

Name _____



Wisdom vs. Wonder

In *The Mitten* by Jan Brett, the story highlights the contrast between the grandmother's wisdom and Nicki's youthful curiosity. Grandmother Baba is experienced and careful, while Nicki is eager to explore and follow his own ideas. This difference between them sets the events of the story in motion and teaches an important lesson.

At the beginning of the story, Nicki asks his grandmother to knit him a pair of white mittens. Baba hesitates, knowing that white mittens will be difficult to see in the snow if they are lost. Her wisdom comes from experience—she understands how easy it is for a child to lose things, especially when playing outside. However, Nicki, full of curiosity and excitement, insists on having white mittens. He does not think about what could go wrong; he is only focused on how they will look.

Sure enough, Baba's wisdom proves to be right. As Nicki plays in the snow, he drops one mitten without noticing. Since it blends in with the snowy ground, he does not find it. Meanwhile, the lost mitten becomes an unexpected shelter for a group of woodland animals. One by one, a mole, a rabbit, a hedgehog, an owl, and even a giant bear squeeze inside, stretching the mitten beyond what seems possible. The mitten holds them all until a tiny mouse causes the bear to sneeze, sending the animals flying and the mitten back into the open.

At the end of the story, Nicki unknowingly retrieves his mitten and brings it home. Though he never realizes what happened, the reader understands the hidden adventure that took place. Baba's wisdom about the mitten's color was proven correct, even though Nicki's curiosity led to a fun and unexpected chain of events.

This contrast between Baba and Nicki reflects the balance between wisdom and curiosity in life. While wisdom comes from experience and helps prevent problems, curiosity allows people to explore and learn from mistakes. *The Mitten* reminds us that both qualities are important. Baba's wisdom keeps Nicki safe, but his curiosity allows for adventure. In the end, the story suggests that while it is good to listen to wisdom, sometimes curiosity leads to discoveries—even if it means a mitten full of animals!