

# THE THREE- LEGGED CAT



**CFE 3306V**

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OPEN CAPTIONED  
WESTON WOODS STUDIOS  
1993  
Grade Levels: K-4  
11 minutes  
1 Instructional Graphic Enclosed

## **DESCRIPTION**

Tom, the three-legged cat, dreams of roaming the wide world like Mrs. Gimble's brother Cyril. When Cyril comes to visit in his Russian hat, a case of mistaken identity lets Tom have his dream. Based on the book by Margaret Mahy. Animated.

## **INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS**

- To motivate reading this and other multicultural stories.
- To distinguish between fantasy and reality.
- To demonstrate traveling as a learning tool.
- To encourage pursuing dreams despite physical challenges.

## **BEFORE SHOWING**

1. Read the CAPTION SCRIPT to determine unfamiliar vocabulary and language concepts.
2. Discuss embarrassment caused by family members or friends.
3. Discuss animals that have been injured and trained to use prosthetic devices.
4. Read the book by Margaret Mahy. Explain that Tom the cat has difficulty prowling. Note how his perception of the world changes after getting out.
5. Discuss *misconception*.
  - a. Display pictures of hedgehogs, trees, and seas.
  - b. Discuss qualities of each such as size, color, and texture.
  - c. Be alert for Tom's misconceptions about each in the video.

## **DURING SHOWING**

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Pause to clarify Tom's dreams and misconceptions and Mrs. Gimble's recollections.

3. Pause to review the conversation between Mrs. Gimble and Cyril. Discuss reasons for their incompatibility.

4. Pause to emphasize Cyril's unawareness of Tom on his head. Note when Cyril finally realizes the mix-up.

## **AFTER SHOWING**

### Discussion Items and Questions

1. Using a graphic organizer, sequence and summarize the story.

2. Compare Tom's perceptions of the world before and after getting out. (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS.) Color the pictures of the seas beforehand.

3. Discuss Mrs. Gimble's exasperation at the cat's appearance every time the refrigerator door opens. Share experiences of similar associations.

4. Discuss Mrs. Gimble's paranoia about the neighbors seeing her brother.

5. Discuss the ending and each character's contentment.

a. Will Cyril stop or continue to travel? Why?

b. Will Mrs. Gimble ever realize the difference between Tom and the hat?

c. Will Tom return home?

6. Distinguish between fantasy and reality. Identify scenes illustrating each in the video.

7. Identify idioms or other uses of figurative language from the video. Explain each. Include:

a. rascally, roving, swagman

b. dot-and-go-carry-one

c. a bit of a chin-wag

d. the wide world

e. a molting Russian hat

8. Decide how Mrs. Gimble, Cyril, and Tom each had their needs met at the end of the story.

### Applications and Activities

1. Display pictures of different kinds of cats. Survey as to favorites and graph the results.
2. Discuss cat care and responsibilities.
3. Read and dramatize other tales about animals.
4. Illustrate and display personal dreams. Dramatize them.
5. Read or view success stories of people who overcame physical challenges.
6. Imagine accompanying Cyril and Tom around the world.
  - a. Using a world map, choose countries where people wear warm hats. Attach pictures of Cyril's "hat" to them.
  - b. Find pictures associated with those countries.
7. Collect a variety of hats. Discuss purposes and places to wear them.
8. Compare the video to the book by Margaret Mahy. Note the different names of Mrs. Gimble's brother.
9. Given situations with various people, list appropriate conversation topics.
10. Plan a field trip. List possible sights. Record experiences, and compare with preconceived ideas.

### **COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

1. Practice new vocabulary using all appropriate modes of communication.
2. Research and use the preferred signs for the countries in which this book has been published: Australia, England, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States. Resources on international signs are:
  - a. Sandager, O.K. (ed.), *Sign Languages Around the World*, O.K. Publishing, CA, 1986.
  - b. *Selected Signs Around the World* (video), Sign Media, Inc., Burtonsville, MD.
  - c. *Countries Around the World* (video), Sign Media, Inc., Burtonsville, MD.

3. Dramatize the story. Add a scene explaining how Tom lost his leg.

4. Explain *horrapotchkin* as an expression of exclamation. Research from what language it comes. Practice using common expressions of exclamations.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHICS**

One instructional graphic is included with this lesson guide. It may be enlarged and used to create transparencies or copies.

- BEFORE AND AFTER

### **WEBSITES**

Explore the Internet to discover sites related to this topic. Check the CFV website for related information (<http://www.cfv.org>).

## CAPTION SCRIPT

Following are the captions as they appear on the video. Teachers are encouraged to read the script prior to viewing the video for pertinent vocabulary, to discover language patterns within the captions, or to determine content for introduction or review. Enlarged copies may be given to students as a language exercise.

(male narrator) There was once an old tabby cat called Tom	all dot-and-go-carry-one, when she opened the fridge.
who longed to prowl around the world.	"You'll eat me out of house and home," she said.
He longed to see hills and valleys,	She wanted a cat who would stay put and eat nothing.
and wild mysterious woods, as well.	She certainly didn't want a prowler.
He longed to see the sea.	"One prowler in the family is quite enough," said Mrs. Gimble,
But Tom was a three-legged cat.	for she had a rascally, roving swagman brother called Cyril.
Prowling was difficult with three legs.	He prowled uphill and down, and around the edges of the world,
He was good at curling up neatly,	wearing his revolting, molting Russian hat
wrapping his tabby tail around himself, and going to sleep.	to keep his bald head warm.
As he slept, he dreamed of the wide world.	Once a year, he would look in at number seven Cardamom Street
His three paws twitched.	for a cup of tea, and a bit of a chin-wag.
Tom lived with short-sighted Mrs. Gimble	Mrs. Gimble knew the neighbors would be watching
of number seven Cardamom Street.	as that revolting, molting, Russian hat came up the street,
She was a respectable widow.	and turned in at her gate.
She liked cats best when they curled up and slept.	"Yes," she grumbled to Tom, "one prowler is more than enough."
It bothered her to see Tom running,	Tom wrapped himself around

with his own tabby tail.

