Ketzel the Cat who Composed

AUTHOR: Leslea Newman
ILLUSTRATOR: Amy June Bates
PUBLISHER: Candlewick Press
COPYRIGHT DATE: 2015
ART MEDIUM: Watercolor and ink
GENRE: Animal Fiction

BOOK SUMMARY: This story is based on a true event about Moshe Cotel, a composer, who found a lost kitten and took it home. When Moshe learns of a contest for a composition no longer than sixty seconds, he struggles to write the musical piece. The kitten he named Ketzel walks across the keyboard and plays the great composition that Moshe had been struggling to create. The piece is submitted and wins a special award.

BOOK TALK: Moshe Cotel was a composer, a creator of music, and was, of course, very attentive to all sounds. As he walked one day, Moshe heard the softest little “meow” and found the kitten which he took home and named Ketzel. Moshe tried to write a very short musical piece, but struggled. Suddenly, he got some help from a very special little friend. Read the story to find out how a kitten can help a grown man.

CHALLENGING WORDS:
Yiddish
composition
fumbled
jig
ludicrous
preposterous
royalty check

AUTHOR BIO: Leslea Newman was born in 1955 and has written over 70 books and anthologies. She has won many awards for her books, and lives in Brooklyn, New York. Website: www.lesleanewman.com

ILLUSTRATOR BIO: Amy Bates is a free-lance illustrator who grew up and was educated in Utah. She currently lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan with her husband and child. Website: www.amybates.com

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1. How would you describe Moshe? What kind of man was he?
2. Have you ever been faced with a task that seemed impossible? How did it make you feel?
3. Do you think the kitten could really create a song or was it an accident? Why do you feel this way?
4. Do you agree that Moshe should have brought the kitten to the concert? Why?
KETZEL THE CAT WHO COMPOSED
by Leslea Newman

Ketzel the cat had a very special talent. She wanted to make her friend, Moshe, happy and ended up playing the piano. Draw four pictures of animals and write the words to show how they could make you happy!

Standard: K.RL.1