Belling the Cat

An Aesop fable
Illustrated by Kyle Aleksander

Applying Strategies

Narrative: Identifying Characteristics of Fables

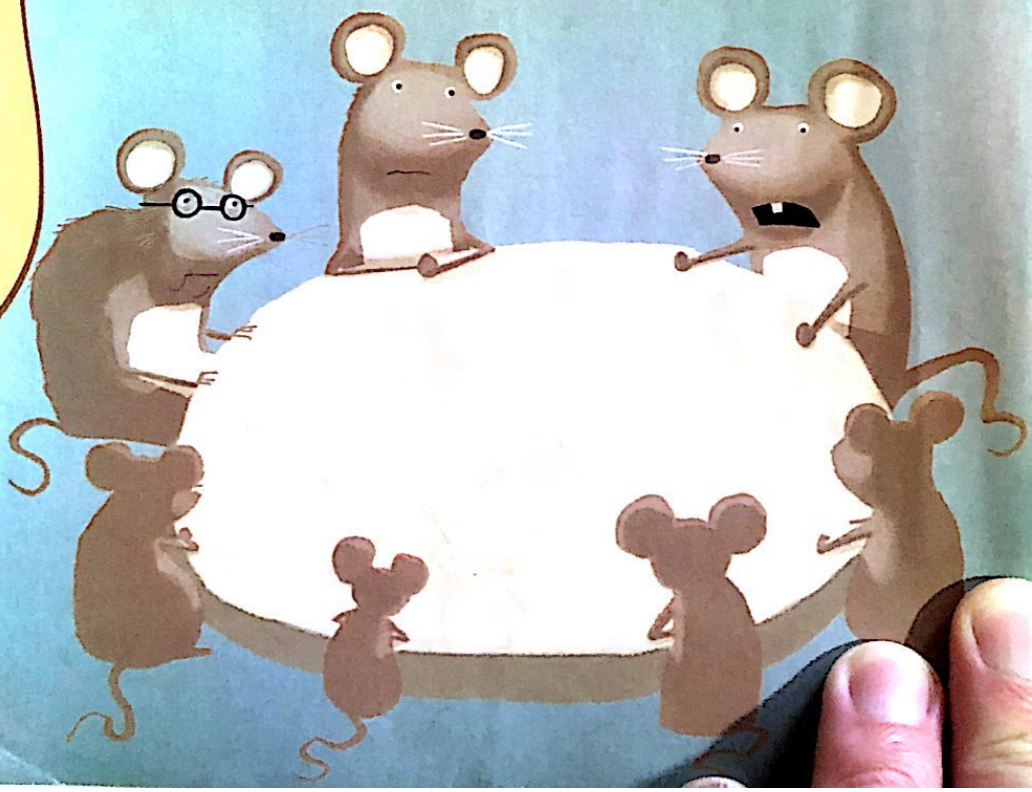
As you read, look for these characteristics of fables:

- The characters in fables are often animals.
- All the events connect to the problem at the beginning of the fable.
- The characters are usually very clever or very foolish.
- Fables teach a lesson, which is often called the "moral."

Mice and cats have been enemies forever. After all, it is a cat's job to chase, catch, and then eat mice.

In one farmhouse, the mice had been living for several years without any worries. The farmer kept the cat in the barn. There, the cat hunted the rats. Then one day, all the rats were gone. The farmer decided to bring the cat into the house.

The mice met to talk about the problem.



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A young mouse complained, "Every time I poke my head out of a hole, the cat is there."

"Something has to be done," another mouse said.

"The cat chases us one at a time," pointed out an old mouse. "Maybe if we all chased the cat, we would scare it."

The grandmother mouse shook her head and said, "Well, we might frighten it at first. But after a while it would be back. And it would be angry!" She was a very wise mouse.





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"You're right!" agreed the youngest mouse. "But if we could hear the cat coming, we could run away quickly."

"We could put a bell on the cat's collar. That way, we would always know where it was," suggested the first mouse.

Most of the mice thought belling the cat was a great idea. They knew they'd never have to worry about the cat again, if it was wearing a bell. All the younger mice hopped around happily.

But the grandmother mouse shook her head. "Which mouse will be brave enough to put a bell on the cat?" she asked.



Moral: Talk is easier than action.



Reflect on

Strategies: How do you know that this selection is a fable? Give examples from the story to support your thinking.

Critical Literacy: How might this fable be different if it were told from the cat's point of view?

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