

Teaching Notes

Waiting for Goliath

Written and illustrated by Antje Damm



Synopsis

Bear waits patiently for his friend. The robins fly to the south and the first snow falls. When Bear awakes from a long sleep he hears a noise like a hand sliding slowly across paper. Goliath is coming! But Goliath's identity is a big surprise.

The Author/Illustrator

Antje Damm is a celebrated children's writer and illustrator. Born in 1965 in Wiesbaden, Germany, she now lives with her husband and four children in a

half-timbered house near Giessen. She has worked as an architect and has written and illustrated over a dozen books for children.

Themes

This warm and surprising picture book has several themes.

The theme of friendship is evident. Bear loves his best friend, Goliath, and likes to describe how smart and strong his friend is as he waits with great anticipation for Goliath to arrive.

The themes of patience and loyalty are all illustrated as Bear waits through all the seasons for his friend, defends his friend's tardiness to Robin, and is understanding why it took Goliath so long to arrive.

Seasons, nature and the passage of time are other themes. Bear waits on a bench, under a tree, as blossom, leaves and snow fall.

A final theme explored is the ability to appreciate the unexpected, as when Goliath arrives his name appears to be somewhat of a misnomer!

Activities

1. Before reading the book, look at the cover image and title. Discuss what you think this story might be about?
2. Bear hears "a noise like a hand sliding slowly across paper." How many figures of speech can you find in this phrase?
3. Bear describes his friend Goliath. List the adjectives and superlatives he uses to do so. Choose a friend or family member to write a description of, using both physical and character traits. Next, in pairs, read your description aloud to your partner and get them to draw a picture of your description.
4. As a reader you can follow the seasons through the story. Choose your favourite season from the book. Imagine you are Bear or Robin. Think about how you would describe the physical scene, as well as your feelings about what is happening around you in your chosen season. In pairs, either describe the scene orally to a partner or write a descriptive paragraph or poem based on your thoughts.



5. Study the illustrations in the book. Do you like the style? Choose your favourite illustration from the book and create your own artistic interpretation of it, for example, a painting, drawing, photograph, model, poem, etc. Or, design your own illustrations for the cover and/or one page of text. Find another book illustrated by Antje Damm. Compare and contrast the illustrations. Are there many similarities or differences?
6. In groups, adapt the book for a puppet theatre performance in your classroom. Devise a script, create scenery, choose music and make puppets to represent each character. Act out your adaptation for your class. If you have access to a video camera, tape it.
7. In pairs, take turns to read the story aloud to one another. Discuss which is your favourite page and why? Do you agree with your partner's choice? Why/why not?
8. In pairs, discuss the ending of the book. Was it a surprise, funny, etc? Did you like it?
9. At the end of the book Bear and Goliath play on a swing. Imagine what other adventures and activities they might do next. Write, design and publish your own short picture book based on your story.
10. Review the book for your favourite magazine or website. What do you like about it? Why? What did you dislike about it? Why? Give it a rating, such as stars, or a number out of ten.