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# Living in Captivity

Before the rats lived at Farmer Fitzgibbon’s farm, they were city dwellers. There were several of them who would go to the marketplace where leftover food was piled high.

“The marketplace was a perfect place for playing and so we did. There were empty boxes for hide-and-seek, walls to climb, tin cans to roll, and pieces of twine to tie and swing on. Then at the first clang of the cleanup men in the distance, one of the older rats would sound a warning, and everyone would pick up as much food as he could carry home. All of us kept a reserve supply, because some days—Sundays and holidays—the marketplace was closed, and we were never quite sure when that would happen.”

One evening in early fall, a strange new truck appeared in the marketplace. The rats did not know that the truck was from NIMH. Before they knew it, they were captured.

From the rats’ point of view, describe how it feels to be free, running around without a care in the world, and then suddenly tangled in nets and captured. What were their thoughts when the bright lights flashed, the nets caught them, and the truck hauled them away from their homes to NIMH? Create a dialogue between Jenner and Nicodemus to describe their feelings.

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# Plan for a Rat's Picnic

To celebrate *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*, it might be fun to plan a spring picnic and invite your friends and family to share delicious food and fun. In groups of two or three, begin by brainstorming what you will need for the picnic, whom you will invite, and when and where you think it will be best to hold the picnic. Consider the following.

- What foods will we serve?
- Who can bring what?
- When and where will we have the picnic?
- Who will we invite?
- What games will we play? (In order to tie the picnic and book together, play a variety of games that require cooperation, such as three-legged and potato sack races. After all, it is cooperation that eventually saves Mrs. Frisby, her family, and the rats.)

After brainstorming, meet again as a class to share each group's suggestions. Vote to see which ideas the class likes best. Firm up the date and plans for the picnic. Design posters announcing the picnic. Create invitations for all the people you wish to invite. Also refer to the next two pages, "Spring Scavenger Hunt" and "A Smorgasbord of Presentations" for additional activities.

