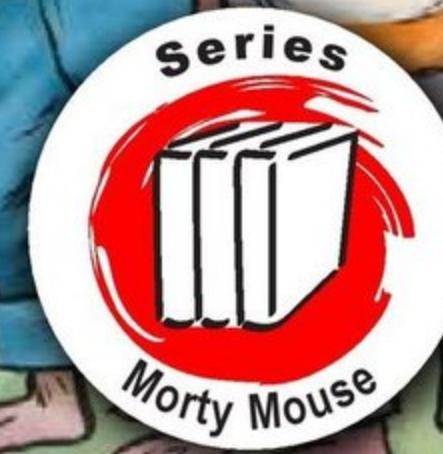
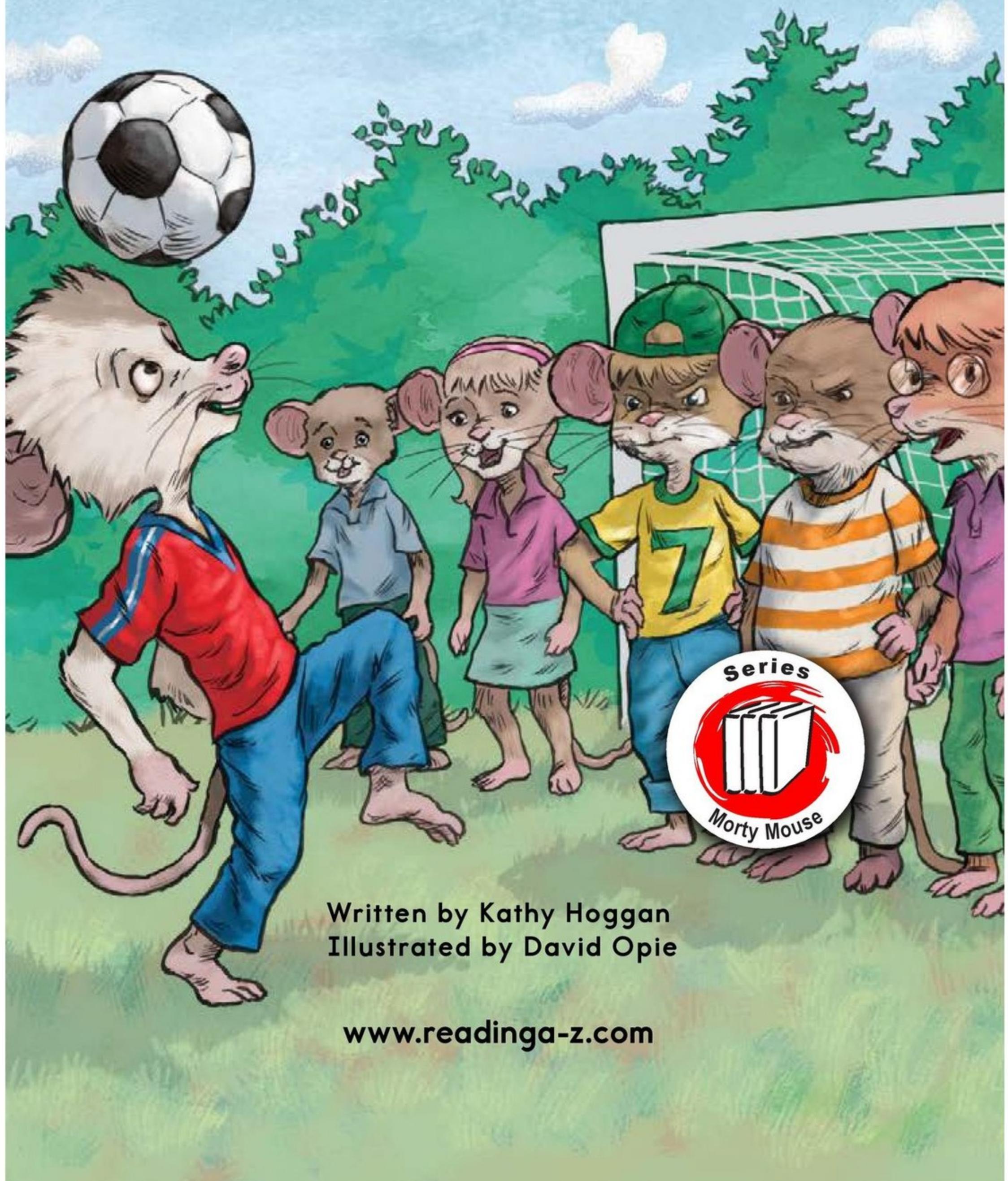


LEVELED BOOK • R

# Morty and Charming Theo



Written by Kathy Hoggan  
Illustrated by David Opie

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## Focus Question

What lesson does Morty learn from Theo?

