

# WHO'S IN RABBIT'S HOUSE?

## WHO'S IN RABBIT'S HOUSE?

By Verna Aardema & illustrated by Leo & Diane Dillon (Dial Books for Young Readers)

Themes: African Culture/Folktales

Grade Level: Pre-K-2

Running Time: 13 minutes

## SUMMARY

WHO'S IN RABBIT'S HOUSE? is an African folktale, presented as a play, about a rabbit whose home becomes inhabited by a mean creature called "The Long One." Rabbit's animal friends come by, one by one, and see Rabbit sitting outside her home. When they ask what is happening, Rabbit desperately explains that she cannot find a way to remove the awful creature from her home. Finally, desperate to move back in, Rabbit allows Frog to try out his ingenious plan to remove the scary creature from her home.

## OBJECTIVES

- Children will explore African culture.
- Children will learn about plays and elements of drama.
- Children will explore problem-solving techniques.

## BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book WHO'S IN RABBIT'S HOUSE?

- Locate Africa on a map. Point out the different terrains, talk about the climate, clothing worn by African tribes, and various customs. Have children compare these to the terrains, climate and customs of our country.

Help children understand that folktales are stories passed down from one generation to the next.

Then give children an opportunity to create a tale of their own. Start with a story starter such as: The night wind blew so hard that ever leaf flew off every tree in the town...Give each child a chance to contribute to the story. Print the tale as the children tell it. Encourage children to add illustrations to the story.

## AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the different ways Rabbit's friends try to solve her problem. Then ask:

- Why is Rabbit unhappy with how her friends try to remove the creature from her home?
- How do you think Frog feels when Rabbit tells him to go away?
- How does Frog remove the creature from the house?
- How do you feel about Frog when he does this?
- Do you think Frog and Rabbit may be friends from now on? Why? Why not?

Supply paper plates, yarn, and other art materials children can use to create rabbit, frog, jackal, leopard, elephant, and rhinoceros masks. Then have children use the masks as they perform their own dramatic version of WHO'S IN RABBIT'S HOUSE? Children may want to create scenic backdrops and decorate a cardboard box to resemble Rabbit's house to enhance their performance. Talk with children about the various characters in the story. Encourage children to imagine that the characters are people.

Ask:

- What kind of person do you think Rabbit would be? Frog? Jackal?
- Which of these people would you like best?

Why?

- Which would you like least? Why?

Later, talk with children about the personality traits of friends they particularly enjoy. Give children an opportunity to explore problem-solving techniques. Have children close their eyes and place an object inside a box. Tell children: "There is something in this box. What can you do, without opening the box, to try and find out what's inside?" Encourage children to think of as many ways as they can to solve this problem.

Other videos and films about African Culture and Folktales available from Weston Woods include:

## African Culture

**HOT HIPPO** by Mwenye Hadithi & illustrated by Adrienne Kennaway

**MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS** by John Stepoe

**A STORY- A STORY** by Gail E. Haley

**THE VILLAGE OF ROUND AND SQUARE-HOUSES** by Ann Grifalconi

**WHY MOSQUITOES BUZZ IN PEOPLE'S EARS** by Verna Aardema & illustrated by Leo & Diane Dillon

## Folktales

**STONE SOUP** by Marcia Brown

**THE STONECUTTER** by Gerald McDermott

**THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF** by Marcia Brown

**TIKKI TIKKI TEMBO** by Arlene Mosel & illustrated by Blain Lent

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# THE BEAST OF MONSIEUR RACINE

## THE BEAST OF MONSIEUR RACINE

By Tomi Ungerer

Themes: Friendship/French Culture

Grade Level: K-2

Running Time: 9 minutes, animated

### SUMMARY

THE BEAST OF MONSIEUR RACINE takes place in France where a retired tax collector, Monsieur Racine, raises perfect pears. He is offered millions of dollars for his prize-winning pears, but refuses, deciding to enjoy his pears himself, the true “fruits” of his labors.

One night, all but one of the pears are stolen by a strange “something.” Monsieur Racine booby traps the remaining pear as a way to catch the thief. The thief turns out to be a strange looking Beast, which Monsieur Racine eventually tames by offering it delicious treats. Monsieur Racine and the Beast develop a wonderful friendship, during which time Monsieur Racine studies the Beast and reports the existence of this unusual creature to the Academy of Sciences in Paris.

Monsieur Racine and the Beast are invited to the Academy where Monsieur Racine is offered a fortune for the Beast. Monsieur Racine refuses, preferring the on-going friendship of the Beast.

The story ends with the discovery that the Beast is actually two children in disguise. Monsieur Racine appreciates the cleverness and endurance of the children and befriends them both.

