Emma’s Pet

ABOUT THE STORY
Emma, a young bear, decides that she wants a new, cuddly pet. On her search she considers several candidates, including a bug, snake, and turtle, but none are cuddly enough to be her pet until she finds the cuddliest pet of all right at home.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR
David McPhail’s favorite pastime was drawing from the time he was just two years old. In 1963, David enrolled in the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, in Boston. And in 1966, while working as a shipping clerk in a book clearinghouse, he rediscovered children’s books. He spent hours looking through the many picture books that crossed his desk, and soon began his new career. His first book, The Bear’s Toothache, was published in 1972. Since then, he has written and/or illustrated more than fifty books; many featuring bears and pigs, and is hard at work on many more. Mr. McPhail currently resides in Massachusetts.

INTRODUCING THE STORY
Ask the group if any of them own pets, and if they do, to describe them. Explain that in this story, Emma is looking for a big, soft, cuddly pet. Have students make predictions about the kind of pet they think Emma will get.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills
a. What was wrong with the pet Emma already had? (cat wasn’t cuddly)
b. Why didn’t Emma keep the mouse? (wasn’t big enough)
c. Why wasn’t Emma able to keep the frog? (took a bath with her mother)
d. What was wrong with the snake? (too cuddly)
e. What pet does Emma finally end up happy with? (father)

Vocabulary
Write these words on the chalkboard and review their meanings. Then ask volunteers to use the words in sentences.

- cuddly
- anybody
- slippery
- belonged

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.

- Pets
  See the “Which Pet to Choose” and “Ancient Pets” activities above.

- ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)
  Visit the ASPCA’s site for kids at www.animaland.org and kids learn more about this group.

- David McPhail
  Have students research this author. What two types of animals are most often featured in his books? How many books has he written? Where does he live? Does he have children of his own?