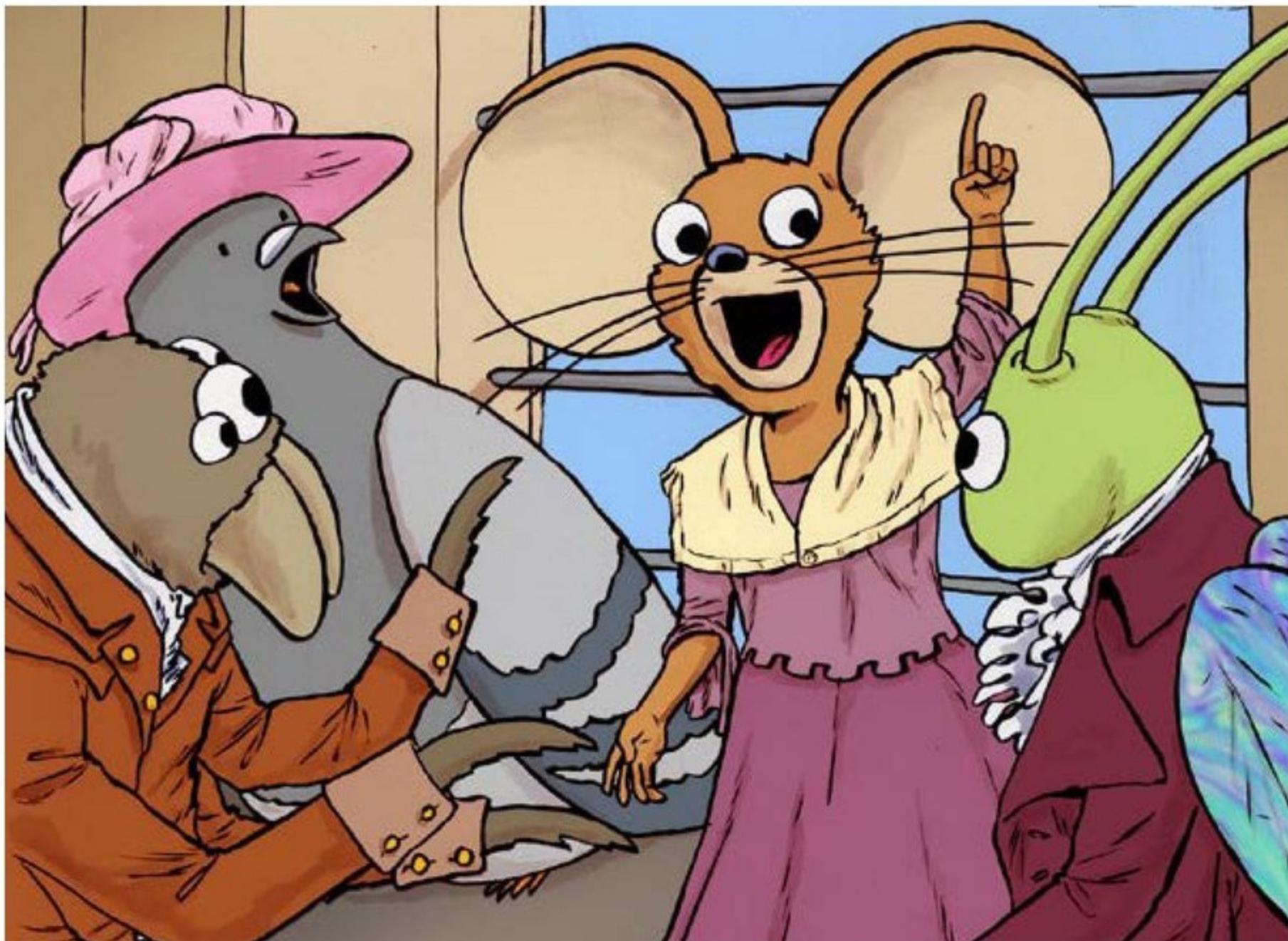
Maddy was sick and tired of being exhausted and miserable. She had the largest ears of any mouse in Independence Hall—and she heard everything. The nights were becoming noisier, and she was concerned that no one would ever have a good night's sleep.



