

Small Wonders

The Perch

There is more trouble when Tell-Tale the Mouse leaves Trifles the Kitten at home alone.

Lesson Link: Disobedience and consequences (Adam and Eve; Noah's generation). Often the newness of something makes it easy to enjoy, but then the responsibilities become more difficult. Beginning with Adam and Eve, God's people often fell into sin. Because of this, God gave them rules to keep them safe and to maintain order within the human community. Disobeying the rules has consequences.

Tell-Tale the Mouse woke up in the morning feeling as if she hadn't slept at all.

"Maybe I have a head cold," she said. And then she remembered how she had brought Trifles the Kitten to live with her in the old bird cage she called home.

At first, Trifles wandered around and sniffed everything in a kitten-like way.

And *then* Trifles attacked the frilly lace on the bottom of the curtains.

"Please don't," Tell-Tale said.

So Trifles chased a cricket along the wall and knocked over a small stand with pictures on it. Then he used the leg of the dining table as a scratching post. Then he destroyed a ball of yarn. Then he clawed at the twigs in the wall and nearly got stuck between the bars of the cage. Later, he pounced on Tell-Tale's feet under the covers when she tried to sleep.

In the middle of the night, he meowed when she didn't look at him. Then he ignored her when she did look at him. And sometimes he suddenly ran from one place to another for no reason at all.

What am I going to do? Tell-Tale asked herself in the morning with a yawn.



She decided to do what the Toys often did when they had a question they couldn't answer. *I'll pay a visit to Granna the Rabbit.*

Trifles was chasing a marble around the floor.

"Trifles," Tell-Tale said to the kitten, "I have to go out for a little while. Please don't destroy my home while I'm gone."

The marble rolled under the sofa. Trifles dove after it.

"Remember what I said about the old perch," Tell-Tale called out. "Do not climb up to the perch! It's too high. You will hurt yourself!"

Trifles peeked out from under the sofa. “Why are you being mean?”

“It’s not mean for me to keep you safe,” Tell-Tale said.

Trifles frowned.

Tell-Tale gave a little sigh as she left.

Trifles batted at the marble under the sofa until it went under the cupboard and he couldn’t reach it. Then he saw a twig sticking out of the wall that Tell-Tale had built over the sides of the cage. He attacked the twig. But it didn’t go anywhere or do anything fun, so he dropped onto the round rug on the floor and rolled onto his back.

Way up high he could see the old perch hanging in the middle of the ceiling.

He thought, *That’s not so high. I can climb up there.* Then he asked himself, *I wonder what’s really up there that Tell-Tale doesn’t want me to see?*

He thought he saw something move way up there. Maybe it was a spider’s web. Maybe there was a spider he could chase!

He leapt onto a chair and then a table and then a tall wardrobe. Then he got his claws into the twigs in the wall and climbed higher. Soon he used the metal crossbars of the old cage to go up and up.

That wasn’t so hard, he thought when he was as high as he could go. He held onto a little feeder that had been bolted to the side of the metal cage. The cage bent upwards like a dome.

Trifles looked down. The tall cupboard was *far* below. But the perch was hanging just in front of him now, and there was a spider’s web just above it. A small black spider sat on the web and looked at him.

“Hello,” Trifles said. “Would you like to play?”

The spider didn’t answer.

Trifles looked at the perch. *What would it be like if I were a bird, sitting on that perch?* he wondered.

He wondered some more.

And then he knew there was only one way to find out.

He sprang from the ledge with his foreclaws stretched out as far as they would go in hopes of reaching the wooden perch.

But the perch was farther away than he thought. In midair, he reached and strained and stretched.

Three of his claws hooked onto the wooden perch. The rest of him didn’t. Trifles swung down, hanging by his three claws.

The perch swayed back and forth and then stopped.

“Oh no,” he said. He was stuck. He tried to pull himself up, but didn’t have the strength. He couldn’t jump back to the feeder. He couldn’t let go because it was a long way down.

“Silly kitten,” the spider said and scampered off.

Trifles didn’t know what to do. “I can’t go up,” he said. “I can’t go down. I can’t go back, and I can’t go forth.”

He thought long and hard. Then he did the only thing he could do.

Trifles cried out very loudly, “Help!”

Questions:

1. **Why did Tell-Tale the Mouse tell Trifles not to climb up to the perch?** (*Tell-Tale was afraid that Trifles might fall off or get hurt.*)
2. **Why did Trifles disobey Tell-Tale?** (*He thought Tell-Tale might be hiding something she didn’t want him to see.*)
3. **How is this story like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden?** (*Adam and Eve believed the serpent and thought God was hiding something from them. They thought they knew better than God.*)