## Words to Know

admired

awe

embarrassment

jealousy

putrid

scampered

scoffed

sneered

snickered

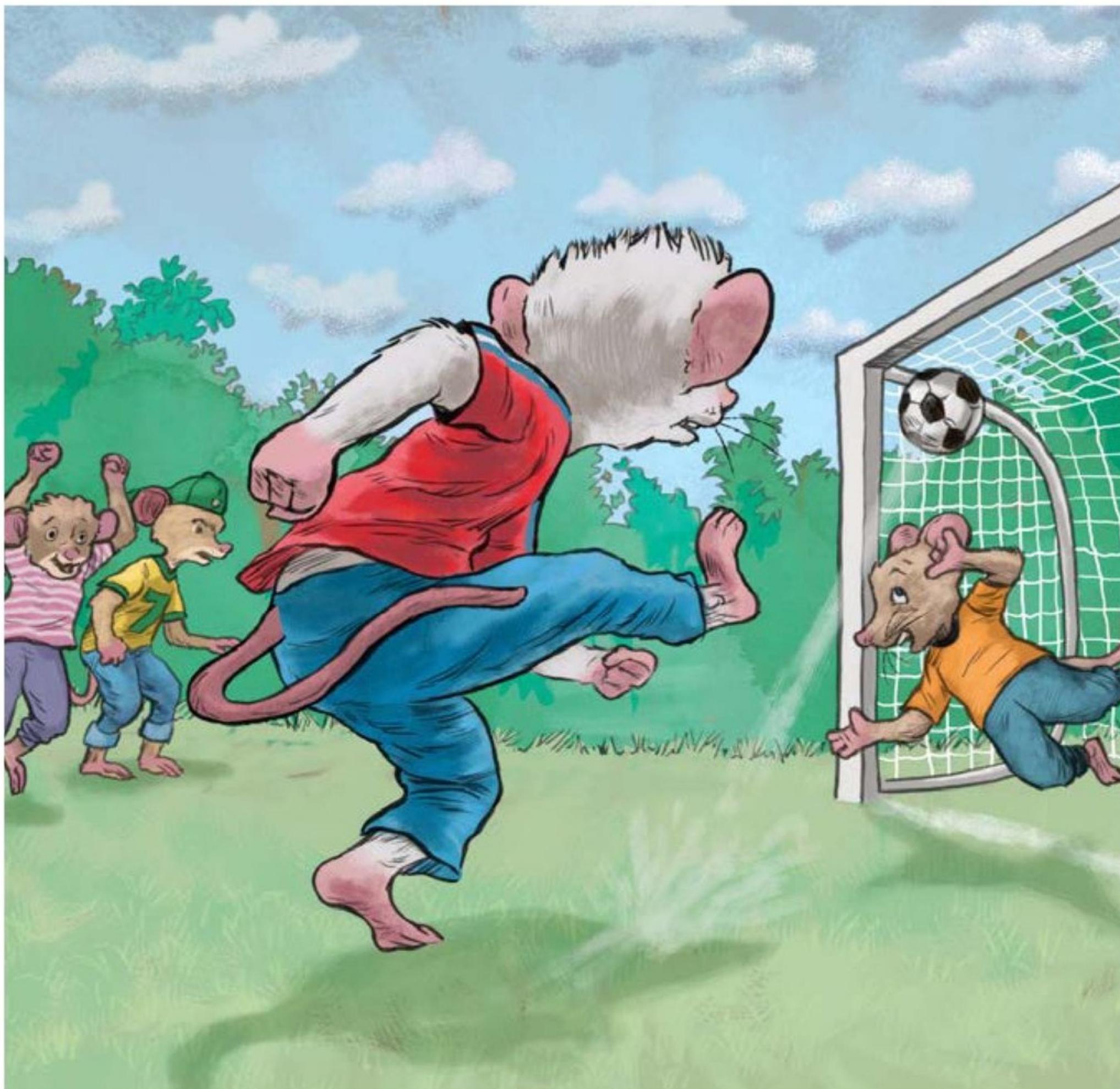
Morty and Charming Theo  
Level R Leveled Book  
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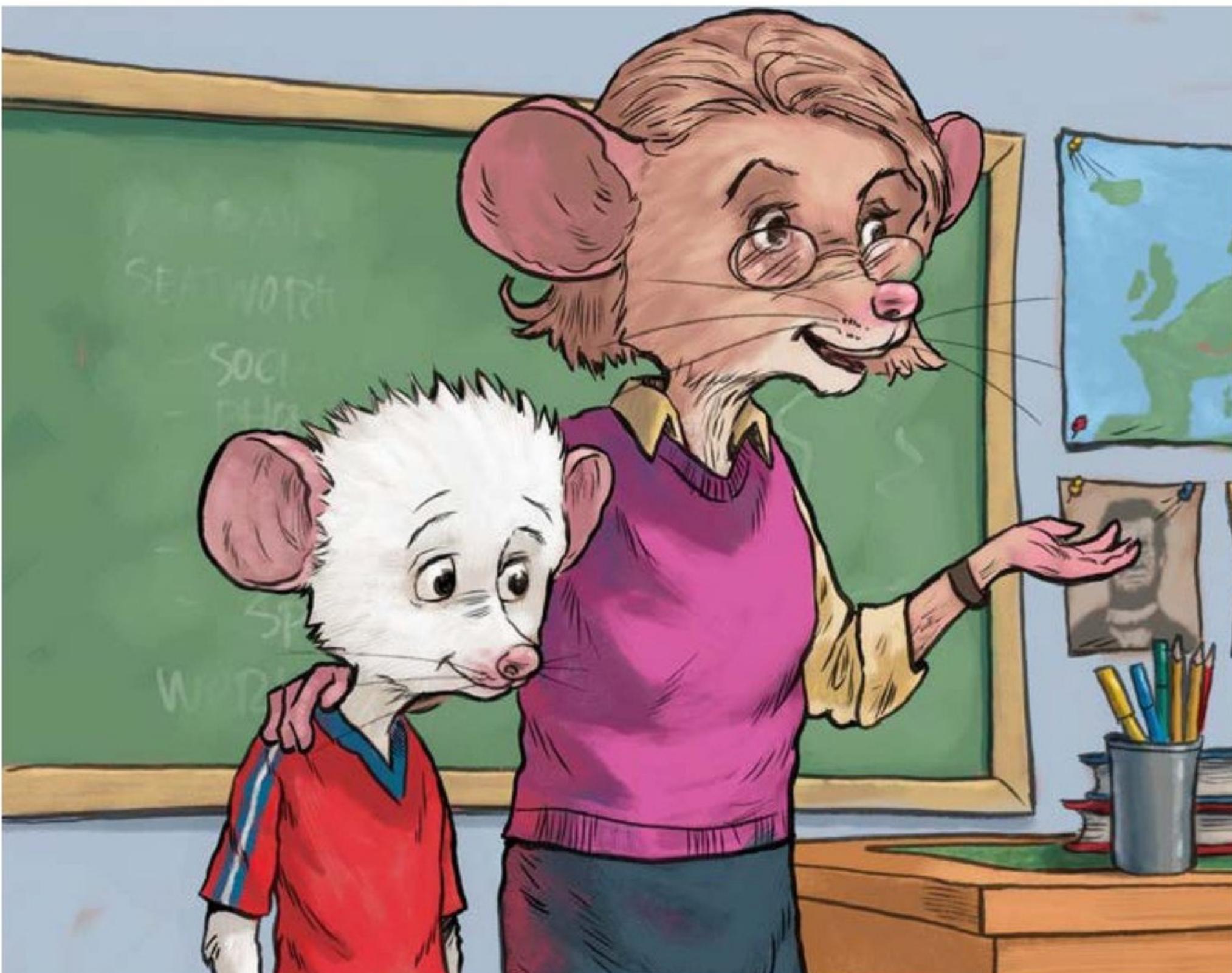
### Correlation