One morning, she heard humans discussing something that sounded important. Maddy sneaked into the room and listened as they argued about their new nation's **constitution**. They needed some rules that everyone in the country would follow. The rules would bring the separate parts of the country together.



Maddy thought a constitution was an excellent idea, so she organized a meeting of all the creatures. Every single creature came, from the spiders in the basement to the pigeons in the clock tower. There were so many animals packed together around the bell in the clock tower that they could barely move.



“Thank you for coming, everybody,” Maddy said. “The humans have a great idea; they are writing a constitution. We should have our own constitution.”

“What’s a constitution?” asked a pigeon.

“It’s a **document** that explains rules that we all live by,” Maddy said.

“We don’t need any rules,” said one of the spiders.

“When was the last time any of you slept all night?” Maddy replied.



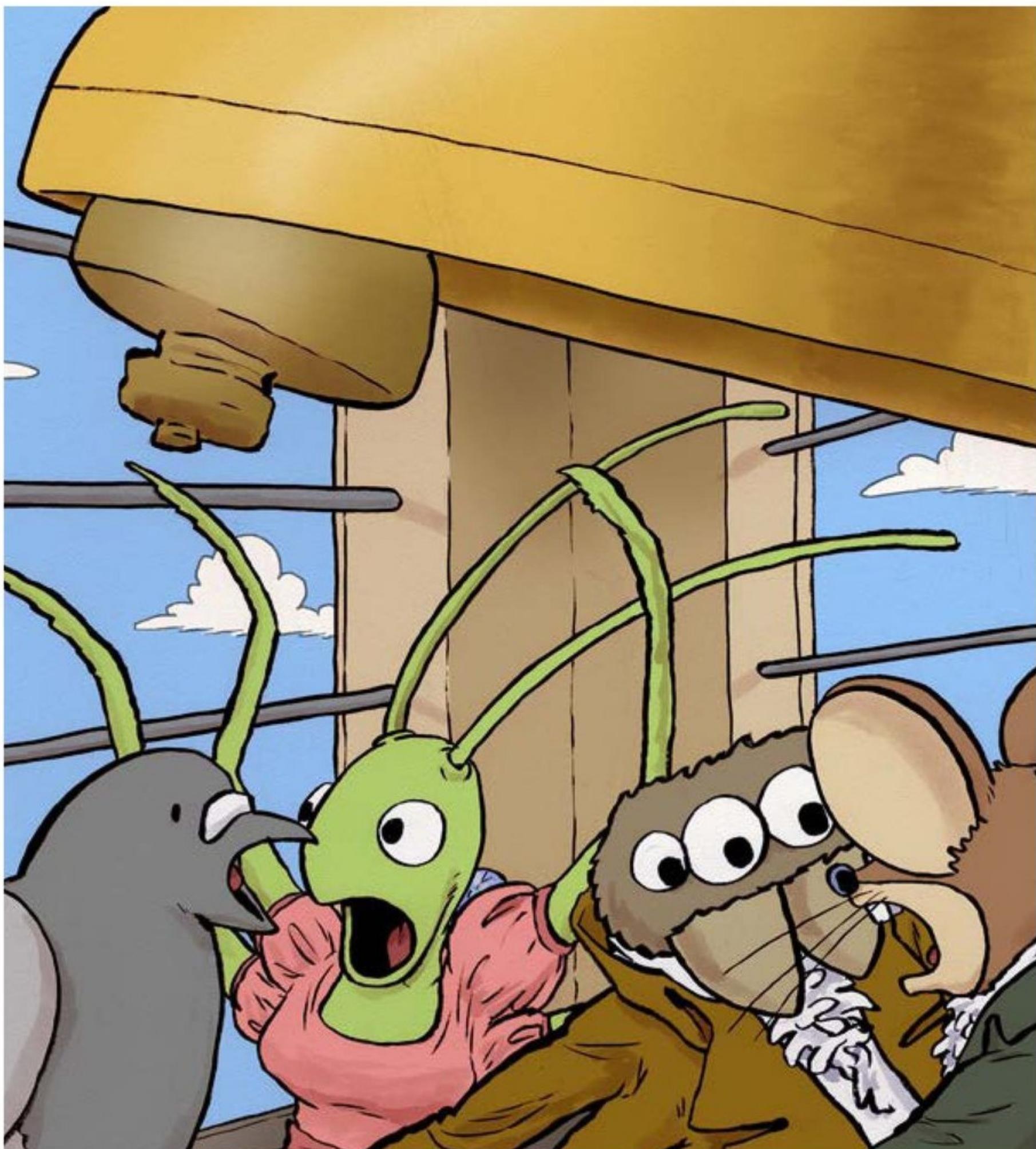
“The crickets keep everyone awake,” one mouse snapped.

