

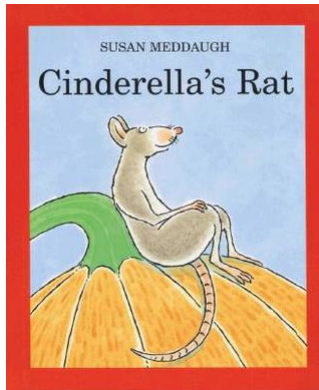


CRUCHLEY'S COLLECTION

Diana Cruchley is an award-winning educator and author, who has taught at elementary and secondary levels. Her workshops are practical, include detailed handouts, and are always enthusiastically received.

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CINDERELLA'S RAT



Andrea Cheng, Walker and Co., NY, ©2003, ISBN 0-8027-8831-9

Cinderella's Rat becomes the coachman for her trip to the ball. During the ball his sister appears and a boy coachman assumes that she is a girl that has been turned into a rat. They take her to a wizard who makes several errors and finally creates a girl with the voice of a dog. The happy ending is that the rat's sister is great at scaring cats away.

THE GENERALIZATION ENDING

Cinderella's Rat opens with the following lines:

*"I was born a rat.
I expected to be a rat all my days.
But life is full of surprises."*

The book ends with the lines:

*"Now I live in a cottage with my family.
Food is plentiful and cats are scarce.
Life is full of surprises. You might as well get used to it."*

This is a nice example of a type of ending which you can teach students. The easiest way is to have them write a series of anecdotes and at the end write what they learned from that experience in a short line. During "RE-VISIONING" they can re-write the opening to create a line representing the life lesson, which they repeat at the end of the tale.

A LITTLE BRAINSTORMING

For fun, ask students to brainstorm animated films about mice or rats. They may come up with: *Ratatouille*, *The Tale of Despereaux*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Cinderella*, *Stuart Little*, *Ben*, *Steamboat Willie*, *The Great Mouse Detective*, *Wilar*, *The Rescuers*, *An American Tale*, *The Secret of Nihm*, *Mousehunt*, etc. What are the common "human" characteristics of most of these animals?

THE RANT

Rick Mercer used to provide a RANT on CBC's *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. He has continued on *The Mercer Report*. He selects a topic and "rant on" in a humorous way about that topic for a period of time. Students writing a rant could choose a fairy tale and then write a RANT complaining about something from the point of view of that character. The example that follows is from the fairy tale Cinderella, from the point of view of the fairy godmother.



JOURNALING IDEAS

3 ideas for journal writing provides choices for students:

1. If I could be an animal for one day, I would choose a _____ and during that day I would _____.
2. "Life is full of surprises." A time when the unexpected happened.
3. Cinderella's Rat can't tell the truth to any humans in the story. Tell a few stories about you and "the truth."

Cinderella's Fairy Godmother Rants



Sometimes I don't know why I even try. There I was, just sitting around in the clouds, planning on having a bagel and some Philadelphia Cream Cheese, when I heard my godchild Cinderella sobbing in the cinders. One of the things I have always wondered about her is, "Why does she sit in the cinders?" It's so messy and dirty. Anyway, even though I had been looking forward to my bagel, I popped right on down.

So, I understood the problem right away - the stepsisters had ruined her dress and she couldn't go to the ball. Blah, blah, blah. Well, my wand wasn't really charged up for this much work, but, if I do say so myself, I conjured up an amazing dress. The problem was that the magic would expire at midnight - I warned her, and I don't want to complain but I think she is quite vain. She was smiling at her reflection in the glass slippers and I was pretty sure she wasn't paying enough attention to my warning.

When I think back on it, I should have just zapped her to the ball, but no. I had to go showing off, creating a coach, a coachman, and a footman from a pumpkin, a rat, and some mice. Of course they were REALLY annoyed, and I am scheduled for a hearing before the RAT, MICE, AND RODENTS UNION, so what I mean is, you always end up paying for it later when you do something too quickly.

Anyway, the next day there's Cinderella sobbing in the cinders again, clutching one of the glass slippers and waiting, again, for someone to rescue her. She was at the ball all night, and did she even think to give the prince her name and address? No. After the ball, does she write him a nice little thank you note from "the girl with the glass slippers, Cinderella, living at 123 Mockingbird Lane?" No. She's just waiting for the prince to travel all over the kingdom looking for someone to fit the slipper. I don't really want to mention this about her, but really...how many sizes of feet can there be? The prince could end up married to a troll with a size 4 foot before he gets to her.