

2.4 The Mouse Merchant

Once, a rich merchant was scolding his lazy son. “I gave you so much money to start a business and yet you have not earned anything. You are good for nothing! Look at this dead mouse. A capable man can start a business even with something as useless as this!”

Somadatta who was a poor orphan boy heard his words. He went in and requested the merchant, “Please lend me this mouse as a capital and I will try my luck.”

The merchant burst out laughing. But still, he gave the mouse to Somadatta and took the receipt that Somadatta wrote out to him.

Somadatta was walking down the street with the dead mouse in his hand, when another shopkeeper called him. “Come here, boy. I need the mouse to feed my cat. I will give you two handfuls of gram for it.” Somadatta accepted the gram.

At home, Somadatta roasted the gram well. Then he took a pitcher of water and stood at the crossroads with his gram and the water. He waited for a long time.

In the evening, when the labourers were returning from the wood, they saw the boy with roast gram and water. Somadatta offered them the gram and water politely.





“But we have no money. Two sticks of wood is all we can give !”

“That’s a good payment for this simple fare!” exclaimed Somadatta. By accepting two sticks from each labourer Somadatta collected a small bundle of sticks. He took the bundle to the market, sold it and bought some more gram with it.

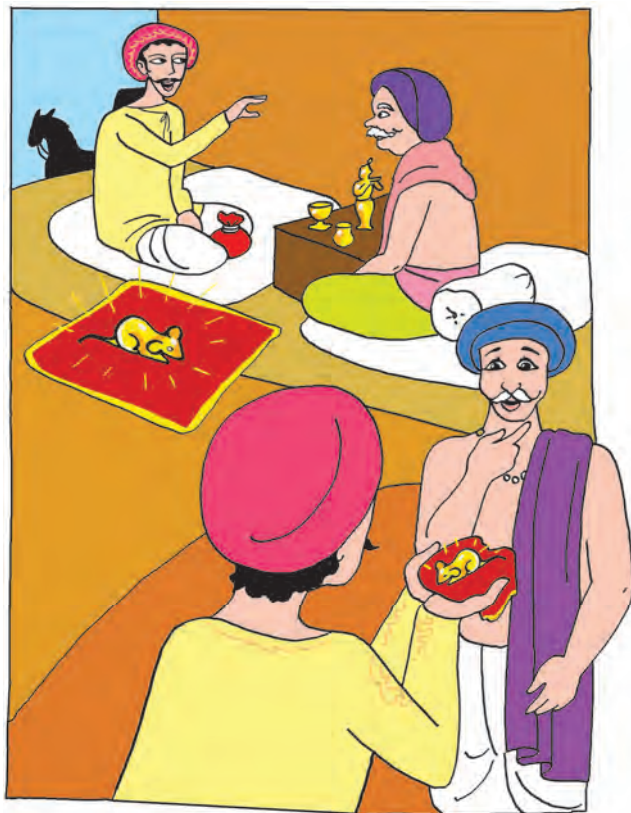
Somadatta did this every day. He became well-known among the labourers as the nice boy who offered tasty gram and refreshing water just for a couple of sticks. Many of them began to buy his gram every day on their way back from the woods. Somadatta got several bundles of sticks every day because now he had so many customers.

Once, when Somadatta was selling the sticks in the market, he met a potter. He needed wood to burn in his furnace. In return for the sticks, he gave Somadatta pots for his gram and a few pitchers for the water.

Somadatta did not waste any money. He worked hard to sell the wood in the morning and the gram in the evening. One day, he had enough money to buy all the wood from the labourers. He sold it at a good price in the market. After some time, he even set up his own shop in the market.

He was always polite to his customers. Some of them paid him cash while others paid him in kind. They gave him whatever articles they could offer. Somadatta always found some way of selling the articles to those who needed them.





After a few years, Somadatta became a wealthy merchant in the town. One day, he asked the goldsmith to make him a small golden mouse. He took the mouse to the rich merchant.

“I had borrowed a dead mouse from you as capital many years ago. Today I have come to return it. Please accept this golden mouse.”

The rich merchant was greatly surprised. He had a beautiful and intelligent daughter. She was so impressed with Somadatta's business skills that she asked her father if she could marry him, and he agreed. Thus Somadatta who was a poor orphan boy earned money and respect due to his intelligence, hard work and politeness.

It is not known whether the rich man's son learnt any of the skills from Somadatta.



POINTERS

1. Listen to the story carefully.

Underline or note the words that you do not understand.

Try to guess the meaning of each word.

You can look up the words in a dictionary.

Or, you can ask your teacher the meaning of the words.

2. Read the sentence in 'A' and find the word whose meaning is given in 'B'.

A	B
• Once a rich man was scolding his lazy son.	– shouting angrily
• Somadatta was a poor orphan boy.	– person who has no parents or close relatives
• That's good payment for this simple fare!	– food
• He needed wood to burn in his furnace.	– place where a potter bakes his bricks, pots, etc.
• Some of them paid him cash while others paid him in kind.	– in the form of things, articles, grain, etc.



3. Quiz your Teacher (with the help of the lesson)!

Student : Teacher, / Sir, / Madam, ...

	What does mean?/ What's the meaning of?	It means Look at it carefully. Try to remember it when I wipe it off.
	How do we say (an expression / sentence from your mother tongue) ?	We say ' '.
	How do you pronounce?/ What's the pronunciation of?	' ' : Listen carefully and repeat after me : Got it ?
	How do you spell? / What's the spelling of ?	It's I will write the word on the board.
	What's the English word for (a word from your mother tongue) ?	It's / I'll have to find it out. I'll tell you tomorrow. / There's no English word for this. You can use the word as it is in English.

Now, make groups of five and play the role of Teacher and Students, turn by turn.

4. Read the story and list the objects that Somadatta sold.

5. Present the story of Somadatta in the form of a flowchart that shows his progress. (Use 5-8 steps.)



I'm going to start a business.



6. Use any one of the following as the starting point and build a story on what happens afterwards. You may present your story in the form of a flowchart / the main points / a few pictures with labels (and speeches).

1. Children were playing cricket in the street.
Their ball went in through Kale Auntie's window.
2. Aneesh planted a mango seed on a hill.
3. Anisha built a robot to do her housework.
4. Sai found an ear of corn in her backyard.
5. A leaf fell on Chicken Licken's head.



LEARNING

about

LANGUAGE

ADJECTIVES

Many times we have to describe people, places, animals or other things. We use 'describing words' to do so. Given below are some such 'describing words'.

Read them and find at least three suitable nouns for each describing word.
Example - beautiful : place, flower, handwriting.

a beautiful place, a beautiful flower, beautiful handwriting.

poor : .....	.....	.....	lazy : .....	.....	.....
dead : .....	.....	.....	good : .....	.....	.....
small : .....	.....	.....	well-known : .....	.....	.....
polite : .....	.....	.....	golden : .....	.....	.....

Words that describe a noun or pronoun are called **adjectives**.

Now spot the adjectives in the following.

Anjita : Are you ready?

Ranjita : No. I am looking for my big blue sharpener.

Anjita : Why don't you take this green and small one?

Ranjita : Oh ! It's old. It has become blunt.

Anjita : Be quick, please.

- How wonderful were the days we spent at Sagroli !
- Unforgettable moments !
- The jackal was very clever.
- I like fresh vegetables.
- We are sitting on this invisible bench.