“Boo, crickets!” yelled a pigeon. “If I hear those crickets chirping one more time—”

“The pigeons wake everyone up so early. It’s their fault,” a cricket chirped.

“The crickets and pigeons are awful,” said a spider, “but the mice are the worst! They keep knocking down our webs.”

“We can’t even see your webs,” a mouse retorted.



The pigeons flapped their wings, the crickets chirped, the mice squeaked, and the spiders whined. There was such a **commotion** that no one could hear a single word anyone was saying. The animals continued arguing until the bell in the clock tower began to ring: *Ding, dong, ding, dong!*



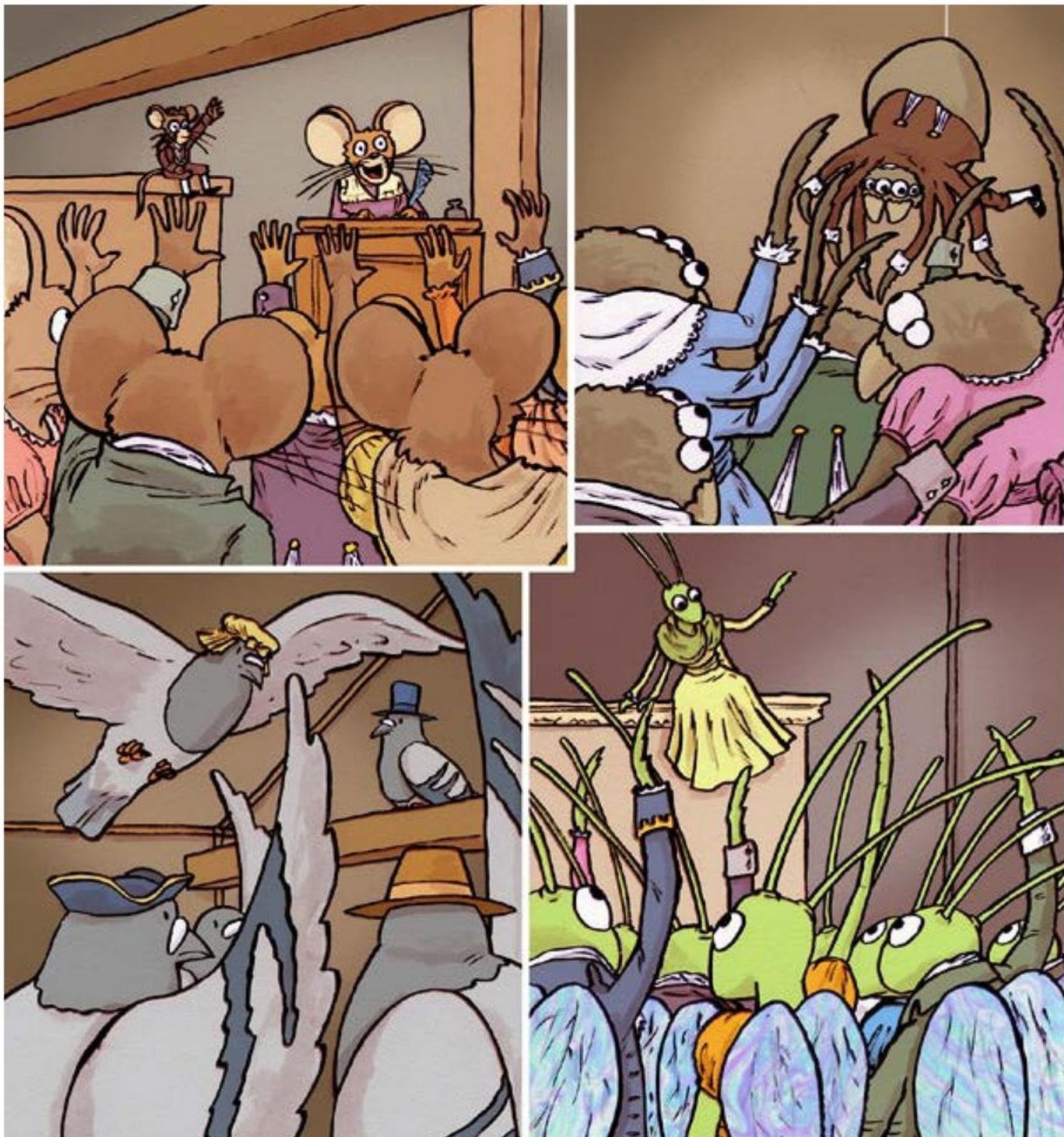
Maddy covered her large ears and examined the hundreds of animals crammed in the room. Exhausted and grumpy from lack of sleep, they weren't achieving anything. Maddy remembered that the humans she saw in their meeting were **representing** the different states. It would be impossible for everyone who lived in the country to meet in one room.

