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Activity Guide

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Horace and Morris Join the Chorus (But what about Dolores?)

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ABOUT THE STORY

Horace, Morris, and Dolores love to sing, though Dolores hits some very unusual notes. When they all try out for a chorus, Dolores is devastated when Horace and Morris are accepted and she is not. Determined, Dolores finds a way to be part of the chorus – and finds her true voice as well.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Howe didn't think about becoming an author until one night when he was watching vampire movies on television and got the idea for Bunnacula, a bunny vampire. He published Bunnacula in 1979, and since then he has been writing books for young people. He lives in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. His first book about Horace and Morris, Horace and Morris but Mostly Dolores, is also a Live Oak Readalong.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Amy Walrod got her bachelor of fine arts degree in illustration from the Rhode Island School of Design. She lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She also illustrated Horace and Morris but Mostly Dolores, another Live Oak Readalong.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

As children if they have ever sung in a chorus. Encourage them to talk about the experience and discuss whether having a good voice or having enthusiasm is more important. Then tell them that the book they will read is about a trio of friends who want to sing in a chorus, and what happens when one of them is left out.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

“What kind of voice does each of the three friends have?” (Compare and contrast)

“How does Dolores feel when she does not get into the chorus?”

“What does Dolores do to try to forget the chorus?”

“Why do you think Dolores writes the letter?” (Draw conclusions)

“Why does Moustro Provolone invite Dolores to join the chorus?”

Vocabulary

Write these words and definitions on the chalkboard and have children copy them. Ask them to draw a line linking each word to its definition.

| | |
|----------|-----------|
| clarity | shouted |
| caressed | wriggle |
| pathos | hugged |
| squirm | pitying |
| bellowed | clearness |

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Language Arts: Poem Form

Dolores doesn't know that her letter is really a poem because she doesn't write it in poem form. Have children rewrite the letter as a poem. Encourage them to break the lines after rhyming words and to divide the poem into verses

Music: Find a Tune

Have children work together in groups to develop a tune for Dolores's poem. Groups can make up their own tunes or use a melody from a song that already exists. Encourage them to practice their songs and perform them for the class.

Art: Create a Poster

Children can work in small groups to design and make a poster advertising the chorus's concert. Ask them to think of a name for Dolores's song and to feature it on their posters. Remind them to include a date, place, and time for the concert. Hang completed posters around the classroom.

Language Arts: The Third Verse

Ask children to work in pairs or groups of three to write a third verse to Dolores's poem. Encourage them to keep to the rhythm and rhyme scheme that Dolores uses. Help children identify the rhythm by tapping it out on their desks: I love to sing more than anything/It makes me feel good inside. When children are done, volunteers can read their verses aloud.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

More About James Howe

Have children use the keywords James Howe interview to find interviews with the author on the Internet. Encourage each child to write down one interesting fact about James Howe. Children can report on their facts to the rest of the class.