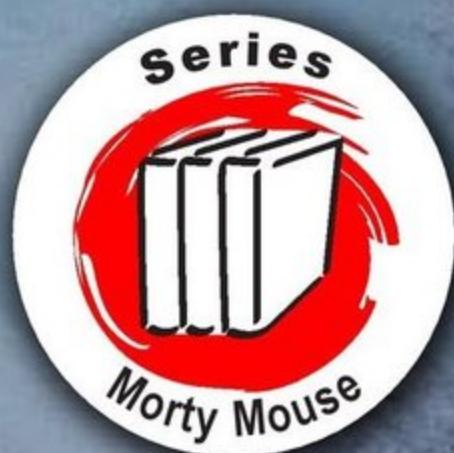


LEVELED BOOKS

Morty the Meany



Written by Kathy Hoggan • Illustrated by David Opie

www.readinga-z.com

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Focus Question

What lesson does Morty learn about being angry?

Words to Know

annoyance
apologetic
dejected
humiliation
indignation

mortified
overcome
sheepishly
sulked

Morty the Meany
Level S Leveled Book
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Correlation

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Chapter One

Morty started his morning on the wrong foot. He skipped his chores to play the newest computer game, Mega Mouse Maze. Mother insisted that Morty pause the game for breakfast, but Morty was in the middle of a level. *I can't stop now*, Morty thought, but Mother scampered over and switched off the monitor.

"That's enough," she said sternly. "No more computer privileges for a week."

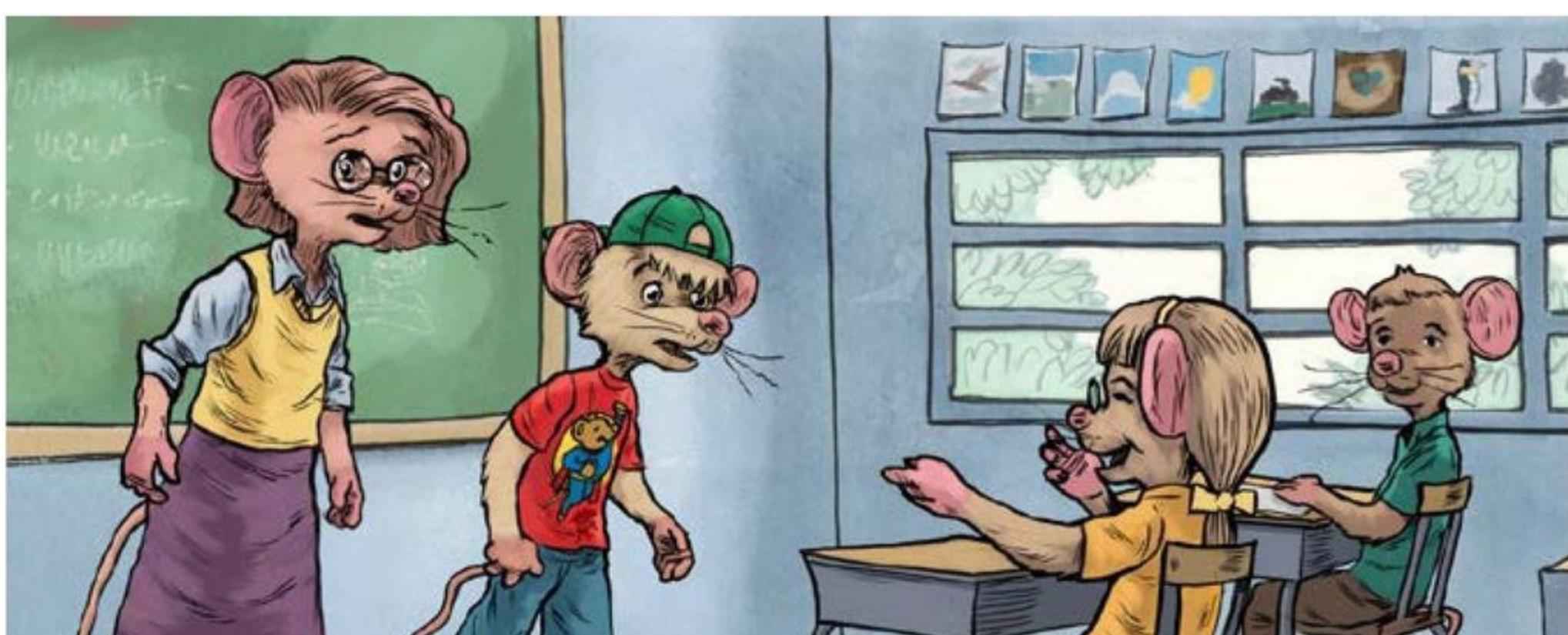
Morty felt irritated. *She never cares about what is important to ME*, Morty thought. He snatched up his backpack and stormed off to school alone, without saying goodbye.