LEVEL R	
Fountas & Pinnell	N
Reading Recovery	30
DRA	30



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## Monday—The New Mouse

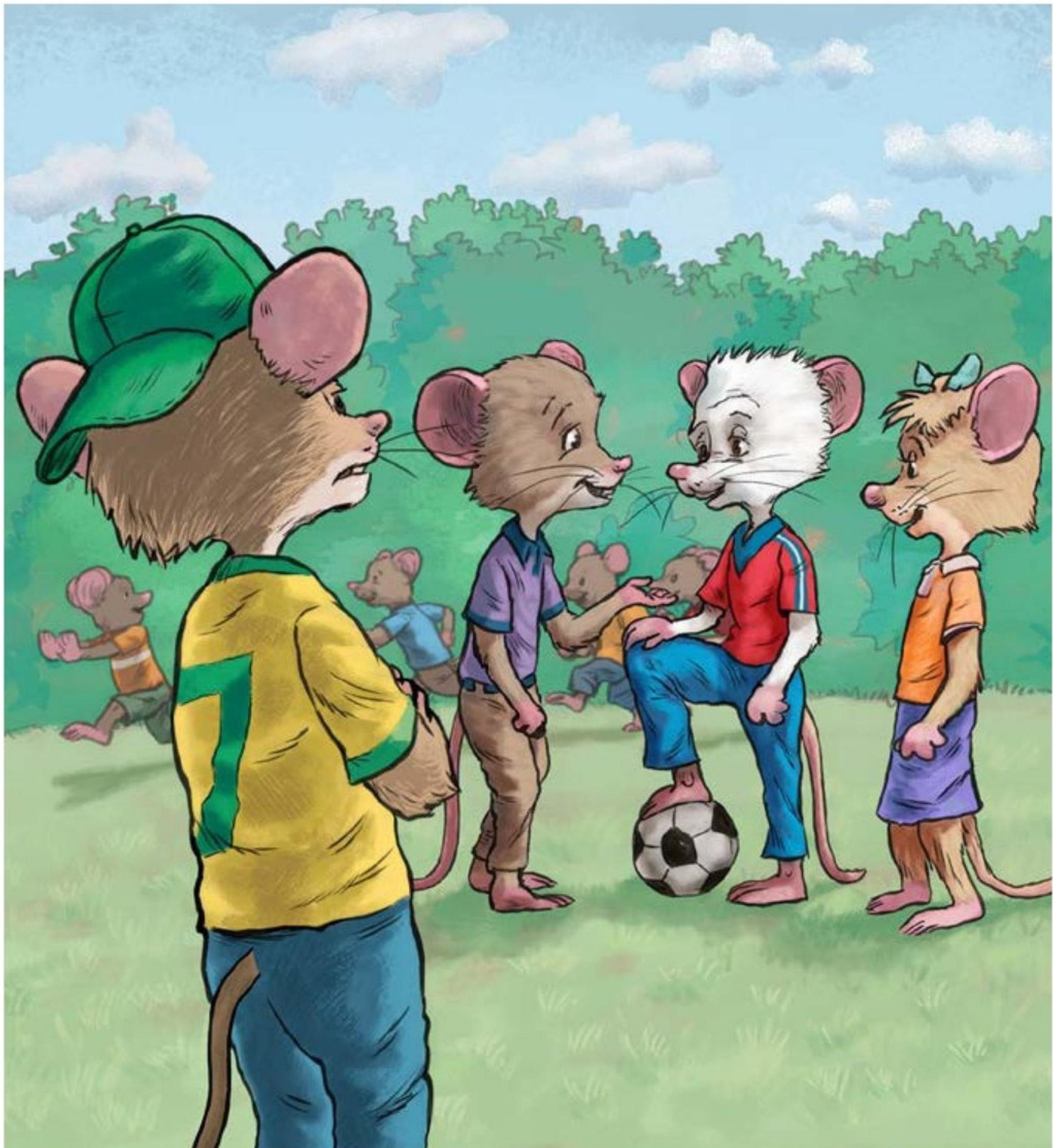
“Meet our new student!” Miss Snickerwhisker announced. “Theo has just moved here from Holland.” She pointed to a small country on the map of Europe. “Let’s all welcome him,” she added. The new mouse said hello and took his seat.

During recess, the other students showed Theo around and **admired** his soccer skills. Everyone was gathered around Theo except Morty, Ben, and Fred. They weren’t used to being ignored.

"I don't see what's so great about him anyway," Morty grumbled.

"No worries," Fred replied. "He may be the newest mouse, but we're still the coolest."

Morty and Ben agreed. "Theo won't be big news for long," Morty said.



