

# The Elephants and the King of Mice

Does size really matter?

■ An Indian folktale adapted by Mike Lockett, *The Normal Storyteller*; edited by Linda Ludwig  
PAGE DESIGN BY ANGELA CHANG / ILLUSTRATED BY ARNOLD LEE

12

Many years ago a village in India **suffered** a large earthquake. The **villagers** left, and mice moved into the empty houses. The mice were happy with their new homes for many years until the elephants

There was a lake next to the village. Elephants had been drinking from and bathing in that lake for many years. While villagers lived in the village, the elephants walked around the village on a narrow path. With the villagers gone, they began taking a **shortcut** down the main street of the village. This caused problems for the mice.

Many of the mice were **smashed** while walking across the street. The elephants walked in large groups visiting with each other on the way to the

lake. Their heads were in the air as they talked to each other. They did not even see the little mice who suffered **beneath** their feet. The king of the mice knew the deaths were **accidental**, but he decided to talk to the elephants to stop more deaths.

## Usage Tip

*With the villagers gone, they began taking a shortcut down the main street of the village.* (p. 24, line 11)

句中 down the main street 表「沿著主要街道」，其實用 down the street 或是 up the street 都是可以的。惟文意指沿著街往北或是往上走就一定要用 up，向南或向下則用 down。

• My best friend lives down the street from our town's movie theater.

Your turn

## 13

“Please, mighty elephant,” said the king of the mice to the leader of the elephants. “My people respect your need to go to the lake every day. But, every day, my people are being hurt by your people. I **request** that you and your friends take a different **route** to the lake. You will save many lives, and perhaps we can help you someday in return.”

The leader of the elephants began to laugh. “Oh, king of mice, you are too small to ever do a favor for the elephants. But, we are not cruel. We are sorry for hurting anyone. We will change our path so we do not **endanger** you any longer.”

### Talk About It

- Do you think size matters when it comes to helping someone?
  - I think it matters sometimes because ... /
  - No, I don't think it ever matters because ...
- Do you always keep your promises?
  - Yes, I do ... / Not always, because ...

The king of the mice thanked him for his kindness and accepted his apology. The **herd** of elephants never entered the village again.

A long time later, the elephants were caught in traps that were set by elephant hunters. They were **tangled up** in thick nets. No matter how they tried, they could not free themselves. ▶

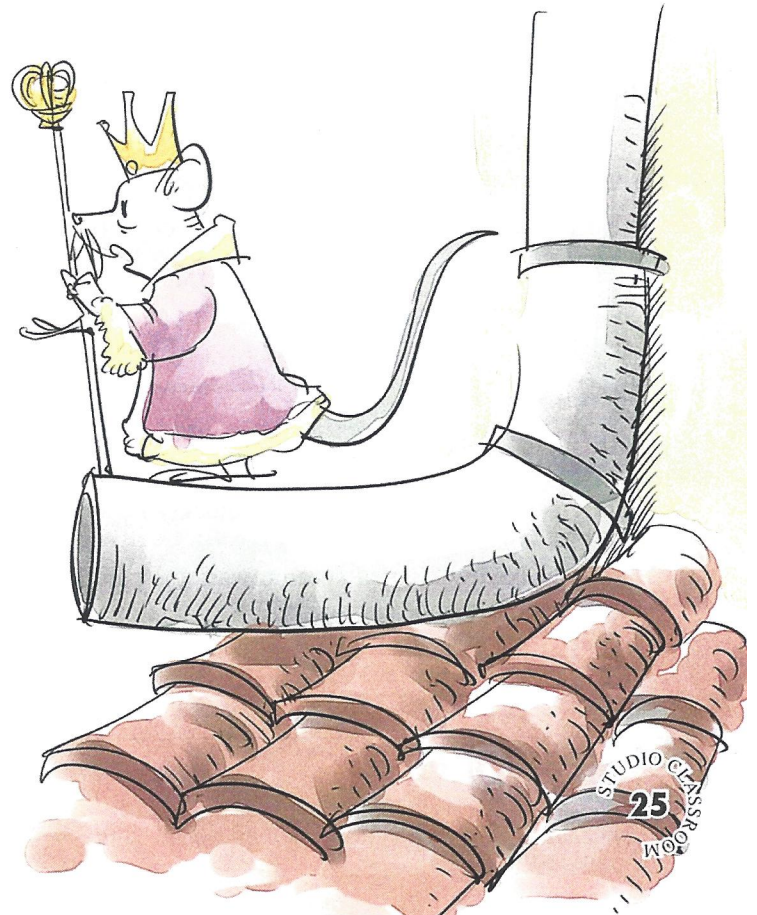
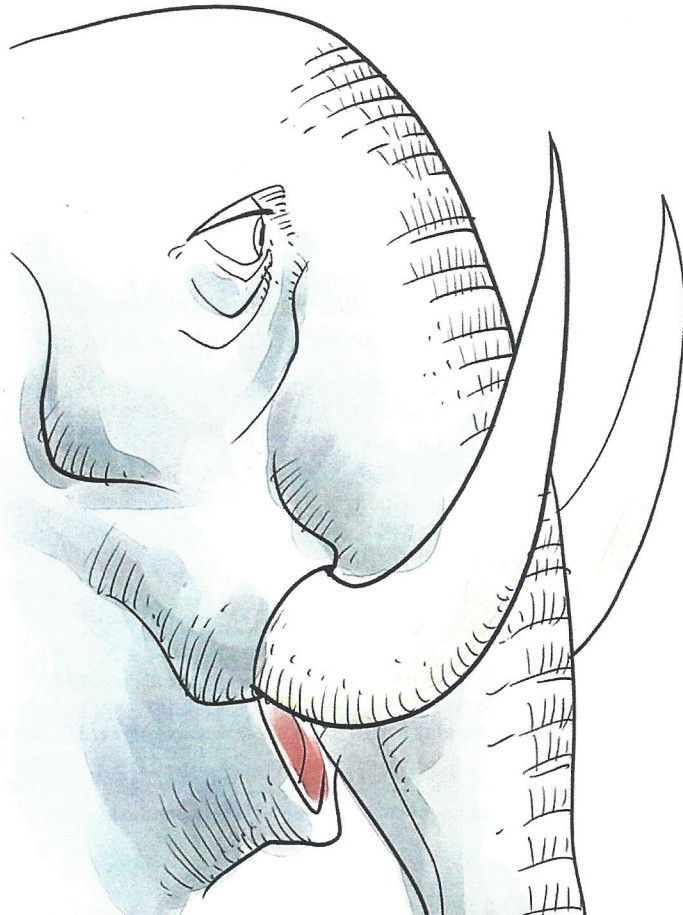
### Usage Tip

