

"The Mouse, the Crow and the Silver Key." by Yohan Daza.

Discussion Points for the Classroom

- **Defining Bravery:** The story notes that "fear did not mean he couldn't be brave". Ask students to discuss a time they felt scared like the mouse but decided to do something anyway. How did the mouse show bravery even when his heart was "pounding like it might burst"?
- **The Value of the Underdog:** The mouse's brothers constantly underestimate him because he is the smallest. Discuss why his small size was actually an advantage when he needed to find the silver key in the barn. How can being different or "small" be a strength in real life?
- **Building Unlikely Friendships:** The crow admits that crows are "not very friendly by nature," yet the mouse chooses to ask, "Are you my friend?". Talk about why the mouse reached out to someone who had previously mocked him and stolen his food.
- **Everyone Has a Role:** The crow tells the mouse that "Everyone has a part to play in this world". How did the mouse's specific role—finding the key—change the fate of all the animals in the field?
- **Breaking the Noise:** The crow tells the mouse he needs to find a way to "break through the noise" to be heard. Discuss what this might mean metaphorically. How can we make our voices heard when things feel loud, dark, or overwhelming?

Creative and Curriculum Activities

1. The "Hidden Treasures" Scavenger Hunt In the story, the mouse explores the old barn to find "hidden treasures and adventures just his size".

- **Activity:** Have students look around the classroom or schoolyard for a "small treasure"—something usually ignored (like a unique pebble, a colorful leaf, or a shiny scrap).
- **Writing Prompt:** Have them write a short paragraph about why their item is "worthy of a crow" and how it might be used to help someone.

2. Visualizing the "Living Storm" The story describes the gathering crows as a "vast black mantle" and a "living storm" of shifting wings.

- **Art Project:** Use charcoal, black paint, or torn tissue paper to create a collage of the "creeping darkness".
- **Contrast:** Then, have students add a bright silver key or a flash of yellow "sunlight" to represent the moment the mouse and crow broke through the darkness.

3. Character Perspective Journals The mouse's brothers go from laughing at him to looking at him with "eyes wide with wonder".

- Activity: Ask students to write a short journal entry from the perspective of one of the brothers. They should describe what it was like to watch the "smallest hero" lead a flock of thousands to bring back the sun.

4. Nature Science: Curiosity and Intelligence The crow mentions that his species is "very curious and intelligent" and attracted to "shiny things".

- Research: Have librarians help students find non-fiction books or articles about crow intelligence and mouse habitats (like the willow trees or barns mentioned in the text). Compare the fictional behavior in the story to real-world animal facts.