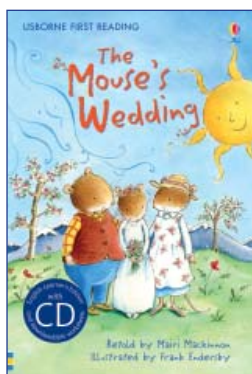


The Mouse's Wedding • Teacher's notes



Author: traditional, retold by Mairi Mackinnon

Reader level: Lower Intermediate

Word count: 610

Lexile level: 440L

Text type: Folk tale

About the story

Like most fathers, Father Mouse only wants the best for his daughter. When he decides that it's time for Miss Mouse to get married, he wants to find her the best husband in the world, that is to say... the sun.

The mouse family go to visit him – but the sun doesn't think he is that powerful, as he can easily be covered up by a cloud. Father Mouse decides they must ask the cloud instead, but the cloud points out that it can do nothing against the wind when it blows, and the wind says that it can easily be blocked by a wall. The wall says, in turn, that it can do nothing to prevent a mouse from nibbling away at it.

To Miss Mouse's relief, the family find a handsome young mouse at the foot of the wall, and Father Mouse is finally persuaded that the young mouse is the best possible husband after all. The two mice are married, and all the other characters come to the wedding.

The story is well known in Japan and also in China, in a more sinister version in which the parents marry their daughter to a cat, with predictable results. Originally, it probably derives from a story in the great ancient Indian collection of fables, the Panchatantra. A wise man rescues a mouse from birds of prey and turns her into a girl. The man and his wife bring the mouse up as a daughter, and ask the sun, the God of Clouds, the God of Winds and the God of Mountains to marry her, but she refuses them all. Then the God of Mountains advises that a mouse ought to marry a mouse, and everyone is happy.

About the author

Mairi Mackinnon has lived in Scotland, France, Italy and Spain, and worked as a teacher, translator, musician, bookseller, nanny, cook and bus driver before settling down in London, where she has written over forty books for children. She has three children of her own, five or six violins, a beautiful old piano and a house full of other people's books. She also sometimes has mice, although they're not meant to be there.

Key words

Your students might not be familiar with some of these words, which are important in the story.

p3 handsome	p22 blows
p6 anymore [or "any more"]	p24 crumbs
p7 pack	p25 rose [past part. of "rise"]
journey	p34 nibbling
p8 powerful	dust
p16 cover	p37 mousehole
block	p43 suppose
warmth	p46 wedding
p19 resting	

Key phrases

p7	Goodness me!
p16	There's nothing I can do
p22	to push [something] around
p30	to set off



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Before reading

Ask the class to think about what (in their opinion) makes a perfect husband.

You could write a heading 'The perfect husband' on the board. Decorate it, if you like, with bells and other wedding symbols. Then draw two big, interlocking circles to form a simple Venn diagram. Explain that one circle is for a bride-to-be, the other is for her father. Ask half the class to imagine they are the bride-to-be. What words might she use to describe her perfect husband? Write the words in her circle. Ask the other half to imagine they are the father. What words might he use to describe the kind of man he'd like his daughter to marry? Write those words in his circle. See if there are any words in common, and if so, move those words to the interlocking section. You may want to discuss some of the different words that have come up, and explore any difference of opinion.

Show the class the book over and explain that this story is about a father who wants the very best for his daughter. Who do they think will have the best idea of the perfect husband – daughter or parents?

Reading or listening

You can listen to the story on CD or read it aloud to the students, take turns to read or read together silently. Each double page spread in the book is one track on the CD, so that you can pause between tracks or repeat tracks if your students need it. The first reading is in a British English accent, and it is followed by an American English reading. The words are exactly the same. After the story, there is a short selection of key phrases that can be used for pronunciation practice.

During reading: you might like to ask some of these questions.

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|-------|---|-----|--|
| pp4-5 | The picture is shown stuck onto something – what do you think it is? What other pictures might you find in it? How old do you think Miss Mouse is in the picture? | p20 | How would you describe Father Mouse? [Students might find positive things to say, e.g. determined, loves his daughter; or negative – he's a little foolish!] |
| p6 | How old do you think Miss Mouse is now? How old do people in your country have to be to ride a motorbike or scooter? | p25 | Is the wind really stronger than a cloud? |
| p8 | Why does Father Mouse want to find his daughter a powerful husband? Do you think it's odd for them to go on a journey? | p29 | What do you think Mother Mouse and Miss Mouse are thinking by now? |
| p11 | Do you think the sun will say yes? Why not? | p33 | Can you guess who could be more powerful than a wall? |
| p16 | Do you think a cloud is more powerful than the sun? | p36 | Why is Miss Mouse so keen to talk to the mouse? |
| | | p39 | Does the mouse think he's powerful? |
| | | p47 | Why couldn't they all come at once? |

After reading

Ask the students if they enjoyed the story. Imagine Father Mouse met the handsome mouse first. What might have happened then?

Do you think Miss Mouse was pleased with how things turned out? Why do you think she didn't tell her father that she wanted to marry a mouse in the first place?

Imagine the sun, cloud, wind and wall each gave a personal wedding present to the married couple. What might the different presents be? [e.g. good weather for the honeymoon from the sun, a sailing trip from the wind, a new house from the wall, and so on.]