### OBJECTIVES

- Children will appreciate the value of

friendship.

- Children will explore the things that make people happy.
- Children will investigate creative thinking.

### BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book, THE BEAST OF MONSIEUR RACINE, with children.

Talk with the children about their special friends. Ask:

- What do you like most about your special friend?
- What kinds of things do you do together?
- What happens when you and your friends don't agree about things?
- What do you do to solve your problems?
- How do you and your special friend show that you care for one another?
- What kinds of things do you do together?
- What happens when you and your friends don't agree about things?
- What do you do to solve your problems?
- How do you and your special friend show that you care for one another?

### AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the Beast in the story. Ask:

- If this were really a Beast, rather than two children in costume, where do you think it would have come from?
- What would its parents look like?
- What kinds of things would it eat?

Then have children use art supplies to create their own unique Beasts. Have them write stories about the Beasts' adventures to comple-

ment their works of art. Display the Beasts and the stories in the classroom to share with the other classes.

Talk about the choices Monsieur Racine made in the story. Ask:

- Do you think Monsieur Racine's choice to keep his pears, rather than take money for them, was a good one? Why?
- What would you have done if you were Monsieur Racine?

Discuss the way the children in the story decided to dress up as a Beast. Ask:

- Do you think the children had a good idea when they decided to do this? Why?
- How would Monsieur Racine's life been different if the children had not chosen to do this?
- What other things might the children have chosen to be in order to meet Monsieur Racine?
- How do you think Monsieur Racine would have felt if the children decided to come to his home as themselves?
- Do you think they would have become friends? Why? Why not?

Dramatize the friendship between Monsieur Racine and the Beast by making a pear tree, choosing a retired tax collector and two children to disguise themselves as the Beast by crawling underneath a blanket.

Other videos about friendship available from Weston Woods include:

**Apt. 3 by Ezra Jack Keats**

**The Caterpillar and the Polliwog** by Jack Kent

**Danny and the Dinosaur** by Syd Hoff

**The Island of the Skog** by Steven Kellogg

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# THE STORY ABOUT PING

## The Story About Ping

By Helena L Barnum & Kurt Wiese (Viking)

Themes: Chinese Culture/ Individuality, Abandonment

Grade Level: Pre-K-2

Running Time: 10 Minutes, iconographic

## SUMMARY

The setting for THE STORY ABOUT PING is the Yangtze river in China. A little duck named Ping lives on a boat on the river with his many family members including parents, siblings, aunts, uncles and forty-two cousins. Every morning, Ping and his family leave the boat to hunt for food, and every evening they return. The last duck onto the boat gets a spanking, so Ping always tries not to be last.

One day, Ping realizes that he will be the last one on the boat, and so, rather than getting spanked, he hides in the tall grasses by the river all night. When he tries to return to the boat in the morning, the boat is nowhere in sight. Eventually, Ping notices that a small boy has fallen off a houseboat. The boy holds onto Ping when his family pulls him back onto the boat. The boy's father traps Ping in a basket so that they can cook him for dinner later. However, before this can happen, the boy frees Ping from the basket and helps him back into the river. The end of the story finds Ping returning to his family –even though he is the last one on the boat that day and must suffer the "last one on board" spanking.

## OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about Chinese culture.
- Children will explore individual differences.
- Children will investigate family relationships and separation from their families.

## BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book THE STORY ABOUT PING with children. Explain to children that one of China's longest rivers, the Yangtze river, is the setting for the film they are about to see. Locate China and the Yangtze river on a map.

Talk with children about Chinese culture, including occupations, life styles, clothing, education, etc. Invite a speaker to the classroom who may be an expert, or have some valuable information to share, regarding Chinese culture.

Talk with children about what you feel is special and unique about each and every one of them. Emphasize to children that they all have different traits and characteristics, and that these differences make it very interesting and exciting to get to know one another. Then explain that Ping has his own very unique set of characteristics. Do a character study of Ping.

## AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the different kinds of boats they saw moving up and down the Yangtze river in the film. Ask:

- Why do you suppose Ping thinks that the boats have eyes?

Supply manila construction paper, crayons, and scissors that children can use to create one of the boats from the story (houseboat, raft boat, fishing boat, etc.). Have children attach black construction paper to the fronts of their boats in order to give the boats eyes. Later, have children imagine that these boats are also capable of talking and create stories about their talking boats. Help children by offering them questions to consider such as:

- What kind of things would your boat think about?
- What kind of work would your boat do all day?

- Who are the people that would be on your boat?

