

Read the short story. Then answer each question.

Belling the Cat

One of Aesop's Fables

The Bellingwood Mouse Colony lived in a big house with a large yard and garden. Fancy staircases rose from the ground floor. Nice paintings lined the walls.

The pantry was so full of food that the mice could creep in late at night and take what they wanted. Everything at Bellingwood Manor was the best.



The gardens were no different. Red roses lined marble paths, and large shade trees protected the manor's owners from the sun. The mice loved to play hide-and-seek in the flowers, and they ate well when the children dropped crumbs from their snacks.

It was a good life for the Bellingwood Mouse Colony. Well, it was mostly a good life. There was one very large problem at Bellingwood Manor. It was an orange and white striped problem. It was a furry problem. It was a whiskered problem. It was a problem with sharp claws and teeth. That problem was Ginger the cat.

For most of the day, Ginger dozed under one of the shade trees, but at night she prowled the house and grounds looking for mice. She slipped into corners and under bushes, and the mice had to be extra careful to keep from being caught.



One night, Jasper Mouse, the leader of the Bellingwood Mouse Colony, called a meeting.

“My fellow mice,” he said, “we have a serious problem. Ginger the cat is getting better and better at sniffing us out. It’s getting harder for us to see her coming. We must find a way to track her.”

“We could set up scouts,” said Horace Mouse.

“That’s a good idea,” Jasper replied.

“Those on duty won’t get to find food,” Poppy Mouse said.

“We could trap the cat,” Rose Mouse said.

“That’s a clever idea,” said Jasper.

“How can we build such a large trap?” asked Cooper Mouse.

The mice continued to give their ideas, but each time someone would come up with a reason why the idea would not work. Finally, just as the sun began to rise, a small mouse named Dorn stepped forward.

“I have an idea,” Dorn said. “It may seem a bit simple.”

“What is your idea?” asked Jasper.

“Why don’t we put a bell on the cat’s collar?” Dorn said. “Every time the cat moves, the bell will ring. When we hear the bell ring, we can hide.”



The mice went silent. Dorn was right. It was a simple idea. It was a good idea. Nobody could come up with a reason why it wouldn’t work.

“Let’s do it!” squeaked Jasper! Everyone cheered. Finally, they had a solution to their cat problem.

Papa Mouse, the oldest and wisest of the mice, stepped forward. “Dorn’s idea is a good one,” he said. “Now, who wants to put the bell on the cat?”

None of the mice wanted to volunteer.

Questions:

1. What creatures live in Bellingwood Manor?

2. Who is Ginger?

3. What problem do the mice need to solve?

4. Which mouse suggests putting a bell on the cat?

5. What is the lesson from the story?

Answers:

1. What creatures live in Bellingwood Manor?
The mice of the Bellingwood Mouse Colony and a cat named Ginger live in Bellingwood Manor.
2. Who is Ginger?
Ginger is a cat.
3. What problem do the mice need to solve?
The mice need a way to know when Ginger is close by.
4. Which mouse suggests putting a bell on the cat?
Dorn the mouse suggested putting the bell on the cat.
5. What is the lesson from the story?
Some things are easier to suggest than they are to do.