

MARTA: Because the moon started losing its strength and wasn't able to pull rocks up easily anymore so it could get fewer and fewer stones up at a time until, finally, the rocks came to a point.

AYISHA: But that's only one pyramid. Where did the others come from?

MARTA: You think I know everything? Maybe the Egyptians thought the first one was so cool, they made two more?

The Great Kitten Caper

Mark Lambeck

Comic

KITTY: 12, the leader

KARLY: 10, the middle sister

PRUDENCE: 8, the practical kitten

When the Three Little Kittens lose their mittens, they decide to frame the Bacon brothers for stealing them, as those Three Little Pigs have a reputation for being bullies. KITTY, KARLY, and PRUDENCE are in a huddle, whispering on center stage.

KITTY: So, do you guys have the story straight, or do I have to review it again?

KARLY: I'm good. It's brilliant!

[They both look at PRUDENCE, waiting for her response.]

KITTY: Prudence?

PRUDENCE: I'm thinking.

KITTY: It's not that complicated. But I don't mind going over it again if you're confused.

PRUDENCE: I'm not confused, Kitty. I'm just worried.

KARLY: Here we go. I knew it! I *knew* she would pull something like this.

KITTY: What's the problem?

KARLY: She's a goody two-paws, that's the problem. Mama's little ball of fur. She always has to be the "purr-fect" one.

PRUDENCE: I just don't like lying.

KARLY: Aw. Ya gonna cry now? I hate crying. It's so manipulative.

KITTY: We're not lying. We're just being a little playful with the story. Mama's always sending us out to play. So actually, we're doing exactly what she told us to do, right?

KARLY: Right.

PRUDENCE: But I'm afraid. What if we get caught? Mama will call us "naughty" and we won't get any pie.

KARLY: Oh . . . stop being such a scaredy-cat!

KITTY: We're not gonna get caught. As long as we get the story straight.

KARLY: This is so easy . . . all we have to do is say that the three little Bacon brothers bullied us into giving them our mittens.

KITTY: We all know Mama already doesn't like them. Remember that time she invited them over for lunch?

KARLY: Yeah—they ate like pigs. No table manners at all!

KITTY: And Mama said, "We're never having those Bacon brothers over again, if they can't be civil."

KARLY: She hates bullies and slobs. And she wasn't thrilled about cleaning up the mess they made of her salmon pie. Crumbs and crusts and filling everywhere.

KITTY: And they used their sleeves to wipe their mouths instead of the napkins Mama gave them.

KARLY: Such pigs!

PRUDENCE: But Aunt Fluffy made those mittens for us. Mama said she knitted them special, with tender loving care.

KARLY: Yeah, yeah. We all know Aunt Fluffy is a master with a ball of yarn. But that just proves the point. If Mama finds out we lost those mittens through carelessness, well, there not only won't be any pie, there also won't be any dinner at all.

PRUDENCE: Carelessness? It wasn't carelessness. It was curiosity, Karly. *Your* curiosity.

KARLY: Me? I just wanted to see what was in the bottom of that well. You guys wanted to know, too.

KITTY: That's true, Prudence. We were all curious.

KARLY: But I was the only one courageous enough to lean in for a better look. [*Pause.*] I didn't drop my mittens into it on purpose. They just slipped off. And I wasn't the one who had the brilliant idea of having the two of you throw yours in afterward so we'd all be blamed.

PRUDENCE: I was just trying to cover for you. We're sisters. We need to stick together.

KARLY: Exactly! And that's why we came up with this Bacon brothers story that *you* need to buy into!

PRUDENCE: I thought you'd be grateful if we told Mama that we *all* lost our mittens so she wouldn't just be mad at you! I was trying to protect you.

KARLY: Protect me? The little whiney crybaby was trying to protect me? [*She bursts out laughing and starts coughing.* **KITTY** *pats KARLY on the back.*] Man! These hairballs are killing me.

KITTY: Stop it! Both of you! There will be no catfighting—not on my watch.

KARLY: She started it.

PRUDENCE: I'm just telling the truth.

KARLY: Oh. So we're supposed to feel guilty for pointing a paw at those . . . those . . . pigs? Where's your sense of adventure?

PRUDENCE: Where's your conscience?

KARLY: [*Sarcastically.*] "Why don't we all drop our mittens into the well?" Prudence says. And I can't believe you, Kitty. That you went along with such a stupid suggestion.

KITTY: Excuse me! Are you hissing at *me* now? I went along with it because I'm the oldest. I'm the one responsible for you. You two can just go about your day

eating, sleeping, and playing carefree, anytime you want. But Mama expects me to watch out for you.

KARLY: I'm not a fraidy cat. I can watch out for myself.

KITTY: No, you can't. I shouldn't have let you walk along the edge of that well. I shouldn't have let you lean over like that. You could have fallen in.

KARLY: But I didn't!

KITTY: And if you had fallen in, it would have been all my fault! You don't know what it's like to have the responsibility.

PRUDENCE: You *do* look out for us, Kitty. And *some* of us really appreciate it.

KARLY: Great. Here she goes again . . .

KITTY: Okay, stop. Now everybody just put away the claws and calm down.

KARLY: Fine. We have a story, so let's just stick to it. Those Bacon brothers deserve whatever they have coming to them.

PRUDENCE: Framing them for a crime they didn't commit? It's dishonest. And that's never pretty.

KITTY: Framing? Do you even know what that means, Prudence?

PRUDENCE: Of course I do. It's blaming someone else for your mistake and then getting others to back you up on it.

KITTY: Wow. That's right! That's pretty good. How did you know . . . ?

PRUDENCE: I may be the youngest, but I can read. Those Nancy Drew mysteries are very educational.

KITTY: Impressive.

KARLY: Then you know that all it takes is a bad reputation. We've all seen the Bacon brothers bully that poor Gingerbread Man. Mama will believe this in a second. I can taste her chicken pot pie now.

KITTY: No. Prudence is right.

KARLY: She is?

PRUDENCE: I am?

KARLY: About what?

KITTY: And you're right too, Karly.

KARLY: Ah-hah! [*Pause.*] But, I'm confused. How can we both be right?

KITTY: It's a good story and Mama would certainly believe the worst of those Bacon bullies. But Prudence is right. It's dishonest. And as the oldest, it's up to me to set the example and take whatever punishment Mama has for me.

KARLY: I don't get it. We have this all worked out. We could pull off this mitten caper in a minute.

KITTY: We probably could, Karly. But we shouldn't. Let's just tell Mama the truth and trust that she'll give us exactly what we deserve.

PRUDENCE: Like homemade pie as a reward for sticking together and telling the truth?

KITTY: It's possible. You never know. [*Holds her paw out in front. She looks to KARLY and PRUDENCE.*] Are you in?

PRUDENCE: [*Putting her paw over KITTY's.*] I'm in. [*They both look at KARLY, waiting for a response.*]

KARLY: Ohhh! All for one and one for all, I always say. [*Places her paw on top of the other two.*] I'm in.

ALL THREE TOGETHER: [*They break, lifting their paws and yell.*] Go kittens!