

Small Wonders

Ups and Downs

The Toys help rescue Trifles.

Lesson Link: God rescues us through those around us (Moses).

Throughout history, God has sent us teachers and prophets and saints to help us in our need to be closer to Him. As a community of believers, we need one another to help in times of trouble. Not everyone gives freely, but it is important that we learn to give.

A crowd of Toys had gathered at the door of Tell-Tale the Mouse's house, which was really an old birdcage. They had gathered because they'd heard Trifles' loud *meeeeeoowwwws* and thought it might be a strange new Toy or even an opera singer.

By the time Percy the Possum arrived, he was sure it was a crisis involving a burglar who had set off the alarm.

Tell-Tale pushed the door open. She looked up. Trifles was hanging way up high from the perch.

"*Meeeeeoowww,*" he cried.

The other Toys crowded in.

"Oh dear," said Brambles the Porcupine.

"This is terrible," said Stout the Pig.

"That's a lovely rug," said Percy the Possum.

Tell-Tale paced back and forth and asked, "What can I do?"

Pencil-Neck the Brachiosaurus said, "It's simple. Throw him a rope and pull him down."

Pinnetti the Puppet suggested that they all push together to turn the birdcage upside down, and then the kitten would be on the bottom again.

Brambles said to have Trifles fall on Tell-Tale's bed. But when they picked up the mattress, the straw inside it scattered all over the floor.



Trifles' cries got louder.

Granna arrived and said quickly to Percy the Possum, "Please find Stern the Owl."

"I don't know how *he'll* be of any help," Percy said.

"Stern can fly up to the perch and carry Trifles down," Granna said.

The Toys hadn't thought of that. Few of them had ever seen Stern the Owl fly.

Stern the Owl was in the middle of trying to sleep on an uncomfortable branch when Percy the Possum startled him by throwing acorns at his feet. That made him grumpier than usual when he arrived at Tell-Tale's house.

Granna explained what she needed him to do.

Stern looked up at the hanging kitten and said with a harrumph, "I don't fly without a good reason."

"What would be a good reason, *apart* from saving a kitten?" Granna asked.

Stern looked around Tell-Tale's home. "It would be a good reason if I could live *here*. It *is* a birdcage, after all."

"Give up my home?" Tell-Tale asked sadly.

Granna said to Tell-Tale, "It isn't a very good home for a mouse *or* a kitten, if you're going to keep Trifles."

"There's a very nice ground-floor apartment in the barn where I live," Percy said.

Tell-Tale looked at her belongings and then up at Trifles, who was still hanging and still crying loudly. "All right," said Tell-Tale. "Stern can live here."

Stern gave an agreeable squawk. "Stand back," he said.

All the Toys moved aside. Stern spread his large wings, flapped them a few times, and then took off. He only made it as far as the tall cupboard. "I'm out of practice," he said, then flapped his wings more.

Up he went, bumping into one side of the cage, then the other, until he reached the perch. He landed on Trifles' paw with the three claws hanging onto the perch.

Trifles stopped crying and said, "Ouch."

Stern moved aside and said, "Let go of the perch."

"I'll fall," said Trifles with a lot of sniffles.

"Let go. I'll swoop down and catch you," said Stern.

"What if you don't?" asked Trifles.

"Then I'll be terribly embarrassed," said Stern. "You can trust me or hang here for the rest of your life."

Trifles pulled in his claws and dropped.

Stern groaned. "I meant *when I'm ready!*" he said as Trifles fell.

Stern dove off the perch and caught Trifles in midair. He flapped his wings until they landed safely onto the floor.

The Toys applauded.

Stern gave them a dramatic bow. "I'll move in this afternoon," he said to Tell-Tale, then shuffled off.

Tell-Tale hugged Trifles but said, "I told you not to climb up to the perch."

"I'm sorry," sniffled Trifles.

"Now we have to move to another house," said Tell-Tale.

Trifles was sad to have caused so much trouble. Then he said, surprised, "*We?* We'll move *together*? You aren't throwing me out?"

"I said I would take care of you," Tell-Tale said.

Granna smiled at her.

Trifles purred and rubbed up against Tell-Tale's legs, almost knocking her over.

"More responsibility," Percy snorted.

It took a lot of work, but Tell-Tale and Trifles moved to a new home in the barn.

Questions:

1. **Why did Tell-Tale decide to move to a new house?** (She did not think her old house was safe for Trifles.)
2. **What can we learn from Trifles' behavior in this story?** (Rules are there to keep us and others safe. We might get hurt if we don't follow the rules.)