Matters turned worse during math, when Miss Snickerwhisker requested that Morty solve a problem on the board. Morty thought he had the answer, but Miss Snickerwhisker corrected him in front of everyone. As he returned to his seat in shame, Margie pointed out a stain on his Mega Mouse shirt and the class dissolved into laughter.

"I'd rather have a dirty shirt than that ugly face," Morty snapped.

"Morty!" Miss Snickerwhisker exclaimed. "I won't stand for that behavior. Apologize to Margie right now." Morty had always gotten along with Margie, but he didn't feel very apologetic.

"Fine, I'm sorry," he grumbled sourly. Margie sat quietly and nodded her head.



Later, Morty realized that he had forgotten his homework when he charged off to school in a huff. In Miss Snickerwhisker's class, fewer than five late assignments each week meant they were rewarded with a Popcorn Party on Friday. Morty's was the fifth overdue homework.

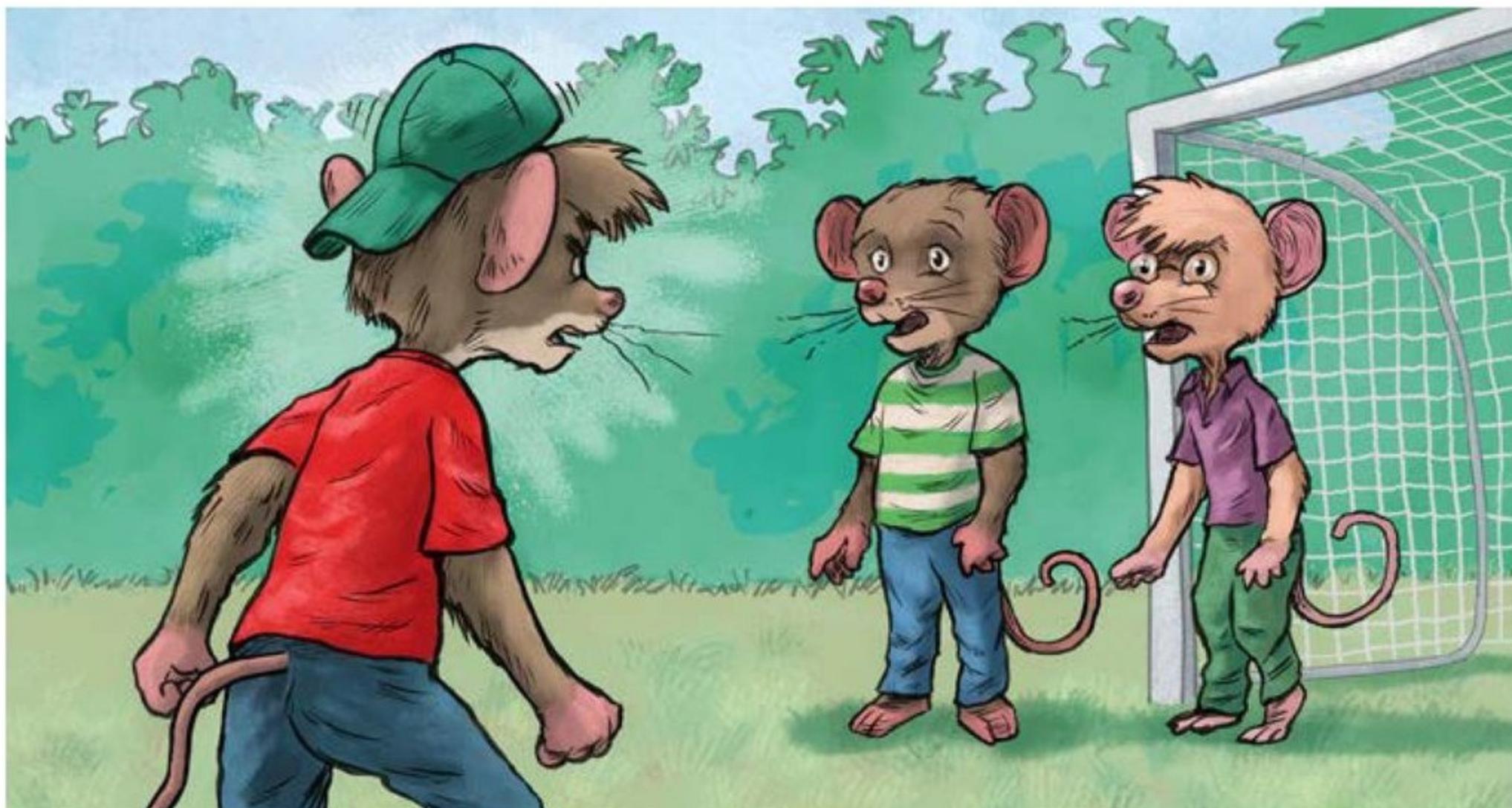
"But it took *forever* to finish my homework!" Morty protested, "It's not fair!" He was **mortified** to disappoint his classmates.