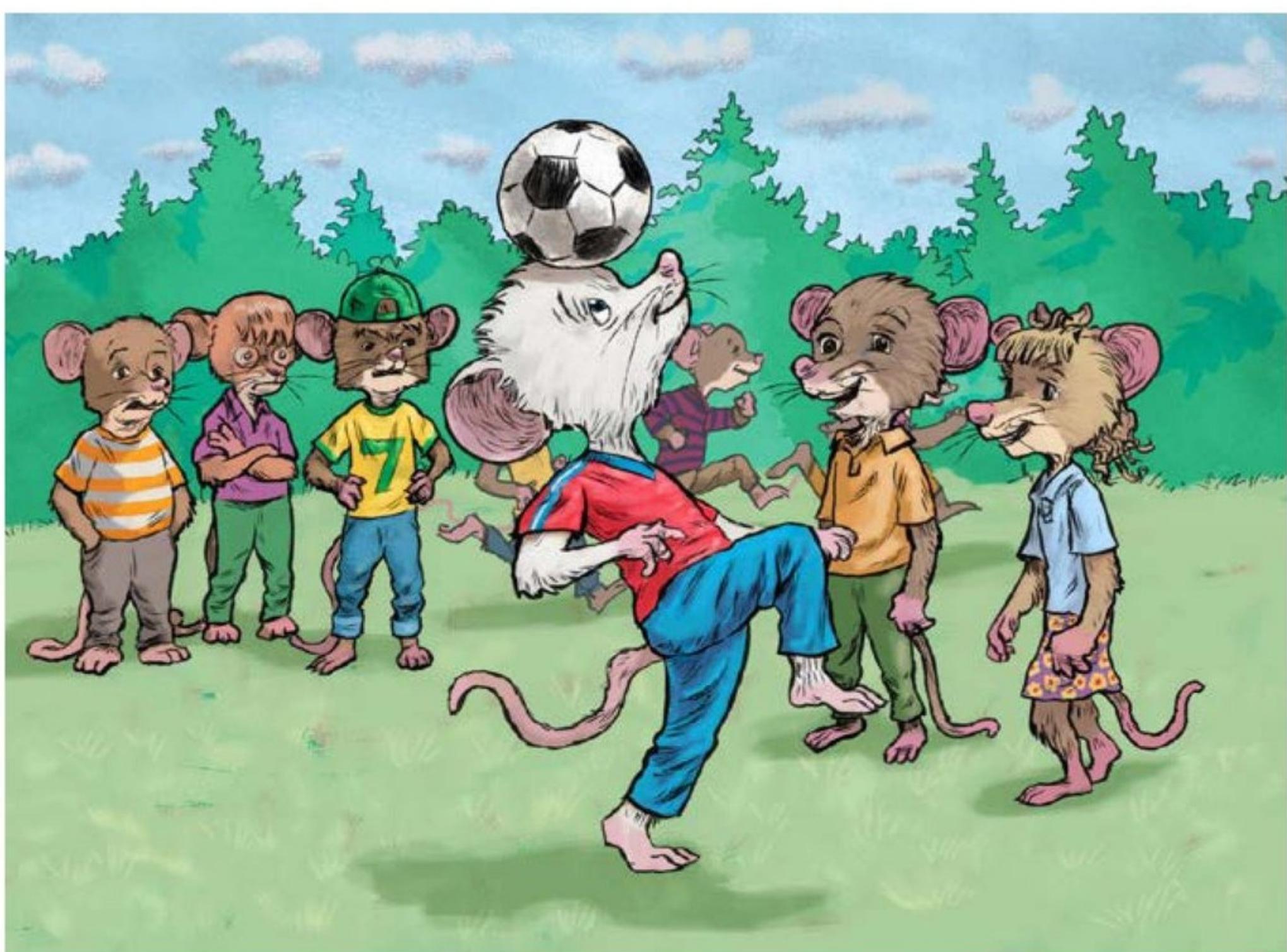
## Tuesday with Theo

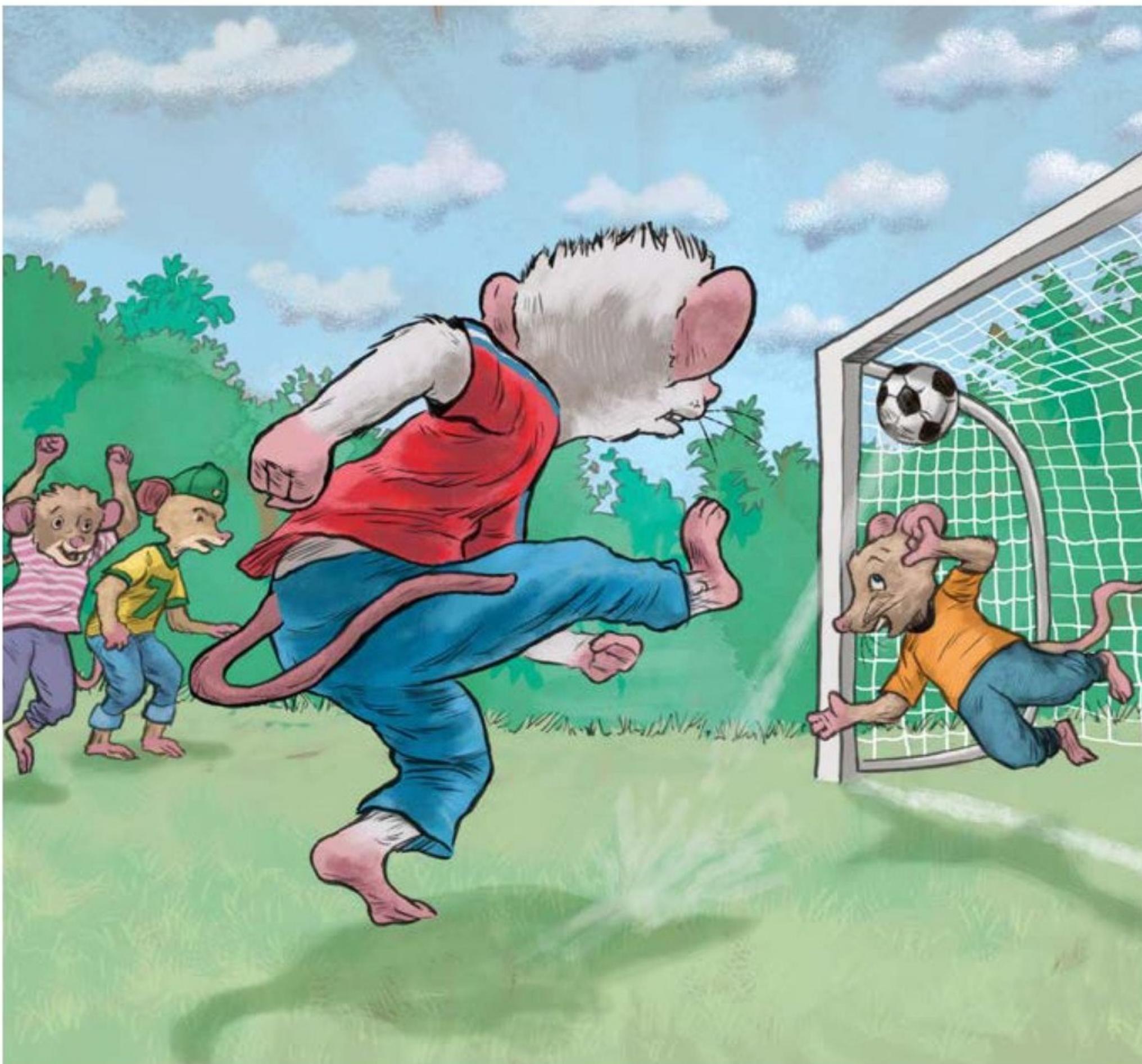
At afternoon recess, Morty, Ben, and Fred were the first ones on the soccer field. They were always given first pick of the players.