After the last bell chimed, Maddy said to the group, "Listen up! We all want to sleep, so we need to work together."

"That's what we're doing," called a spider.



“We can’t meet together in one room because there are too many of us,” Maddy said. “Go back to where you live and choose five creatures to represent your group. The creatures you choose will present your concerns and problems at a meeting tomorrow. The representatives will then vote on what the new rules will be.”



"Maddy's right," said one of the other mice. "We're not accomplishing anything."

The groups returned to where they lived to figure out who would best represent their group. They decided to take votes so every creature would have a say. The **elections** lasted until late in the evening.



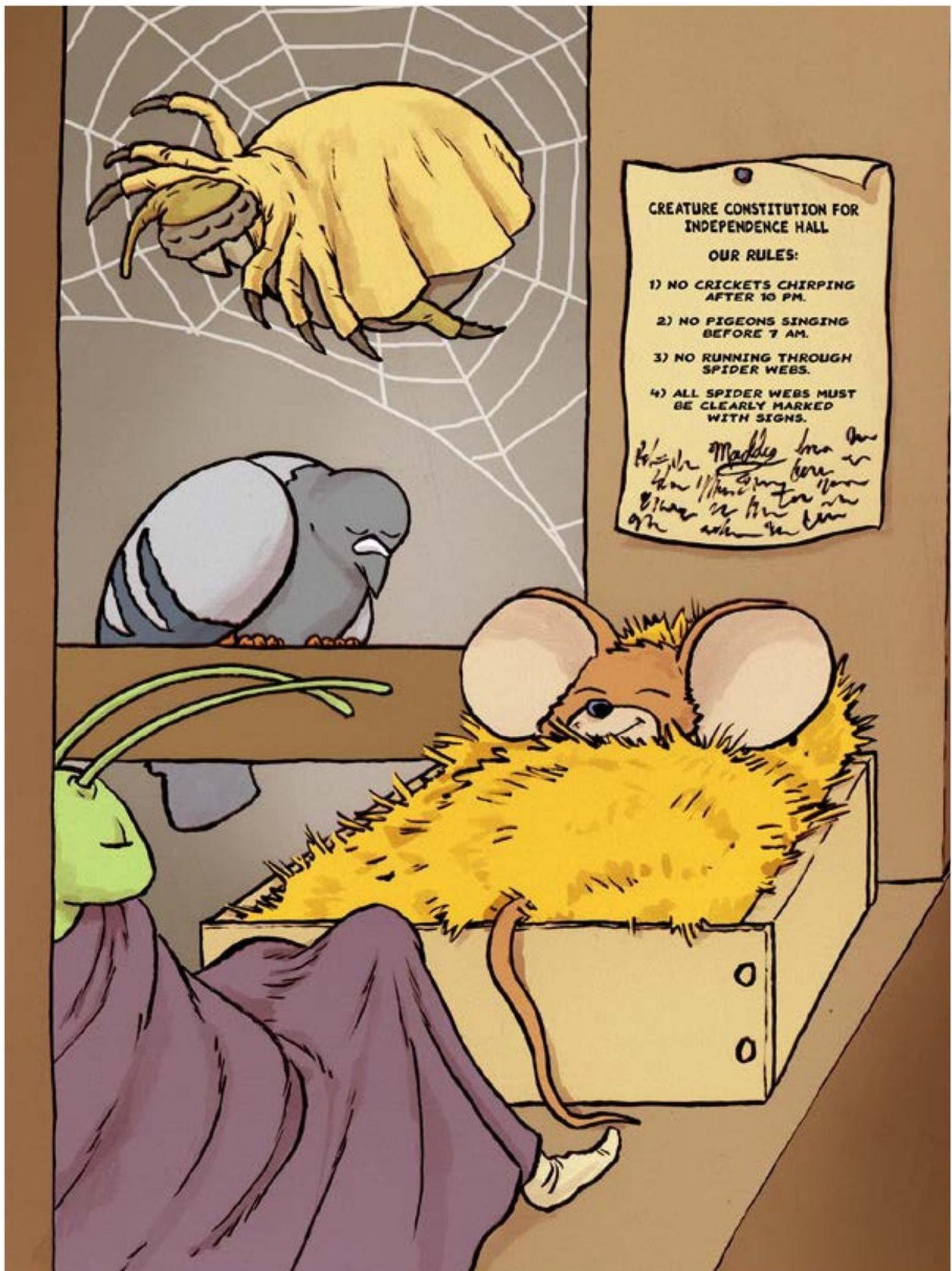
The next day, the creatures representing each group met around the bell in the clock tower. Everyone listened to each group's **issues**. When the groups started arguing, Maddy calmed them down and reminded them to work together. Each group then suggested rules that would allow the creatures to sleep.

The creatures spent almost as much time as the humans did coming up with their rules and voting on them. In the end, they came up with rules that everyone could agree on.



In September of 1786, the creatures signed their constitution.

Maddy had listened to all the creatures and had **convinced** them to all work together. Since she was such an amazing listener, the creatures asked Maddy to be their leader. Whenever the groups had a problem, they would bring it to Maddy and the representatives.



The night they signed their constitution,  
the creatures in Independence Hall fell  
asleep happy. For the first time in as  
long as they could remember, they all  
had a good night's sleep.

## Glossary

<b>commotion</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	confusion; noisy activity (p. 9)
<b>constitution</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the basic laws of a state or nation that tell how the government is run (p. 5)
<b>convinced</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	talked someone into doing something (p. 14)
<b>document</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	anything written or printed that provides a record, information, or proof of something (p. 7)
<b>elections</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	acts of selecting a person for government office by voting (p. 12)
<b>issues</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	important topics or subjects (p. 13)
<b>miserable</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	very unhappy, uncomfortable, or unpleasant (p. 3)
<b>representing</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	speaking or acting for another person or group of people (p. 10)
<b>signed</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	wrote one's name on something (p. 14)

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