During recess, a **dejected** Morty sat at a picnic table and **sulked**, so nobody dared to approach him. *Everyone hates me*, he thought with **indignation**. His ears burned and his whiskers twitched.

Fred and Ben urged Morty to join them at soccer. "Come on, Morty—you big, lazy grump!" Ben shouted with a grin.

"Yeah, stop being a whiner and get over here!" Fred hollered.





Laughter erupted around Morty, and his face grew hot with **humiliation**. *How could Fred and Ben tease me?* he thought as he clenched his hands.

Morty was seeing red. He stood abruptly and raced toward them. “Shut up!” he screamed with spite, “Or should I shut you up myself?”

Fred and Ben gaped at Morty in astonishment. “Take it easy, Morty,” Ben said.

“You don’t have to play,” Fred muttered. “We were only kidding.”

“Whatever you say!” Morty barked. He crossed his arms, marched off, and stomped on anthills by himself until the bell rang.

Chapter Two

When Morty got home, he usually loved to play with his younger sister, Mary, but he knew that today she would completely drive him up the wall. He scrambled upstairs to his room before she could pester him.

Later, Mary knocked on his door. "Morty? Do you want to play Mega Mouse Maze?" she asked.

"I'm not allowed. Go away," Morty snarled.

Mary opened the door and inched into his room. "We can play something else," she offered. Morty glared at her.

"I said get out! I don't want to play with you," he said.



Mary scowled in **annoyance**. “I’m going to tell Mom that you’re being mean. Then you’ll be in huge trouble.”

“Just leave me alone!” Morty bellowed as he leaped from his bed to push Mary out the door.



Morty accidentally shoved Mary too hard, and she tumbled down in the hallway with a thud. When Morty saw her eyes flood with tears, he was **overcome** with shame. Before he started crying too, he slammed his door shut and threw himself on his bed.



Chapter Three

Morty gazed at the Mega Mouse poster on his ceiling. *Today was terrible, and everything I did made it worse,* Morty thought sullenly.

“Morty?” Mother began as she entered his room and sat on the edge of his bed. She continued in a serious voice, “Mary told me what happened between you two. You’ve been so angry today.”

Morty swallowed hard. “I’ve been having a really bad day,” he revealed. “I couldn’t help how mad I got at everything, and nobody understood.”

