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Activity Guide

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A Hare-Raising Tail

ABOUT THE STORY

Fletcher the basset hound and his flea friend, Jasper, have finally been adopted from the pound. Fletcher's new owner, Jill, brings Fletcher to school for Show and Tell. Not long after, the class rabbit is missing, and everyone suspects Fletcher. It's up to Fletcher to find out what really happened to Anakin the rabbit – before Jill takes Fletcher back to the pound!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elizabeth Levy grew up reading a wide variety of books for children and adults. She graduated magna cum laude from Brown University and went on to earn a graduate degree from Columbia University. Levy has published more than 90 books for young readers, including fiction, nonfiction, young adult novels, and mysteries. She is the author of *The Mixed-Up Mask Mystery* and *The Principal's on the Roof*, both Live Oak Media audiobooks featuring Fletcher the basset hound. She lives in New York.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Mordicai Gerstein is a painter, sculptor, and prize-winning designer and director of animated films. He attended the Chouinard Institute of Art before moving to New York City where he lived and worked for twenty-five years making animated films for television. Gerstein's many picture books include *What Charlie Heard* and *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*, which won the Caldecott Medal; both are Live Oak Media readalongs. He has also illustrated *The Mixed-Up Mask Mystery* and *The Principal's on the Roof*, both Live Oak Media audiobooks. Mordicai Gerstein lives in western Massachusetts with his wife and daughter.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children if they have ever gotten a pet from an animal shelter. Then tell them that the story they will read is about a dog who is rescued from the pound – but who might be sent back.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- “What is special about Fletcher's markings?”
- “Why is Fletcher so popular at Show and Tell?”
- “Why is Fletcher a suspect when Anakin disappears?”
- “What does James do at the Winter Festival?”
- “How does Fletcher prove the identity of the rabbit?”
- “How would you describe Fletcher's character? (*Analyze*)”

Vocabulary

Write these words from the story and sentences on the chalkboard. Have children copy the sentences and write the correct word in each blank.

culprit aroma atmosphere
genuinely spectacular inspiration

- Fletcher loves the _____ of salami.
- Jasper the flea is _____ fond of Fletcher.
- The town is filled with an _____ of excitement about the Winter Festival.
- Fletcher's markings are the _____ for the snow globe.
- Fletcher needs to find the _____ who took the rabbit.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Social Studies: *Map of the Continents*

Fletcher has markings that look like the continents. Divide children into seven groups and have each group make a construction-paper map of one of the continents. When they have finished, help them tape together their maps to create a map of the world, similar to Fletcher's markings.

Art: *Make a Snow Globe*

Ask children to draw their own snow globes. Remind them that a snow globe usually features a wintry scene. Children can draw their scenes within a globe shape; urge them to include falling snow inside the globe. Display snow globes around the classroom.

Language Arts: *Describing Your Pet*

Jill gets Fletcher at the dog pound; her classroom has a pet rabbit. Have children write a description of a pet they have or would like to have. Encourage them to describe what their pet looks like and acts like, without telling what animal the pet is. Then have children read their descriptions aloud. The rest of the class can try to guess what kind of animal each reading describes.

Science: *Tracking Dogs*

Fletcher mentions that basset hounds and bloodhounds are known for their tracking abilities. Have children look on the Internet or in books about dogs for information on tracking dogs. Working in pairs, they can write a brief description of one kind of tracking dog and what the dog does when tracking.

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.

Tongue Twisters

Jasper the flea loves tongue twisters. Have children use the keywords *tongue twisters* to find examples of tongue twisters on the Internet. Children can write down one tongue twister each and then try to say them aloud three times to the class. Collect their tongue twisters in a class book.