



Cheeku and Oonderbhai

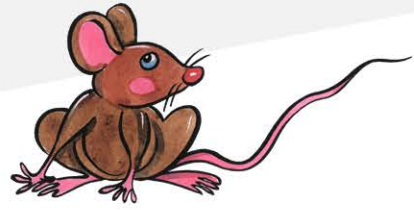
By Esther David

“There is a mouse in the house,” cried Cheeku, as he jumped onto a chair. Baa laughed, but she was worried that the mouse would sneak inside their cupboards and make holes in their clothes. Cheeku named the mouse Oonderbhai and said, “It is small, but plump.”

Cheeku and Baa tried to chase it out of the house, but it was smart and always disappeared in a corner somewhere. Cheeku said, “Oonderbhai is a daring creature. He is fit and fast, and can jump from the cupboards to the sink and onto the floor, just like a circus acrobat.”

Oonderbhai often littered the floor with food crumbs, and made Baa very upset when she found out that he was nibbling at everything from paper and clothes to food. Baa told Cheeku, “It is very difficult to catch mice. They are like magicians. They appear and disappear in a flash. And, when they are in the house, food disappears. It is amazing how a little creature like this, can upset our lives.”





Baa asked Cheeku to look for a mousetrap in the storeroom. Cheeku found it, but even if Oonderbhai was caught, he always managed to wriggle out and was at his mischief again. So, Baa sent Cheeku to buy a new mousetrap. That night, Baa put a ghee soaked chapatti on the hook of the trap, whose smell Oonderbhai simply could not resist.

This time, Oonderbhai was firmly trapped and unable to escape. The next morning, Cheeku looked into the mousetrap and called out to Baa saying, "Oonderbhai has eaten the chapatti and has become so fat that he cannot get out of the trap." Cheeku and Baa peered into the trap.

Their hearts melted when they saw Oonderbhai looking at them with his black, beady innocent eyes. For a moment, Baa and Cheeku felt like freeing Oonderbhai, but decided against it. With heavy hearts, Cheeku and Baa carried the mousetrap to the park and returned Oonderbhai to Mother Nature.

THE END



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