Theo arrived and started to juggle the soccer ball with his feet. He even balanced the ball on his head. The students crowded around in awe.

"Any team with Theo will be unbeatable!" one mouse exclaimed.

"I want to be on Theo's team," said another.





They formed teams and started to play.  
Theo was as skilled as everyone thought.

“We can’t compete with those moves!” Fred groaned when Theo scored another goal.

When the bell rang, everyone headed back to their classrooms. Morty overheard a few mice say, “Theo is the coolest mouse in the whole school!”

*Not if I can help it, Morty thought.*

## Wednesday Without Theo

Wednesday during gym class, Coach Mack announced, “Remember, you need a permission slip to play in the soccer game after school.”

Morty smirked and showed the slip he’d stolen from Theo’s box to Ben and Fred. “Theo won’t be showing off at the game today,” he whispered.

Theo looked puzzled. “When were the slips given out?” he asked.

“You didn’t get one?” Morty **snickered**. “That’s too bad.” He waved the slip behind his back as Fred and Ben tried not to burst out laughing.



When school ended, the mice chattered about the game. “We’re going to run as fast as Mega Mouse on the field,” Fred bragged.

Theo’s ears perked up. “Do you play the new Mega Mouse video game?” he asked. “I’m on level twelve.”

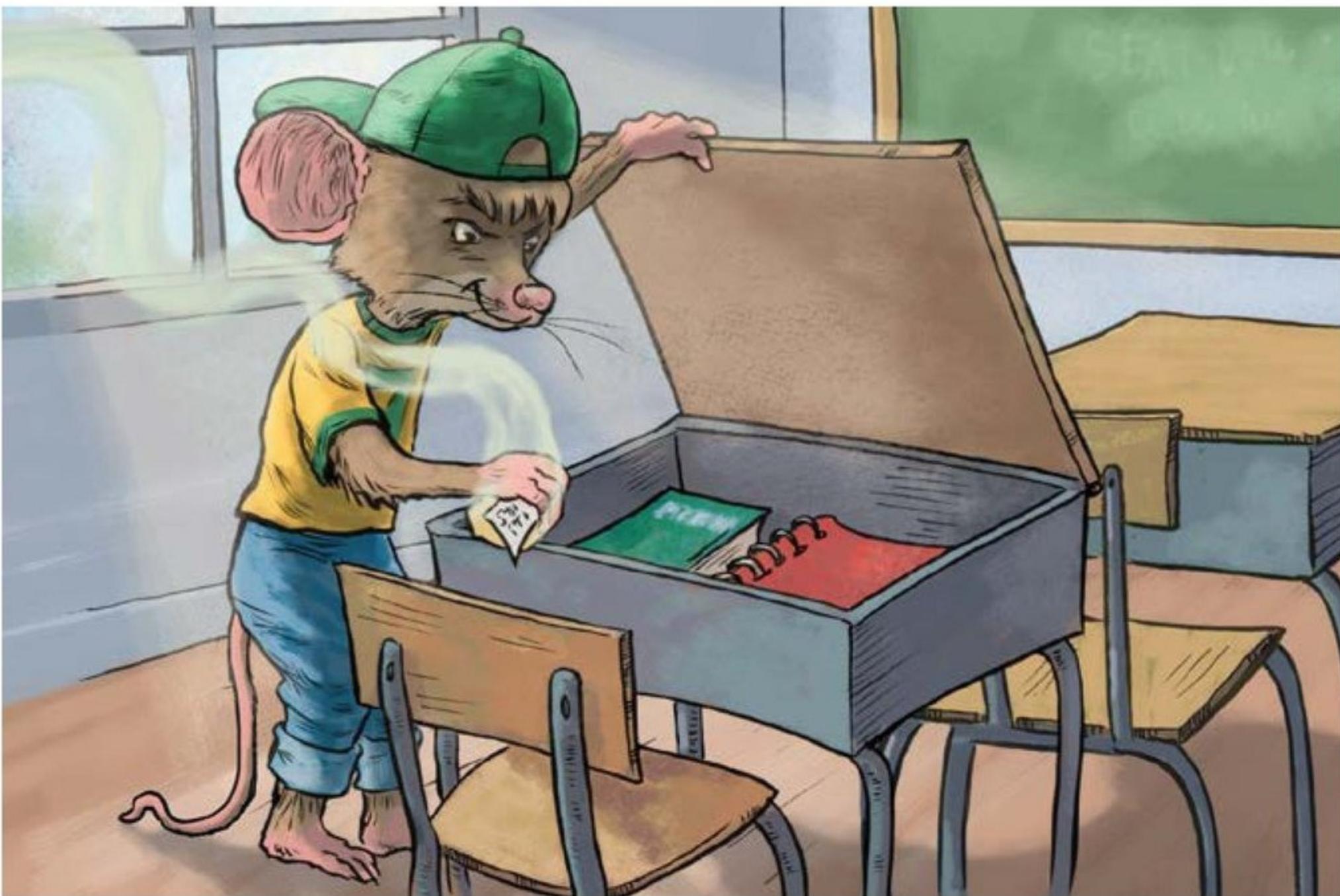
Morty, Ben, and Fred glared at Theo. “We beat twelve ages ago,” Morty **scoffed**.

