



# THE LION AND THE MICE

by Rebecca Emberley and  
Ed Emberley



Guided  
Reading  
Level E

## About the Book

In this interpretation of Aesop's fable, a mouse finds herself trapped by a caged lion in a city zoo. The mouse begs to be released and promises to help the lion one day, and the lion helps her. Later that night, the mouse returns with mouse friends and together they unlock the lion's cage and prove that "little mice can be big friends."

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GRADES  
PREK-3

## SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### Language Arts

**Compare and contrast**—The Emberleys' version of this well-known Aesop's fable, "The Lion and the Mouse," takes a somewhat different twist on the traditional story: the lion seems to be already trapped in a cage—possibly in a zoo—and it takes more than one mouse to free him with the help of a ladder and a key. Listed below in "Further Reading" are several other excellent picture book versions of the same fable, which students can use to compare and contrast some of the major elements. In the "Online Resources" section below are links to even more versions of this fable available in school or public libraries.

**Morals**—Various picture books present many versions of the moral. Here are a few: "Kindness is more important than strength"; "No act of mercy is ever wasted"; "Friends come in all sizes and shapes"; "A good deed should be returned." Students can discuss these morals to determine whether they all mean the same thing or how they are slightly different from one another. In reading other versions they may find additional statements of the moral of the story.

**Writing original fables**—Here are some morals from other Aesop's fables. Students can write their own fables using these morals. Remind them that fables are short, usually have animal characters, and contain one or two incidents leading to the moral.

- "Appearances often are deceiving."—"The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing"

- "Familiarity breeds contempt."—"The Fox and the Lion"
- "Slow and steady wins the race."—"The Hare and the Tortoise"
- "One person's meat is another's poison."—"The Ass and the Grasshopper"
- "Things are not always what they seem."—"The Bee-Keeper and the Bees"
- "Never trust a flatterer."—"The Fox and the Crow"
- "Beware the wolf in sheep's clothing."—"The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing"
- "Little friends may become great friends."—"The Lion and the Mouse"

### Art

The Emberleys provide brightly colored, somewhat abstract illustrations. Students can closely observe the illustrations in the other books and compare them with those of the Emberleys. They can then decide which ones they prefer and why. Some things to notice include: Do the animals wear clothes? What do their houses look like? Do they walk on two feet or are they depicted more like "real" animals? What is the size of the illustration: a whole page, part of the page, or just a small segment of the page? Are the colors realistic or fanciful?

**Art/Dramatic representation**—Students can create drawings of the lion and the mice and then glue them to tongue depressors to make puppets. They can act out the story using their puppets and create additional dialogue if they wish.

## Research

Students may be interested in obtaining more information about Aesop, the supposed creator of hundreds of fables that continue to be a part of our literature. They can use encyclopedias, fable collections, and other print or online resources to read various accounts of Aesop, his world, and his creation of these timeless stories. (See “Online Resources” below.)

## Further Reading

Carle, Eric, *Aesop's Fables*. Scholastic, 1988. (p. 8)  
Chorao, Kay, *Baby's Story Book*. Dutton, 1985. (p. 62)  
dePaola, Tomie, *Favorite Nursery Tales*. Putnam's Sons, 1986. (p. 32)  
Hoberman, Mary Ann, *You Read to Me, I'll Read to You*. Little Brown, 2010. (p. 30)  
Morpurgo, Michael, *McElderry Book of Aesop's Fables*. Simon & Schuster, 2005. (p. 8)  
Percy, Graham, *The Lion and the Mouse*. Child's World, 2010.  
Pinkney, Jerry. *The Lion & the Mouse*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2009.  
Sneed, Brad, *Aesop's Fables*. Dial, 2003. (unp. 8<sup>TH</sup> story)

## Online Resources

[www.aesops-fables.org.uk/](http://www.aesops-fables.org.uk/)

Provides a short explanation and the history of Aesop's fables and their construction, and includes links to eighty-two of his fables.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Lion\\_and\\_the\\_Mouse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lion_and_the_Mouse)

Provides a detailed explanation of the history of this fable, and the “References” section below it provides links to many versions—some in poetry, some quite long—of this fable throughout history.

[www.google.com/imghp](http://www.google.com/imghp)

Enter “Aesop” + “The lion and the mouse” to access many, many pictures related to this fable (actually 244,000!).

[www.creative-writing-ideas-and-activities.com/writing-fables.html](http://www.creative-writing-ideas-and-activities.com/writing-fables.html)

Presents a four-step lesson plan that teachers can use to help students write original fables.

Classroom activities prepared by Sandy Schuckett, school library consultant.

## About the Authors/Illustrators

**Rebecca Emberley** has written and illustrated more than thirty books for children. She lives in Maine. Visit her online at [www.rebeccaemberley.com](http://www.rebeccaemberley.com).

**Ed Emberley**, Rebecca's father, has created more than eighty books for children, including *Drummer Hoff*, which won the Caldecott Medal. He lives in Massachusetts. For more about Ed and his books, go to [www.edemberley.com](http://www.edemberley.com).

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