Help children appreciate the individuality of their classmates. Give each child in the class an opportunity to interview one of his/her classmates and then introduce the child to the group. Have children describe their classmates' physical characteristics, their personalities, the ways they like to spend their free time, etc. Help children learn even more about their classmates by allowing time for them to ask questions of the children after the introductions have been made.

Discuss the idea of being separated from loved ones.

- Has any one of the children ever gotten lost – on the beach, at the shopping mall?
- How did he/she feel?
- How does Ping Feel?

Discuss with the children the feeling of hopelessness when they get lost, and how good it feels to be reunited. Talk about common sense rules when one gets lost.

## Other videos and films about Chinese culture available from Weston Woods include:

THE FIVE CHINESE BROTHERS written by Claire Huchet Bishop & illustrated by Kurt Wiese

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# THE GREAT WHITE MAN-EATING SHARK

## THE GREAT WHITE MAN-EATING SHARK

A Cautionary Tale

by Margaret Mahy, ill. by Jonathan Allen (Dial)

Themes: Greed, Problem-Solving Techniques, Sharks

Grade Level: K – 5

Running time: 10 minutes

### SUMMARY

THE GREAT WHITE MAN-EATING SHARK – A CAUTIONARY TALE is about a boy named Norvin, who would make a fine actor, but, in fact, has a very plain face that looks much like a shark. Norvin spends his days swimming in the crowded cove, moving through the water like a silver arrow, and bumping into other swimmers. One day Norvin decides that he would like to have the cove to himself. He ties a fin onto his back and moves through the water wearing his best shark look to frighten the other swimmers. Eventually, Norvin frightens everyone out of the water and swims to his heart's content. As the story unfolds, Norvin swims out of sight and eventually the swimmers return to the water. Again, Norvin, who does not like sharing the water, returns with the fin, and scares everyone away. This plan works quite well for Norvin until one day, a female shark appears and threatens to devour Norvin if he refuses to marry her. A frightened Norvin shoots through the water like a silver arrow and onto the beach. At last, Norvin's prank is revealed to the other swimmers.

The end of the story finds the swimmers returning to the water, with a shark net protecting them from the real shark beyond. Norvin decides to stay on the beach, having come a bit too close to being devoured by a shark in love.

### OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about greed
- Children will investigate problem-solving techniques
- Children will study sharks

### BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book THE GREAT WHITE MAN-EATING

SHARK – A CAUTIONARY TALE with children. Then ask:

- How did you feel about Norvin in the story?

- How many liked him? Didn't like him? Felt sorry for him? Thought he was smart, silly, wimpy, brave, etc.?

Talk with children about their own swimming experiences.

Ask:

- How did you learn to swim?
- Where do you go swimming?

Ask children to think about something they may have wanted so badly that they would do almost anything to get it. Then ask:

- What was this "something?"
- When you finally had it, was it as wonderful as you imagined?
- After having this "something" for a while, did you want it as much as you did before?
- Did it seem as important?

Provide children with illustrations and photographs of sharks to examine. Ask:

- What are the special body parts of the shark?
- What kinds of things can sharks do that other animals cannot?
- Where do you think you might find sharks?
- Why are they dangerous?

### AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Have children identify Norvin's problem and the way he chose to solve his problem in the story. Then ask:

- What other things might Norvin have done in order to have some time alone in the water?
- Was the way Norvin chose to solve his problem a good way? Why? Why not?

Give children several of the following hypothetical situations involving problems. See how many different solutions to the problems children can come up with.

- You're about to leave for a camping trip and you can't find your backpack. What can you do?
- One of your friends wants you to go to the movies with her. Another friend is having a birthday on the same day. You want to be with both friends. What can you do?

Borrow some non-fiction books from the library or get a chart about sharks. Show the children the different sharks, what they eat, talk about their teeth, etc.

Tell the children the story of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" how the first few times he claimed he saw a wolf eating the children, how he alarmed the adults, how the adults were irritated, and how they did not listen the last time when a real wolf came. Have the children make up their own girl or boy who cried wolf stories.

Provide props that children can use to perform simple dramas. Challenge children to use the props to represent different animals and people. See how effective children can be in their dramatizations without using language, similar to the way Norvin used movement and facial expressions in the film to represent a shark.

Other videos and films about greed available from Weston Woods include:

DOCTOR DE SOTO by William Steig

THE FISHERMAN AND HIS WIFE by Wanda Gág

GOLDBLOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS by James Marshall

MILLIONS OF CATS by Wanda Gág

THE SELFISH GIANT by Oscar Wilde, ill. by Gertraud & Walter Reiner

THE SILVER COW by Susan Cooper, ill. by Warwick Hutton

THE STONECUTTER by Gerald McDermott

STREGA NONA by Tomie dePaola

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS by James Marshall

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