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Activity Guide

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The Princess and the Pea

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ABOUT THE STORY

Adapted from a Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale, this is the story of a queen's quest to find a real princess worthy of marrying her son. Using animals to portray the various undesirable qualities in each potential bride provides an added touch of humor as the royal family travels around the world in search of the perfect real princess.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Janet Stevens studied art at the University of Colorado in Boulder where she received her BFA. After being told that her work belonged in children's books, she began visiting book publishers and was soon offered her first book contract. The first book she illustrated was a collection of Holiday poems compiled by Myra Cohn Livingston. Many of Ms. Stevens' books have won awards. She lives in Boulder, CO.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask the group to brainstorm characteristics of real princesses. Explain that in this story, the queen finds a variety of interesting ways to test each candidate until the perfect princess for her son is found.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- By looking at the pictures in the book, how can we tell that this is not a true story?
- What was wrong with the princess of the south?
- Were all of the rejected princesses the same kind of animal as the royal family?
- What kind of animal was the princess of the north?
- What was the negative trait the pig princess demonstrated?
- Why did the queen decide that the princess who arrived at the palace during the storm was indeed a real princess?

Vocabulary

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

clumsy	greedy	grace	disgusted
thunderstorm	introduced	discuss	bedstead
comfortable	position	gasped	delicate

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Geography: Which Way Is Up?

Display a map of the country. Have children locate their state or country, and then indicate what borders it to the north, south, east, and west. Think back to the book and label the map with the four princesses that were rejected by the queen. What was wrong with each of them?

Language Arts: Many From One

Write "princessandpea" on a sheet of paper. Duplicate and hand out to each child. Have a contest to see who can make the most smaller words using only these letters.

Mathematics: Pea Groups

Give each child twenty dried peas. How many different combinations of twenty can they make? After practicing grouping, have each child glue the twenty peas on an outline of the number twenty.

Language Arts: An Animal Kingdom, Part 1

In the story, the illustrator uses animals as characters for the royal family and princesses. Discuss the pun of the "royal kingdom" versus the "animal kingdom". How did the author/illustrator combine the two for this story?

Science: An Animal Kingdom, Part 2

Divide students into small groups. Have each group select an animal from the story to research. Does the animal really live in the part of the world the direction associated with it indicates? What do they do in the wild? Eat?

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.

Princess

Have students research princesses, both real and fictional. What makes them a princess? Where do princesses usually live? What is their life like?

Janet Stevens

Visit the author's website (www.janetstevens.com) to find out more about this prolific author. What are her interests? When did she start writing?

Vegetables

Using the name of a vegetable as the keyword, have students research their favorite vegetable. Where is it grown? How is it harvested? How is packaged for sale?