

The Great Mouse Plot

My four friends and I had come across a loose floor-board at the back of the classroom, and when we prised it up with the blade of a pocket knife, we discovered a big hollow space underneath. This, we decided, would be our hiding place for sweets and other small treasures such as conkers, monkey-nuts and birds' eggs.

One day, when we lifted it up, we found a dead mouse lying among our treasures. It was an exciting discovery. Thwaites took it out by its tail and waved it in front of our faces. "What shall we do with it?" he cried.

"It stinks!" someone shouted. "Throw it out of the window quick!"

"Hold on a tick," I said. "Don't throw it away." Thwaites hesitated. They all looked at me. When writing about oneself, one must strive to be truthful. Truth is more important than modesty. I must tell you, therefore, that it was I and I alone who had the idea for the great and daring Mouse Plot. We all have our moments of brilliance and glory, and this was mine.

"Why don't we," I said, "slip it into one of Mrs Pratchett's jars of sweets? Then when she puts her dirty hand in to grab a handful, she'll grab a stinky dead mouse instead." The other four stared at me in wonder. Then, as the sheer brilliance of the plot began to sink in they started grinning. They cheered me and danced around the classroom. "We'll do it today!" they cried. "We'll do it on the way home! *You* had the idea," they said to me, "so *you* can be the one to put the mouse in the jar."

Thwaites handed me the mouse. I put it into my trouser pocket. Then the five of us left the school, crossed the village-green and headed for the sweetshop. We felt tremendously jazzed up. We felt like a gang of desperadoes setting out to rob a train or blow up the sheriff's office.

"Make sure you put it into a jar which is used often," someone said.

"I'm putting it in Gobstoppers," I said. "The Gobstoppers jar is never behind the counter."

"I've got a penny," Thwaites said, "so I'll ask for one Sherbert Sucker and one Bootlace. And when she turns away to get them, you slip the mouse in quickly with the Gobstoppers"

Thus everything was arranged. We were strutting a little as we entered the shop. We were the victors now and Mrs Pratchett was the victim. She stood behind the counter, and her small malignant pig-eyes watched us suspiciously as we came forward. "One Sherbert Sucker, please," Thwaites said to her holding out his penny.

I kept to the rear of the group, and when I saw Mrs Pratchett turn her head away for a couple of seconds, I lifted the heavy glass lid of the Gobstopper jar and dropped the mouse in. Then I replaced the lid as silently as possible. My heart was thumping like mad and my hands had gone all sweaty.

"And one Bootlace, please," I heard Thwaites saying. When I turned round, I saw Mrs Pratchett holding out a Bootlace in her filthy fingers. "I don't want all the lot of you troopin' in 'ere if only one of you is buyin'," she screamed at us. "Now beat it! Go on, get out!"

As soon as we were outside, we broke into a run. "Did you do it?" they shouted at me.

"Of course I did!" I said.

"Well done you!" they cried. "What a super show!"

I felt like a hero. I *was* a hero. It was marvellous to be so popular.

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1. Whose perspective is the extract written from? (1 mark)

2. List three items that Dahl and his friends used to hide under the loose floorboard: (2 marks)

a.) _____

b.) _____

c.) _____

3. How did the boys decide who should be the one to hide the dead mouse? (1 mark)

4. Using information from the text, tick one box to show whether each statement is true or false.
(2 marks)

	True	False
Thwaites carried the dead mouse to Mrs Pratchett's sweet-shop.		
The Great Mouse Plot took place on the way to school.		
At the sweetshop, Thwaites ordered a Gobstopper.		
Thwaites paid for his sweets with a penny.		

5. Find and copy a group of words from the text which suggest that boys were very excited on the way to the sweet-shop. (1 mark)

6. "*We were strutting a little as we entered the shop*". What does this tell you about the way they were feeling? (1 mark)

7. Why did Thwaites buy one Sherbert Sucker and one Bootlace? (1 mark)

8. Why did Dahl choose to hide the mouse in the Gobstopper's Jar? (1 mark)

9. How can you tell Dahl was nervous while carrying out the *Great Mouse Plot*? Give two ways:
(2 marks)

a.) _____

b.) _____

10. Why do you think the boys "*broke into a run*" after leaving the sweet-shop? (1 mark)
