

# **“Potions, Poisons and Elixirs” Portentia’s Story**

**(as told to the Ruby Street Quiltworks Mistresses of Stitchcraft)**

“Well ... you know ... at the Ruby Ranunculus School, mice have long been employed by the Stitchcraft Department in a number of capacities, primarily small tasks such as holding and retrieving thimbles, wielding needles, snipping thread and suchlike. I have no problem with mice being thusly employed.” (Here, we must note, Portentia’s whiskers drooped into a frown and her nose wrinkled in what we, Stitch Mistresses, interpreted as distaste.)

“However, of late, the mice have been appealing to the School Administration for better wages ... as if such trivial tasks are deserving of artisanal cheese ... and insinuating themselves into departments in which they have no value. I hear they are now making scratchings in the Rune Room. In particular, and most disturbingly, a notably nimble mouse has been found on a number of occasions, on the shelves of the Potions Laboratory, nosing around the potions jars and baskets of ingredients. While we do appreciate the contributions to the mouse droppings jar, mice are not tolerated among the potions.

“I made it clear to the school administration, that if such incursions continued, offending mice would be stuffed into a potions bottle ... for the first offense. For subsequent offenses they would be tacked to the rafters, by their tails, among the stinging nettles, there to remain until their return was negotiated by the Stitchcraft Department.” (At this Portentia stretched into a play bow and then arched, to settle herself. She then resumed her normal, regal pose.)

“Such negotiations continued until the day I found a particularly troublesome and outspoken mouse, perusing an ancient and arcane text in the Potions Archives! You must understand that such sacrilege could not be tolerated!” (At this Portentia bristled into a wild arching menace! Then, she calmed herself, as if we had offered a bowl of cream. She continued.) “Can you imagine ... a mouse in your archives?”

“If I do say so myself, I handled that incursion with great restraint.” (Portentia unsheathed the claws from one paw and calmly groomed them before continuing.) “A potions jar labeled “Minced Mouse” left on the piercing machine of one of the Mistresses of Stitchcraft created, what turned out to be, a temporary truce. All seemed settled until, a fretful fortnight later, I heard through the RS network” (We understand that RS refers to the Resident Spiders at the Ruby Ranunculus School.) “that the same impudent mouse, who had so viciously violated the Potions Archives, had created an elixir which enhanced the qualities of precision and patience amongst the Mistress of Stitchcraft.” (Portentia rumbled with an ominous purr.) “It was upon hearing that impossibly treasonous truth, that I realized the entire Stitchcraft Department was complicit in the mouse uprising!

“You must clearly see that this insult to my potions primacy could not go unavenged! That very night, after the Mistresses of Stitchcraft had retired and not a creature was stirring in the

Stitchcraft Studio, not even a mouse, I took my revenge. I entered the Stitchcraft Studio on cat paws and approached the Stitchcraft Stash. Carefully, I selected some yards of lovely, potion-themed fabric and a dozen or so carefully, curated coordinates. Enlisting the aid of our Resident Spiders, I hung the fabric about the studio. Then ... quite precisely and artfully I slashed it to ribbons. I must say, the studio looked quite festive, thusly festooned.

“The Mistresses of Stitchcraft were not so well pleased with my claw-work. They appealed to Ms. Ranunculus for remedy. My dear Ms. Ranunculus, however, recognized myself as the aggrieved party. As punishment for their leniency in elevating the aspirations of the mice, she required the Mistresses to create a quilt, from the gloriously slashed strips, that would both please and honor me. Upon approval of their creation I, most graciously agreed to accept a mouse into our newly formed Potions Apprenticeship Program.” (Portentia gracefully curled upon the pillow we had provided for her comfort and purred contentedly. We did notice that a single cutlass-like claw protruded from her front left cat paw.)

“And so,” Portentia concluded, “we are proud to offer the Stitch Mistresses Quilt (Potions, Poisons and Elixirs) as our 2018 Halloween Mystery Quilt.”

So ended Portentia’s presentation.