



The journey of Mouse

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Theme: Surviving and overcoming trauma such as sexual abuse

Appropriate age group: All age groups



Mouse lived with his family in a barn on a big farm. Mouse really liked living on the farm. There were lots of mice and other friendly animals to play with. Mouse's best friend was Pinky, a very small pink piglet who lived in the

pigsty next to the barn. Mouse often went to play with Pinky. There was always lots of food in the pigsty and Pinky's mother, Bella, always said, "Please just help yourself."

One night, Mouse wanted to visit Pinky for some food and a chat. On the way, he met Spider, busy spinning her web. Mouse was a little afraid of Spider until Spider started chatting and was really friendly. But something happened to Mouse, something bad, while he was chatting to Spider. Mouse knew that what happened was wrong – very wrong.

Spider did something that was just not okay. Spider told Mouse: "It's our secret and if you dare tell anyone, you will lose your sense of smell. Then you'll be in big trouble. You won't be able to find food any more, and you'll get hungry and thin!"

Mouse ran away from Spider as fast as he could. He was so frightened that his long tail stood up completely straight and his eyes were wide. Mouse felt scared because of what happened with Spider. He felt scared because Spider said it was a secret.

He felt scared he would lose his sense of smell if he told the secret. But he knew Mother Mouse often told him, "Don't keep any secrets, son – never be afraid to tell me." So he decided to go and tell Mother Mouse.

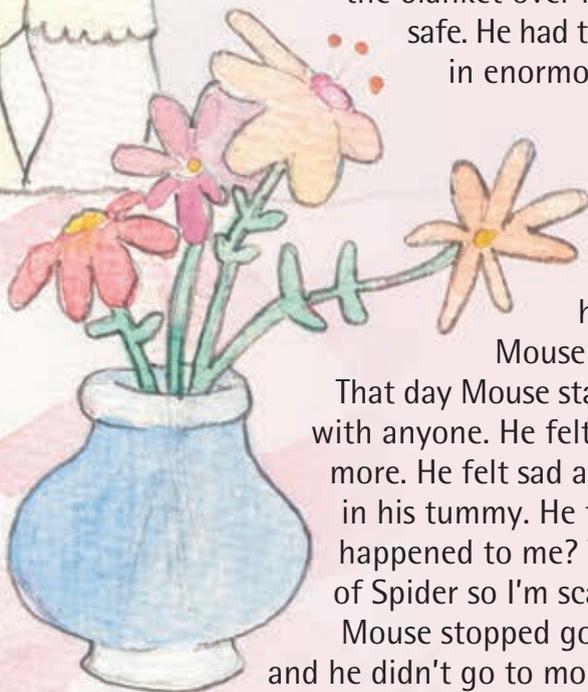
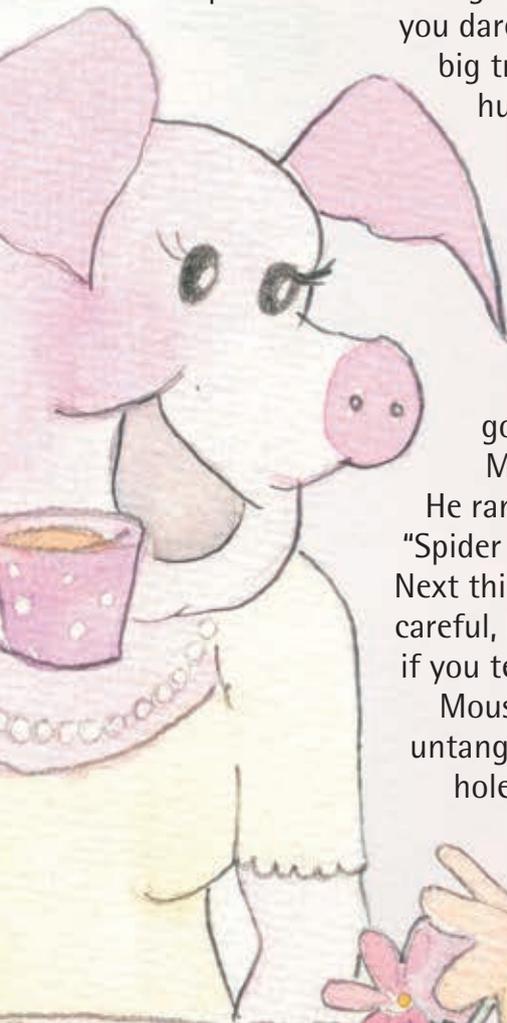
Mouse was in such a hurry that he didn't look where he was going. He ran straight into Spider's big sticky web. "Oh no!", thought Mouse, "Spider knew I was going to tell, and now she's caught me in her web." Next thing, Spider came close to Mouse and said in a big gruff voice, "Be careful, little Mouse. I'm watching you. Remember, bad things will happen if you tell our little secret!"

