

# The pouch of gold

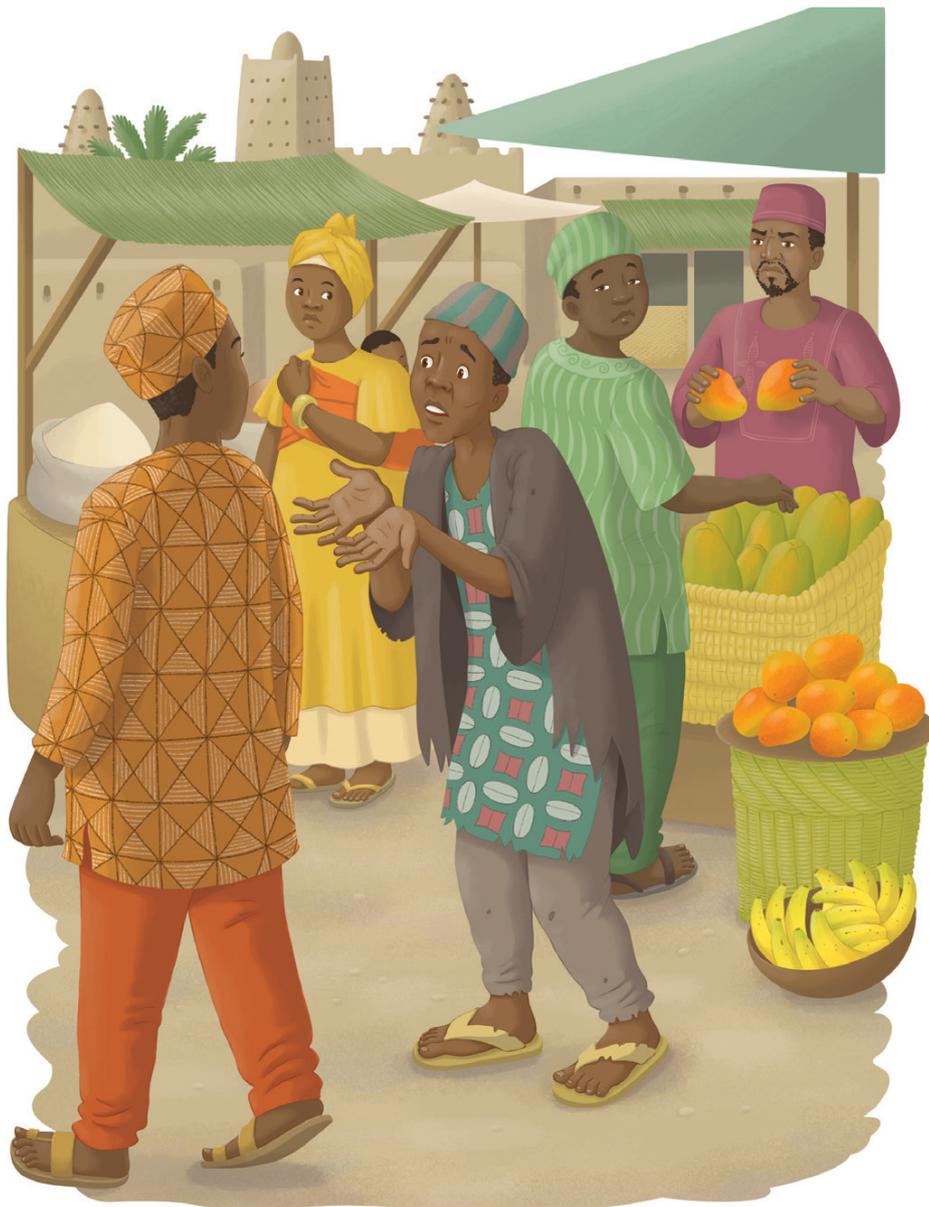
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One morning a homeless man woke up. He had spent the previous night begging for food, but no one had shown him any kindness. His stomach was growling because he was very hungry. Desperate to find food, he walked through the village market begging merchants for their leftovers.