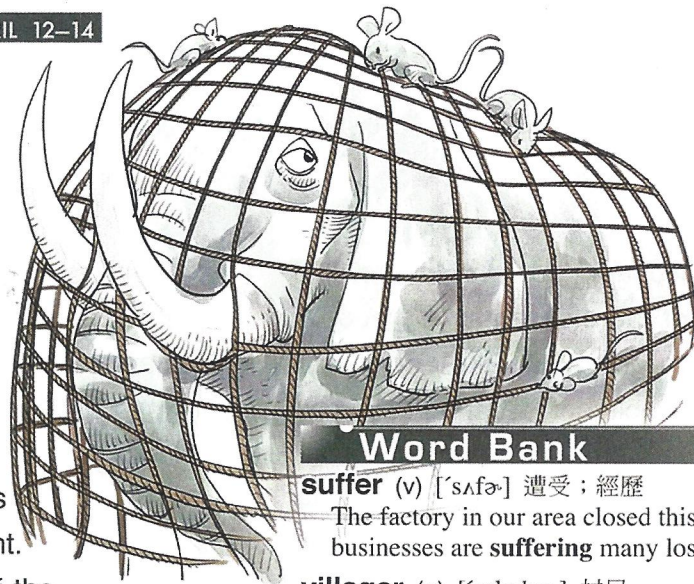
*You will save many lives, and perhaps we can help you someday **in return**.* (p. 25, line 6)

句尾片語 in return 表「作為回報」。

- My neighbor helps me a lot and expects nothing in return.

Your turn





## 14

The leader of the elephants was one of the elephants caught. He remembered the promise of the king of the mice. He called to one of the elephants that had not been caught. “Go to the village by our lake. Find the king of the mice. Remind him of his promise to help us if we ever needed it.”

The elephant went with great speed and told the king what had happened. The king of the mice immediately **assembled** all of the mice and said, “It is time to repay the elephants for listening to our plea to change their route. Let us hurry to their aid.” The mice followed the elephant to where his leader and his friends were trapped. The mice **chewed** on the ropes that made up the nets and cut them **loose**.

Finally the elephants were set free. They thanked the mice for their help. “I was **mistaken** when I said that you were too small to help us,” said the leader. “I will never judge anyone again by the way they look.” 🐘

## Usage Tip

The elephant went **with great speed** and told the king what had happened. (p. 26, line 9)

with great speed 可以用來代替副詞 quickly 或 speedily，詞義相同。

- They walked with great speed toward the park because they heard someone crying.

Your turn

## Word Bank

**suffer** (v) [ˈsʌfə] 遭受；經歷

The factory in our area closed this year, so nearby businesses are **suffering** many losses.

**villager** (n) [ˈvɪlədʒə] 村民

All of the **villagers** attended the festival.

**beneath** (prep) [bɪˈniθ] 在...下方

She put her purse **beneath** her chair.

**accidental** (adj) [ˌæksɪˈdentl] 偶然的；意外的

Their meeting was **accidental**, but they ended up becoming good friends.

**request** (v) [rɪˈkwest] (禮貌、正式的) 請求，要求

Tom **requested** two weeks off for vacation.

**route** (n) [rut/raʊt] 路；路線

The **route** to the top of the mountain was long and winding.

**endanger** (v) [enˈdendʒə] 使處於險境；危及

The father **endangered** his small children by leaving them alone for several hours.

**herd** (n) [hɜːd] 獸群；牧群

There is a **herd** of cows by the side of the road.

**assemble** (v) [əˈsembəl] 集合，聚集

Everyone **assembled** to see the king and queen pass by.

**chew** (v) [tʃu] 咬；嚼

Mary told her kids to **chew** their food well!

**loose** (adj) [lus] 鬆的；未受束縛的

When the dog finally got **loose**, it ran all over the yard.

**mistaken** (adj) [mɪˈstekən] 弄錯的，錯誤的

The teacher was **mistaken** about the little boy's ability to learn another language.

## More Information

**shortcut** (n) [ˈʃɔrtˌkʌt] 捷徑

**smash** (v) [smæʃ] 壓扁；粉碎

**tangle up** (phr v) [ˈtæŋɡl][ʌp] 使纏繞糾結

**repay** (v) [rɪˈpeɪ] 償還；報答

**plea** (n) [pli] 懇求

## Word Bank Focus

**accident** (n) [ˈæksɪdənt] 意外；事故

I saw a really bad car **accident** on my way to work this morning.

**accidentally** (adv) [ˌæksɪˈdentli] 意外地；偶然地

Francine **accidentally** burned the meat she was cooking because she was on the phone.

**accident-prone** (adj) [ˈæksɪdəntˌprɒn] (通常因為笨拙而) 易出事故的

Bob has broken lots of bones because he is very **accident-prone**.