Mouse was so scared that he started shaking and it was really hard to untangle himself from Spider's web. Mouse scurried off to his mouse hole and all night long he lay shivering in his little bed. He pulled the blanket over his head, but even that didn't make him feel safe. He had terrible nightmares about hungry mice trapped in enormous sticky spider webs.

The next morning Mouse didn't want to get out of bed. He just wanted to hide under the blankets. He didn't want the other farm animals to see him. He was sure all the animals would see that something wrong had happened to him. He wanted to tell Mother Mouse but what if he lost his sense of smell?

That day Mouse stayed inside by himself. He didn't want to play with anyone. He felt as if he didn't fit in with the others any more. He felt sad and stupid and bad and he had a terrible pain in his tummy. He thought, "What if the others can see what happened to me? What if it happens again? I'm really scared of Spider so I'm scared to tell my mother."

Mouse stopped going to play with Pinky and his other friends and he didn't go to mouse school any more. Sometimes he crept out of his hole at night to look for food but he didn't want anyone to see him. If he heard animals laughing, he always thought, "Everyone is laughing at me because I'm really



good-for-nothing". These awful, sad feelings went on for quite a long time, and Mouse got thinner and thinner.

Late one night Mouse went out to look for food. He crept past the pigsty but Pinky was awake. She jumped up and said, "Mouse, my friend, I'm so happy to see you. Where have you been? I miss playing with you. You look terribly sad and down. What's the matter?" Mouse said nothing. He just thought, "See, even Pinky says I'm terrible", and he started to cry.

Mouse cried and cried and cried. He felt so sad and worthless and the pain in his tummy just wouldn't go away. Pinky was so upset she started to cry too. The crying woke up Pinky's mother and she came to see what was going on. She found Pinky staring at Mouse with tears in her eyes, not knowing what to do or say. Mouse was still sobbing and sobbing. So Pinky's Mom sat down next to Mouse and asked him gently, "What's the matter, Mouse? Why are you crying? What's the problem?"

Mouse remembered Spider's words, "Bad things will happen to you if you tell anyone about our secret." He was scared to tell the secret but Pinky's Mom kept on saying, "Please tell me what's the matter." She was kind and she seemed to care about him so Mouse told her about the wrong thing that happened with Spider. It was really hard to say the words but he was brave. She listened very carefully and then she told Mouse, "Spider did the wrong thing and not you. It wasn't your fault. I'm sorry Spider was so mean and horrible to you and I think you were very brave to tell me about it."

Mouse felt a little better after telling the secret. The pain in his tummy was not so bad any more. Pinky's Mom went on: "Spider doesn't have power over you. Telling the secret can't make you lose your sense of smell. Spider was just trying to trick you so you wouldn't tell the secret. You've got lots of friends on the farm and we all love you so don't be scared of Spider's tricks and don't let him tell you what to do."

Mouse looked up at Pinky's Mom's kind face and he thought to himself, "Maybe she's right. Spider has tricked others before me and we were all afraid to tell. But I'm not going to let Spider make me think bad things about myself. No way! Something wrong happened to me but that doesn't mean I'm a bad mouse. No way! I'm a good mouse, in fact I'm a marvellous mouse".

Mouse gave Pinky's Mom a mousy hug and Pinky smiled happily at the two of them. Mouse was so glad he'd shared the secret. Now he felt much better – he knew he was Marvellous Mouse! Nobody could make him believe any different.



? Possible discussion points:

If there is something bothering children they must always try to tell someone they trust. Whom can they tell? Identify trustworthy people.