

Small Wonders

Responsibility

Tell-Tale hears about responsibility. She thinks she doesn't want it.

Lesson Link: Responding to responsibility (God's call; consequences). Being responsible for someone else can be difficult. Following rules can seem inconvenient. Refusing to be responsible or to follow the rules can have painful consequences.

Tell-Tale the Mouse was sitting at Granna the Rabbit's kitchen table having a cup of tea. Tell-Tale was complaining to Granna about Trifle the Kitten being so kittenish and running and playing and breaking things and making a mess in general.

"It's what kittens do," said Granna. "Didn't you think about that before you took him home?" she asked.

"He was so cute," said Tell-Tale.

"Is that the *only* reason you took him home?" Granna asked.

Tell-Tale thought about it. "Also, I didn't want him to get lost in the woods again," she replied.

"You are a kind mouse," Granna said. "The Toymaker would be proud."

Tell-Tale shook her head. "But what am I supposed to do with a kitten in my house? It isn't safe for him."

"Maybe you should move," Granna suggested.

Tell-Tale lowered her head. "Give up my home?" she asked.

"It was made for birds, not a mouse," Granna said. "And definitely not for kittens."

Tell-Tale asked, "You want me to give up my home for Trifles?"

"Is an old birdcage the best home for a kitten?" Granna asked.

Tell-Tale thought about it. "No, I suppose not."



"Then moving is the responsible thing to do," Granna said. "Do you know what it means to be responsible?"

"It means to take care of something," said Tell-Tale.

Granna nodded. "When you took Trifles home, you said you would take care of him."

"I didn't think it would be so hard," Tell-Tale said.

"The most important kinds of responsibilities are often hard," said Granna.

After drinking her tea and saying “thank you” to Granna, Tell-Tale decided to take the long way home.

I don’t want to be responsible, she said to herself. Let someone else be responsible.

She came to the stream and watched it bubble and gurgle over the rocks.

“Hello,” said Overbite the Beaver with loud puffs and grunts. He was carrying large branches.

“What are you doing?” Tell-Tale asked.

“The stream is flooding the Mole family’s home,” he said. “A small dam will take care of that.”

He’s being very responsible, Tell-Tale thought.

“I heard about you helping that kitten,” Overbite said as he walked on. “Well done! It’s not every Toy who would do that.”

Tell-Tale went deep into the Brackenbury Forest to a very lonely place. She walked up to a bush and stared at it for a moment.

She remembered when she first came to the Kind Garden. She was cold and scared and hid under that bush.

“You seemed a lot bigger then,” she said to the bush.

She remembered how Granna had found her and took her home and put her to bed to get warm. Granna took care of her until she could take care of herself.

“But I was no trouble,” she said out loud.

Then she remembered how she had scampered along a shelf and knocked down three plates, two cups, and a bowl. They had all broken on the floor.

Granna had talked to her about being more careful.

“But she didn’t make me leave,” Tell-Tale said out loud again.

“Are you talking to yourself?” a voice asked.

The voice made Tell-Tale jump.

It was Percy the Possum. He was walking with a book in his hand, as usual.

“What do you think of responsibility?” Tell-Tale asked him.

“Responsibility is a very good thing,” Percy said. “I believe it is important for all the other Toys to be responsible.”

“Not you?” she asked.

“I avoid it as often as possible,” Percy said. “It gets in the way of what I want to do. How can I read or think or muse to myself if I’m busy being responsible?”

“That’s true,” Tell-Tale said.

Percy agreed with her agreement. “It’s far better to live for yourself than with responsibilities,” he said.

He began to stroll away but then suddenly stopped and said, “By the way, you should turn off your security alarm. It’s very loud.”

“What security alarm?” Tell-Tale asked.

“The one that sounds like a kitten crying for help,” he said. “It’s annoying.”

Tell-Tale thought it was very curious for an alarm she didn’t have to make a noise like a kitten crying for help.

Just then a small black spider dropped on a tiny thread from a branch overhead and dangled in front of Tell-Tale.

Tell-Tale stepped back. She didn’t like spiders very much.

“I’m Niddy,” the spider said in a tiny voice. “There is a kitten hanging from a perch in our house.”

“Oh no!” Tell-Tale shouted and rushed away.

Percy walked over to Niddy and asked, “Hello, Niddy. Why did Tell-Tale shout like that?”

“There is a *crisis* at home,” Niddy said.

“That will be fun to see,” Percy said and followed Tell-Tale.

“Not for the kitten,” Niddy said.

Questions:

1. **Who in the story was doing a good job of being responsible?** (*Overbite the Beaver.*)
2. **Do you think Percy was right about avoiding responsibility and living for himself?** (*No, God calls us to care for one another.*)