In fact, they had only made it to level thirteen the weekend before.

“Oh,” Theo laughed, “I suppose I’m not a very good gamer.”

“No kidding,” Morty **sneered**. “We only play with the best.” Theo blushed as Morty, Fred, and Ben left the table. Everyone **scampered** to the soccer field except Theo, who walked sadly to the bus.

Even with Theo gone, the others were still talking about his skills. *I need a way for everyone to see that he’s a loser,* Morty thought. He used his nose for trouble to make a plan.



## Stinky Thursday

Morty got up early on Thursday morning. Reaching in the fridge, he grabbed a stinky chunk of forgotten cheese. It was green in color, with blackish-purple spots and patches of white fuzz. Morty tucked it in his backpack, scurried into the classroom before anyone else arrived, and scribbled a note: *Stinky lunch for stinky Theo.* He placed the note over the nasty chunk and stuck it in Theo's desk.

By the time the bell rang, the awful smell was everywhere! “Yuck!” “Sick!” “Rotten!” “Gross!” the students squeaked, holding their paws over their noses.

Miss Snickerwhisker held a handkerchief over her nose. “Smells like someone forgot to take their lunchbox home,” she said. “Clear everything out of your desks.”

Theo placed a few papers on his chair before he pulled out the **putrid** cheese. Morty watched him read the note. *Were Theo's eyes watering from the smell or the note?* Morty wondered.

Theo brought the stinky bundle to Miss Snickerwhisker.

“I guess I forgot this cheese in my desk. I’m sorry,” Theo muttered. He crumpled the note in his hand.

“That’s all right, Theo,” Miss Snickerwhisker replied. “It was just a mistake.” The class stared in silence as Theo returned to his desk.

“No wonder he has such stinky breath,” Morty said quietly so Miss Snickerwhisker wouldn’t hear. The mice around him giggled, and Theo grew red with **embarrassment**.

Morty was satisfied. *No one likes a smelly mouse*, he thought with delight.

## Friends on Friday

The next morning before school, Mother called, "Morty! There's someone here for you!" Morty scampered to the door and saw Theo.

"Good morning," Theo said nervously.  
"May I walk with you to school?"

"I don't know . . . I have to meet Ben and Fred," Morty said as he started to leave.

Theo walked with him. "You're lucky to have best friends," Theo said with a sigh. "We move a lot, so I've never had any for long."

*What a loser,* Morty thought, but he couldn't help but feel a little guilty about picking on Theo.





"I know you put the cheese in my desk,"  
Theo said.

"Why didn't you tell on me?" Morty asked.

