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Activity Guide

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Play With Me

ABOUT THE STORY

Sad that the animals in the meadow are afraid to play with her, a little girl sits quietly by the water until she happily realizes that it might be better to let the animals come to her.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

Marie Hall Ets was born in Wisconsin and attended several colleges and universities, including the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts and the University of Chicago Art Institute. Ms. Ets' first book was published in 1935, and three later titles were award winners (*Oley*, *Sea Monster*, *Play With Me*, and *Nine Days to Christmas*). She continued her prolific career up to her death in 1984.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask the group to think about a time they've taken a walk in the woods or in the country. Did they see any animals? What kinds? Were the animals easy to approach or did they flee? Explain that in this story a little girl tries to play with the wild animals in a meadow.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- What were some of the animals the little girl met in the meadow? (grasshopper, bunny, snake, turtle, etc.)
- What happened each time she reached out to touch the animals? Why? (animals flee because they're afraid of her)
- What was the little girl doing when the animals started coming up to her? (sitting quietly by the pond)
- Which animal was the first to approach the little girl as she sat by the water? (grasshopper)
- The fawn gave the little girl a special surprise. What did it do? (licked her)

Vocabulary

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

dew	meadow	mosquito	plopped	shelling
acorn	bough	jabbered	scolded	zigzagging
fawn	slowpoke	milkweed		

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Language Arts: Get to the Root of the Matter

Explain what "root words" are. Discuss why the last letter of the root word is often doubled. Then write the following list of words from the story on the board. Have volunteers underline the root word in each of them.

Eating, leaped, jumping, waiting, sitting, plopped, shelling, jabbered, sneaking, zigzagging, picked, watched, crawled, chattered, hopped

Language Arts: Friends Forever Discussion

Ask the group to think of a time they had nobody else around to play with. What did they do? (Imagine that television, computers, and video games were off limits.) Would they turn to animals as a substitute for playmates? Which animals would be the most fun to play with?

Language Arts/Creative Writing: Which Would You Be?

Ask the students to select one of the animals from the story that they would most like to be. Then have them decide if they would most like to live in a zoo, a park, or in the country and tell why. Write a short story told from the viewpoint of the selected animal.

Art: Simple Drawings

Study the illustrations in the book. How many colors are used? How much detail is provided? How are the main elements of each page highlighted? Provide students with the necessary materials and have them create an illustration for the "Which Would You Be?" activity above, replicating the style of Marie Hall Ets.

Science/Research Skills: Wild and Free

In the story, the little girl encounters several wild animals. Divide the students into smaller groups and have each group research one of the animals in the story. Use nonfiction books, encyclopedias, etc. Write reports and present them to the class. (May be combined with an Internet activity.)

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.

Animals

See the "Wild and Free" activity above to research the animals found in the story.

Marie Hall Ets

Look up biographical information on the author/illustrator. What other books did she write? What were her interests besides writing?