Marcel goes to Hollywood

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Summary

Marcel and his girlfriend, Céline, are French mice. Marcel is a detective and Céline is a painter. When they go to Hollywood on holiday, they become involved in a dangerous kidnapping. The story is amusing because the mice are much smaller than the people in the story, and nobody knows they are there. Although they are small, they are still able to help rescue young Lois Waldman from her cruel kidnappers.

Pages 1–7: The mice arrive in Hollywood and find their holiday flat in the Waldmans’ home. Shortly after they go to bed, Marcel is woken up by a noise. He sees some men kidnapping the Waldmans’ daughter and finds a note they left behind. He realises that it’s a dangerous situation and he decides to help the Waldmans. The next morning, the two mice follow Arnold Waldman to his office and hear his conversation with the kidnappers. They see Mr Waldman take US$1 million out of the bank and follow him to meet the kidnapper.

Pages 8–15: Mr Waldman meets a kidnapper on a ship and gives him the money. However, the kidnapper tells him this is not enough to get Lois back. He tells Mr Waldman to go home and wait for a phone call. Marcel and Céline decide to stay with the kidnapper and, hiding in the suitcase with the money, they are driven a long way to the kidnappers’ hideout. Later, when the kidnappers fall asleep, Marcel and Céline climb out of the suitcase to find Lois. Next, they hide the kidnappers’ guns and steal their phone. Marcel calls the police who arrive quickly at the house and rescue Lois. The kidnappers are taken away. Back at the flat the next day, Marcel and Céline see Lois return home. Now their holiday can really begin!

Background and themes

Different worlds: Marcel and Céline have a special mouse holiday flat in Hollywood. It is actually part of the Waldmans’ house. The mice share the world of humans, but the humans are unaware of the mouse world. The mice are clever and have human emotions and ideas, which makes the story charming and humorous.

Power and size: Marcel and Céline are tiny creatures with little physical power. In comparison, the kidnappers are strong young men who forcefully take Lois from her home and have guns. But the mice prove that however small or insignificant we may seem, we can use knowledge and intelligence to beat the most physically powerful enemy.

Values: The Waldmans value Lois’s safety above everything else. Arnold does not hesitate to give US$1 million to the kidnappers for her release. The kidnappers are selfish and value money more than other people’s feelings. Marcel and Céline value Lois’s safety above their own holiday. The values the characters have influence their actions and shape the plot. This is equally true in real life.

Discussion activities

Before reading

1 Discuss: Ask students to look at the front cover of the book. Who is the mouse? Where is he? What nationality is he? What kind of character is he? What does he want to do on holiday?

2 Group work: Put students into groups. Give them five minutes to choose a famous animal story. Each group should prepare a few sentences about the story – but without using the name of the story or the names of key characters. Each group takes it in turns to read out their sentences to the class. The class guesses the story. Alternatively, ask students to work individually and to write a few sentences about their favourite animal story.

After reading

3 Role play: Put students into pairs. Ask them to choose one of these numbered panels from the story: Panel 6, Panel 13, Panel 20 or Panel 25. Students prepare a conversation between the two characters in the picture. They should use their imagination and try to include details which are not in the story. Give students time to practise before asking confident pairs to role play their dialogues in front of the class.