He dreamed of prowling  
beside the sea.

In his dream,  
the sea was pink and fizzy.

He dreamed of forests and fields  
of sheep.

In his dream, the forests  
were no higher than hedges,

and the sheep ran about  
like woolly hedgehogs.

"Thank goodness Tom isn't  
one of those prowling cats,"

thought Mrs. Gimble.

"I'm glad he has only  
three legs."

Then she heard a familiar  
step on the path.

Horrapotchkin!

A molting, revolting Russian hat  
was coming to her door.

It was Cyril the swagman.

What would the neighbors say?

Knock, knock, went the door.

"Hello, Daisy!

How about a cup of tea, and a  
bit of a chin-wag?" cried Cyril.

"Oh, Cyril, Cyril!  
It's lovely to see you,

but why don't you curl up and  
settle down?" Mrs. Gimble said.

As she poured a cup of tea  
for her brother,

she wept into the teapot.

"Don't cry into my tea, Daisy.

I take sugar, not salt,"  
said Cyril.

"Perhaps you're right.

"I love prowling the world,  
but my hat has molted badly.

"Somehow it doesn't keep  
my head as warm as it used to.

"It's not fun prowling about  
with a bald head when it's cold.

"Perhaps I should settle down.

Once more around the world,  
and then I'll think about it."

Mrs. Gimble was looking  
anxiously out of the window.

Her neighbors didn't prowl,  
but they did pry.

"Suppose they see  
a swagman here,

having a cup of tea, and a bit  
of a chin-wag," she thought.

Hastily, she drew the curtains.

As Cyril poured tea  
into his saucer

so it would cool quickly,  
Mrs. Gimble told him about

a new furniture polish  
she discovered in a sale.

Cyril told her how to prowl  
successfully during earthquakes.

Mrs. Gimble hated the idea  
of earthquakes.

Cyril, who had no furniture,  
was not the least bit interested

in furniture polish.

"Well, time to be on my way,"  
Cyril said, at last.

He picked up his hat,  
but it wasn't his hat.

He put on his hat,  
but it wasn't his hat.

Out into the street he strolled  
wearing Tom

the three-legged cat, curled  
around his head, sound asleep.

"Good-bye, old girl,"  
he called to Mrs. Gimble.

"I'll be back this time next  
year for a cup of tea,

and a bit of a chin-wag."  
And off went Cyril the swagman,

and with him went Tom  
the three-legged cat.

"My hat is deliciously warm,"  
Cyril thought

as he marched down the road.

"My bald head feels so cozy.

"I could prowl all the way  
around the world

wearing a hat as warm as this."

Tom the cat woke to find  
he was wrapped snugly

around a bald head,  
and riding down the road.

Right in front of him, was  
the beginning of the country.

He saw hedges.

He saw hogs.

He even saw hedgehogs,  
and fields full of sheep.

The world stretched all the way  
to the edge of the sky.

"I'm seeing the wide world at  
last," Tom thought in amazement.

He wrapped his tabby tail  
more firmly around Cyril's ears.

"The wide world is so much wider  
than I thought it was."

"This hat is so much warmer  
than I thought it was,"

muttered Cyril the swagman,  
walking up and over a hill.

Then Tom the cat saw the sea  
for the first time.

It was not pink.

It was green.

It was not fizzy.

It rolled backwards and forwards  
all the way around the world.

"The sea! The sea!"  
thought Tom the cat.

"I am seeing the sea."

He began to purr.

"My hat is purring,"  
thought Cyril the swagman.

"It's never purred before."

A tabby tail twitched  
in front of his eyes.

"Horrapotchkin! I've carried  
off Daisy's three-legged cat!"

cried Cyril the swagman.

"It's just as well I have enough  
sausages for the two of us."

Meanwhile, back at number seven  
Cardamom Street,

Mrs. Gimble was sitting  
by the fire stroking the hat.

It sat very still.

And when she opened the fridge,  
the hat did not stir.

It just sat there,  
molting slightly.

"My cat is suddenly cheap  
to feed," thought Mrs. Gimble.

The hat did not show interest,  
even when she ate  
her own fish dinner.

Out in the wide world, Cyril and  
Tom were sharing the sausages.

"I won't settle down after all,"  
said Cyril the swagman,  
stroking Tom.

"You can curl around my bald  
head and keep it cozy,

"while I do the prowling  
for both of us.

"I've never had a better hat  
then a furry, friendly,

three-legged cat."

"I've never had a better cat,"  
said Mrs. Gimble,

stroking the Russian hat  
tenderly.

"It's true that it molts,  
but we all have our faults.

And it's cheap to keep,  
and always asleep."

The wide world beckoned.

Tom purred.

The hat just sat  
on Mrs. Gimble's lap.

And everyone lived  
happily ever after.

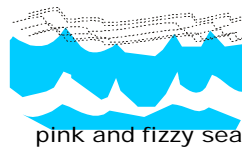
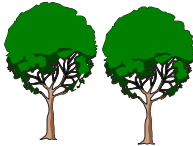
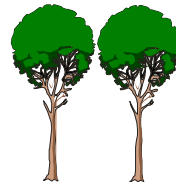
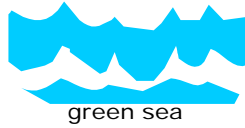
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# BEFORE AND AFTER

DIRECTIONS: Cut out the pictures and paste in the right time frame.



BEFORE

AFTER

BEFORE	AFTER