“Would you like to explain what’s troubling you?” Mother coaxed.

Morty blurted out everything that went wrong during his dreadful day: Ben and Fred’s teasing, Miss Snickerwhisker scolding him, and his tardy assignment.

“Hmm, it sounds like you felt embarrassed and alone, and like you weren’t being treated fairly,” she suggested. “I bet you didn’t think those feelings could lead to anger.”

Morty sighed, “I guess not.”

Mother held his paw. “It’s okay to be angry sometimes. Everyone loses their temper, but anger doesn’t solve anyone’s problems.”

“When you start feeling angry,” she continued, “pause and think about what’s happening for a moment—you can even count to ten. This will help you relax and figure out what is really causing your anger. Once you know that, you can try to find a solution.”

"Well, I suppose I could have stopped to think about how Ben and Fred were teasing me," Morty admitted. "They were only trying to cheer me up."

"Exactly. You've already solved one problem you had earlier," Mother said. "Sometimes you can't change or fix what is making you mad. Then the sensible thing is to set aside your anger. If you don't, you will only hurt yourself and those around you."

"I feel guilty about Mary," Morty said. "I really hurt her."

"She will forgive you, Morty. So will everyone else," Mother said as she kissed Morty's head right between his ears. Morty was determined to right his wrongs. He understood what he needed to do.





Chapter Four

The following day at school, Morty apologized to Fred, Ben, and Margie; then he promised Miss Snickerwhisker that his conduct would improve.

At recess, Morty played soccer, but he wasn't doing his best. The more goals he missed, the angrier he became. Then Morty remembered what Mother advised, took a water break, and paused to consider what was bothering him. *I'm not playing very well, he thought. I'm a bit embarrassed. Maybe I should just tell them how I'm feeling.*

Morty scurried back onto the field and huddled with his teammates. “I’m having a lousy game,” he said **sheepishly**.

“We all have our moments—I’ll just have to play twice as good,” Fred said with a wink.

“Try four times,” Morty added, and they all laughed.

After the huddle, Morty didn’t feel embarrassed anymore. He didn’t succeed in scoring even one goal, but he had an awesome time with his friends.

When he returned home, he gave Mary a giant hug and explained how sorry he felt. Morty joined her in her favorite activity—playing dolls—and even contributed his superhero action figures.





That evening when Morty was in bed waiting to be tucked in, he examined Mega Mouse flying through the atmosphere. *Do superheroes get angry, too?* he wondered.

Mother interrupted his thought with a peck on his cheek.

"Mom," Morty held her soft paw. "You were right. It helps to stop and focus on why I'm getting mad."

She smiled and squeezed Morty's paw. "It isn't always smooth sailing, but you're shaping up to be a strong mouse, Mega Morty."

Glossary

annoyance (<i>n.</i>)	the state or feeling of being irritated; a source of irritation (p. 9)
apologetic (<i>adj.</i>)	being sorry and showing regret for a mistake or an action (p. 5)
dejected (<i>adj.</i>)	feeling sad or depressed because of a failure or loss (p. 6)
humiliation (<i>n.</i>)	the state of being completely embarrassed, uneasy, or self-conscious (p. 7)
indignation (<i>n.</i>)	anger or annoyance caused by something that seems wrong or unfair (p. 6)
mortified (<i>adj.</i>)	very embarrassed (p. 6)
overcome (<i>adj.</i>)	strongly affected by one's feelings; overwhelmed (p. 9)
sheepishly (<i>adv.</i>)	in an embarrassed or shy way (p. 14)
sulked (<i>v.</i>)	was in a bad mood due to disappointment or annoyance (p. 6)

Morty the Meany

A Reading A-Z Level S Leveled Book

Word Count: 1,201

Connections

Writing

When have you felt angry? What helped you feel better? Write a letter to Morty describing your experience and giving him advice about how to deal with his anger in the future.

Social Studies

Work in a group to write and present a skit that demonstrates how to be a good friend when someone is feeling angry or having a bad day.

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