

Name: _____ Class: _____

The Lion and the Mouse

By Aesop
From Aesop's Fables • 620-560 B.C.

Aesop was an Ancient Greek storyteller and slave credited with a number of fables now collectively known as Aesop's Fables. In the following story, a tiny mouse proves she is more powerful than she looks. As you read, take notes on the relationship between the two characters and the theme.

- [1] A Lion lay asleep in the forest, his great head resting on his paws. A timid little Mouse came upon him unexpectedly, and in her fright and haste to get away, ran across the Lion's nose. Roused from his nap, the Lion laid his huge paw angrily on the tiny creature to kill her.

"Spare me!" begged the poor Mouse. "Please let me go and some day I will surely repay you."



"Leo et mus" is in the public domain.

The Lion was much amused to think that a Mouse could ever help him. But he was generous and finally let the Mouse go.

Some days later, while stalking his prey in the forest, the Lion was caught in the toils of a hunter's net. Unable to free himself, he filled the forest with his angry roaring.

- [5] The Mouse knew the voice and quickly found the Lion struggling in the net. Running to one of the great ropes that bound him, she gnawed it until it parted, and soon the Lion was free.

"You laughed when I said I would repay you," said the Mouse. "Now you see that even a Mouse can help a Lion."

The Lion and the Mouse by Aesop is in the public domain.

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: What does the word "timid" mean as it is used in paragraph 1? [RL.4]
 - A. Courageous and bold
 - B. Cute and soft
 - C. Foolish and careless
 - D. Fearful and wary

2. PART B: Which phrase provides the best support for the answer to Part A? [RL.1]
 - A. "unexpectedly"
 - B. "in her fright"
 - C. "ran across"
 - D. "tiny creature"

3. What does the information in paragraph 3 reveal about the lion? [RL.3]
 - A. He knows he is too big and powerful to ever encounter any danger in the forest.
 - B. He is cruel toward those who are smaller than he is.
 - C. He does not believe that an animal as mighty as he is would ever need the help of a creature so small.
 - D. He enjoys the company of smaller animals and often seeks them out to assist them in any way he can.

4. How does paragraph 5 contribute to the overall structure of the story? [RL.5]
 - A. It describes the setting where the story takes place.
 - B. It compares the personalities and characteristics of two characters.
 - C. It establishes the problem of the story.
 - D. It reveals the solution to a main conflict in the story.

5. Explain the theme of the story on the lines below. [RL.2]

Discussion Questions

Directions: *Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.*

1. Consider other examples of stories from literature, film, sports, or popular culture in which an underdog triumphs over someone or something seen as more powerful. What is it about these stories that captivates us? What makes us root for the “little guy”?
2. In the context of this story, how do we define worth? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.
3. In the context of this story, how can people – especially the small and weak – overcome adversity? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.
4. In the context of this story, what does it mean to be a friend? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.