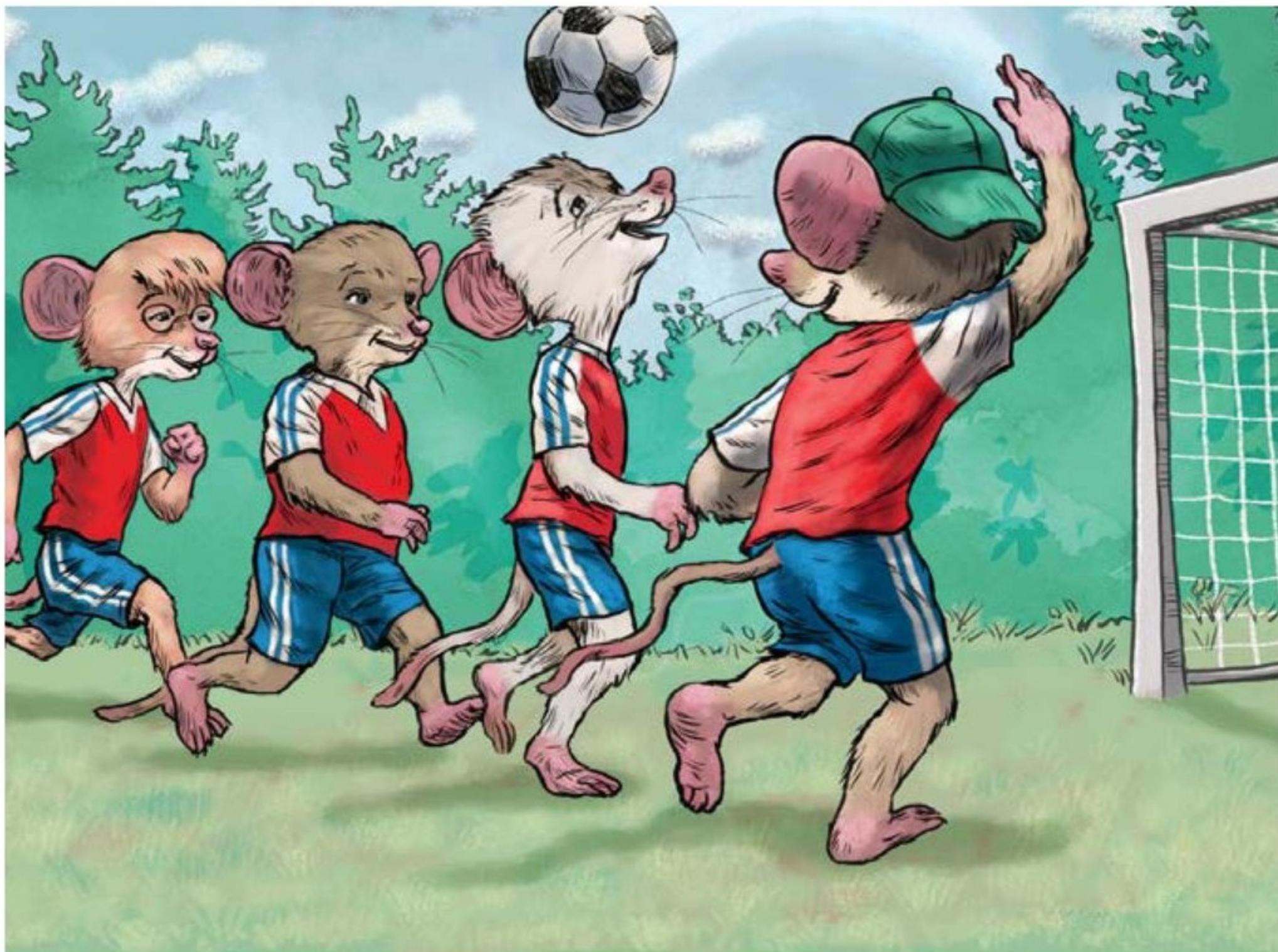
Theo took a soccer ball out of his backpack and started kicking it as they walked. "You don't like me," he said, "but I don't understand why. I wanted to be your friend because it seems as if we enjoy the same things. If you don't want to be my friend, that's cool, but I hope we can at least be nice to each other."

Morty felt awful. He had no real reason to dislike Theo. Along with charm and soccer moves, Morty realized that Theo had a quality he really admired—he was forgiving. Theo knew how to be a friend.

Morty remembered when he was younger and his mother talked about being “green with envy.” She told him that **jealousy** is a bad feeling that can hurt everyone. What Morty remembered was *green* and a word that sounded like *jelly*.

Morty finally realized why he couldn’t stand Theo—Morty was buried in slimy green “jelly.”





Morty looked down at his feet. "I was really mean to you," he admitted. "I shouldn't have been. You're not so bad." He patted Theo on the back.

Theo smiled. "It's okay," he said. "So we're good?"

"We're good," Morty agreed.

By Saturday, Morty, Ben, and Fred had become Morty, Ben, Fred, and Theo. They were always the most popular mice, but with Theo in their group, Morty, Ben, and Fred soon became kinder mice.

## Glossary

<b>admired</b> (v.)	respected, appreciated, or warmly approved of a person or a quality (p. 4)
<b>awe</b> (n.)	mixed feelings of wonder, fear, and respect (p. 6)
<b>embarrassment</b> (n.)	a state of feeling awkward, uneasy, or self-conscious (p. 11)
<b>jealousy</b> (n.)	a mean feeling toward someone because he or she has something one wants (p. 14)
<b>putrid</b> (adj.)	rotten and giving off a foul smell (p. 11)
<b>scampered</b> (v.)	ran or moved in a playful or lively way (p. 9)
<b>scoffed</b> (v.)	showed dislike of something or someone in a mean or mocking way (p. 9)
<b>sneered</b> (v.)	showed a strong feeling of dislike, often by smiling or laughing in a mean way (p. 9)
<b>snickered</b> (v.)	laughed in a quiet or partly covered way, often to show disrespect (p. 8)

# Morty and Charming Theo

A Reading A-Z Level R Leveled Book

Word Count: 1,059

## Connections

### Writing and Art

Have you ever felt jealous like Morty?

Write about what made you feel jealous and how you handled that emotion.

### Social Studies

Work with a group to create a skit about bullying. In your skit, show how to best handle someone who is acting like a bully and why it is important to treat everyone kindly.

The logo for Reading A-Z features the word "Reading" in a large, bold, red sans-serif font. The letter "R" is stylized with a small sun-like shape above it, having rays extending upwards. To the right of "Reading" is the acronym "A-Z" in a smaller, bold, red sans-serif font.

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