

Tin Tin and the Nice Mice

By Manoshi de Silva

A couple of mice moved into the neighbourhood. They dug a burrow under the big mango tree and built their house there.

High up in the mango tree was a hollow branch; that was Tin Tin's home. Tin Tin watched curiously, as the two mice moved into their new home.

The two mice made friends with their new neighbours in no time. The mice were very nice and helpful to their neighbours. Every time someone needed something, they came forward and helped them. They were always very generous. The neighbours soon started calling the two mice the 'Nice Mice'.

One morning, Mr. Rabbit, who lived very close to the mango tree, was very upset. "My carpet is missing," he complained, "it was just outside my door!" The neighbours helped him to look around for it, but it was not to be seen.

"Don't worry," said Mr. Mouse and crept into his burrow. He came out with a piece of hard cloth like a piece of sack. "See if this helps," he said handing it to Mr. Rabbit.

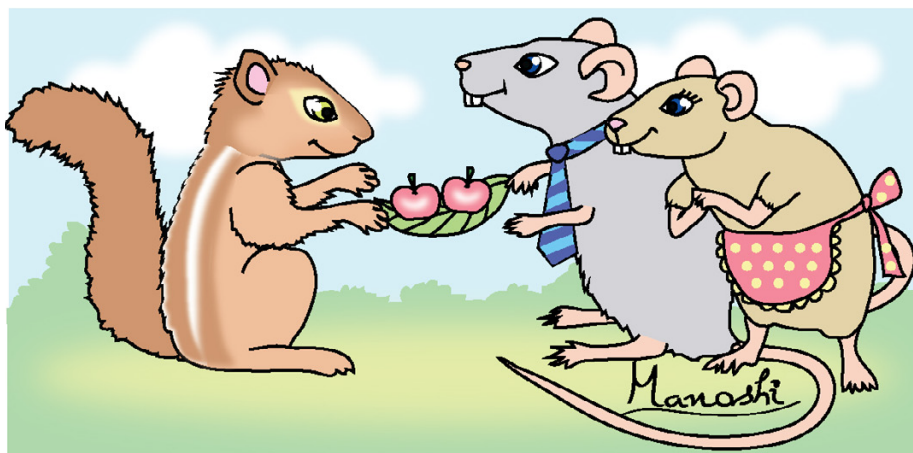
"Oh this will do," said Mr. Rabbit, "it's even better than what I had!"

"We're so lucky to have such helpful neighbours!" thought Tin Tin.

Suddenly so many things started to go missing from different houses. There seem to be a thief in the neighbourhood. Everyone was worried about this. But thanks to the Nice Mice, the problem was always solved.

One day after coming home in the evening, Tin Tin looked for the food he kept in his small kitchen. But to his surprise his little basket which was full of fruits, was missing. "I have been robbed!" he shouted from his small window and all the neighbours gathered under the mango tree. And as usual the Nice Mice came forward and offered him some fruits.

Later that evening, Tin Tin saw Mr. Bat and told him what had happened during the daytime. Mr. Bat always slept during the day and was not aware about this. "Oh that's too bad," he said, "even my food was robbed today."



"That's terrible. There's a thief in the neighbourhood. I was given two fruits by the Nice Mice. I can share one with you. Please come in," he invited Mr. Bat.

"Oh, thank you so much Tin Tin," said Mr. Bat, taking a fruit. "I had two of this type of fruits at home. While I was sleeping someone had stolen it!" "Really?" asked Tin Tin in surprise. It sounded as if the thief knew the neighbours and their behaviour well.

A few days later, one morning Mrs. Woodpecker was surprised to see, the bed she made to keep her eggs warm, was missing. "It was here a little while ago," she complained. Everyone searched for it but they couldn't find it. But thanks to the Nice Mice, the problem was sorted again.

The crows who live in the tree next to Mrs. Woodpecker started shouting a little while later. "It was the bed I made of feathers," explained Mrs. Crow. I took great trouble to make it. "My bed was also stolen a little while ago," said Mrs. Woodpecker, "but the Nice Mice helped me out".

"Maybe you should ask the Nice Mice if they can help you too," suggested Mrs. Woodpecker, "if they have another feather bed, I'm sure they'll give it to you. They are really helpful like that!"

Then she showed the crows the bed the Nice Mice had gifted her. The crows looked shocked.

"This is our bed that went missing," said Mrs. Crow in horror. "How did this happen?"

"The Nice Mice gave it to me!" said Mrs. Woodpecker. "They have given me many nice things. This carpet was also a gift by them," she said showing a carpet in her house. "But that's my carpet that went missing," shouted Mr. Rabbit.

"That's the carpet that got stolen!

Looks like the Nice Mice are a couple of thieves!"

"But didn't they give you a better carpet when yours went missing?" asked Tin Tin.

"Yes, they did!" said Mr. Rabbit scratching his head, "I don't understand why they help others if they are thieves!"

"Let's talk to them when they get home!" said Tin Tin, "I'm sure there is some misunderstanding here!"

That evening when the mice came home, everyone in the neighbourhood gathered under the mango tree. "We found out that the feather bed you gifted Mrs. Woodpecker is one that has gone missing from the Crow's nest!"

"Yes, I did take it from there," said Mr. Mouse, "I didn't think the Crows would need it as they still have no eggs or chicks. So I took it to give someone who'd need it!"

"But did you ask the Crows before you took it?" asked Tin Tin.

"No," replied Mr. Mouse, "there was no one there to ask. Anyway I didn't think they'll need it or miss it at all!"

"I didn't ask Mr. Bat about taking the fruits we gifted you the other day," said Mrs. Mouse. "I didn't want to disturb him because he was sleeping!"

"And I never asked you when I took the fruits from your basket. You were not at home to ask. So I took them and gifted them to some hungry baby birds," said Mr. Mouse. "We just took things which we felt that others don't really need and then gifted it to those who really needed them," said Mrs. Mouse.

The neighbours understood what had happened. The Nice Mice took what belonged to others without their permission and then gifted them because they wanted to help. "We're glad you two are very helpful to everyone. But you should never take something that belongs to another without asking them first. You never know if they need it or not until you ask them," said Tin Tin. The mice accepted their mistake. "You should always ask permission before you take something that belongs to another."