“Please ... please ... It’s been two days since I have eaten. Please give your leftovers to a poor homeless man,” he pleaded.



But most people pretended he was invisible. Those who saw him, threw rotten fruit at him and called him names like “street rat” and “slum dog”.

After many tries and many insults, the man decided to go scratching through a nearby rubbish dump, hoping he might find food there. While he was searching through piles of old rubbish, he suddenly saw a small leather pouch that was tied at the top with string. He picked it up and opened it. It was full of gold coins! With a heart filled with joy, he counted his treasure.

“One, two, three ... a hundred gold coins!” he said when he had finished counting. “This will feed me for the rest of my life.”

As the man ran back into the market place looking forward to having a full stomach, he heard a merchant shouting, “Listen everyone! I have lost my pouch of gold coins and I will reward anyone who brings it to me!”

The homeless man had a kind heart and he felt bad for the merchant. He decided to do the right thing.

“Is this the pouch you lost?” he asked, holding up the pouch he had found.

“Oh my, you’ve found it!” said the merchant taking the pouch and counting the gold coins inside.

The homeless man waited a while then he asked softly, “Sir, you said something about a reward?”

“Reward?” scoffed the merchant.

“Why should I give you a reward? You have already stolen some of the coins!”



“I have not taken anything from the pouch. Please, can I have the reward you promised?” asked the homeless man.

“The pouch I lost had two hundred gold coins in it. Now it only has a hundred coins. You have already stolen more than your reward,” said the merchant angrily.

“Please, sir, I have not stolen anything,” explained the homeless man. “All the coins are in the pouch, exactly as I found them.”

“Go away, before I call the king’s guards to arrest you,” shouted the merchant.

“I may not seem like much to you, but I am an honest man,” said the homeless man. “Call the guards and I will prove myself before the king.”

So, the merchant called the guards. Then the merchant followed them and the homeless man to the king.

“What can I do to help the two of you?” asked the king when the merchant and the homeless man were standing in front of him.

The merchant was the first to speak. He told the king his side of the story. He explained how many gold coins had been in his lost pouch and how the homeless man had stolen half of them.

The king listened to the merchant, then he turned to the homeless man and asked, “What do you have to say for yourself?”

“My king, I found the pouch on the rubbish dump and it had only a hundred gold coins in it,” said the homeless man bowing his head as he spoke. “That is the truth.”

The king thought for a while and then he said, “Merchant, am I correct? You say that your pouch had two hundred gold coins in it.”

“Yes, my king,” said the merchant.

“I see,” said the king stroking his long beard. “Well, I believe both of you and I can solve this easily! Merchant, you said that the pouch you lost had two hundred gold coins in it.

That is a lot of gold to carry around in a small pouch. But, the pouch this homeless man found only had a hundred gold coins inside. That means that this is not the pouch that you lost. I order you to give it to the homeless man immediately.”



And so, the merchant had no choice but to give the pouch to the homeless man. The homeless man’s honesty had paid off and he lived a long and happy life, with plenty to eat every day.

**GET CREATIVE!**

- Imagine that the merchant wanted to put a reward notice in the local newspaper.
- What would it look like? What would it say? Invite your children to design the notice.



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## Visual

Go to the activity sheet here:  
Find six differences between the two pictures.



## Reading

Think about what happened in the story and answer the questions. Look for details in the story to help you.

- ★ Do you think the homeless man returned the pouch only because he wanted the reward?
- ★ Do you think the merchant would have treated the man differently if he had not been homeless? Is that fair?
- ★ Do you think the king behaved fairly towards the homeless man and the merchant?



## Writing

Imagine that the merchant wanted to put a reward notice in the local newspaper. What would it look like? What would it say? Write and design the notice.



## Craft

Use a piece of fabric to create a pouch, and some cardboard and shiny paper to make gold coins to go inside it.



## Performance

Create a radio news report about what happened in the story. You might want to interview the merchant and/or the homeless man as part of the report.