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Activity Guide

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Dandelion

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ABOUT THE STORY

Despite the “come as you are” note on his invitation, Dandelion is intent on making a good impression at the tea party, so the lovable lion transforms himself with fancy clothes and a hairdo into a dapper dandy. Unfortunately, his friends do not recognize him and he is unable to join the party until later when a rain storm converts him back into his usual, lovable self.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

Don Freeman was born in San Diego, California on August 11, 1908. A graduate of Principia High School in St. Louis, Missouri, Freeman also studied art under Joan Sloan and Harry Wickey at the Art Students League in New York City. He later returned to the West Coast to settle down and create his prolific collection of endearing picture books. Mr. Freeman passed away in 1978.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Explain to the children that a “come as you are” party means the host/hostess expects people to attend wearing their normal, everyday clothes. This is the story of a lion that received an invitation of this kind, but decided to go ahead and wear fancy clothes anyway.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

1. What was the first thing Dandelion did in preparation for the party after he received Jennifer Giraffe’s invitation? (*went for a haircut*)
2. After his haircut didn’t turn out very well, what did Lou the Kangaroo do to Dandelion’s mane? (*curled it*)
3. Why didn’t Jennifer Giraffe recognize Dandelion when he first rang her doorbell? (*he was dressed all fancy*)
4. Why did Jennifer recognize Dandelion when he called on her the second time? (*the rain had made him look like his usual self again*)
5. How did Dandelion react when he was told about the foolish looking lion that arrived at the party earlier? (*he laughed and told everyone it was him*)

Vocabulary

Be sure students have an understanding of the following terms. Depending on age, discuss the terms, or have children look them up in a dictionary.

shampoo, dapper, heartily, magnificent, flustered, unfurled, frizzy, manicure, bouquet, dandy, uproariously, cloudburst, elegant, fuzzy, mane, torrents, paced, sincerely, barbershop, fashion, protected, apologize

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Language Arts: Contraction Action

Write the following list of contractions, which can be found in the story, on the board. Have the students take turns telling or writing the two words that are joined to make the contraction.

that’s it’s I’ve you’ve
isn’t we’ve I’ll I’m weren’t

Art: Stylish Lions

Collect several fictitious picture books about lions (such as Pfister’s “Leo the Lion”, Disney’s “Lion King”, and Peet’s “Randy’s Dandy Lions”). Have children discuss the different artistic styles used in each of the selected books. Point out the differences and similarities. Which are more realistic? Give children crayons, markers, and colored pencils, and instruct them to draw a lion of their own, either using a style just discussed, or their own. Display on class bulletin board.

Creative Writing/Life Skills: Importance of Being Me

Discuss with the students why Dandelion dressed the way he did for Jennifer Giraffe’s party. What did he learn about pretending to be something/somebody else? What is self-confidence? Have children each write a short essay about the importance of always being yourself. Compile into a class book called “Why I Love to be ME!”.

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.

Lions: Have students research lions. Find out information such as habitat, diet, population, etc. Write reports.

Don Freeman: Have students research this prolific author. What other books did he write? Is he still alive? Where did he grow up? Did he go to college for writing? For illustrating? Compile research into a biographical essay about the author.