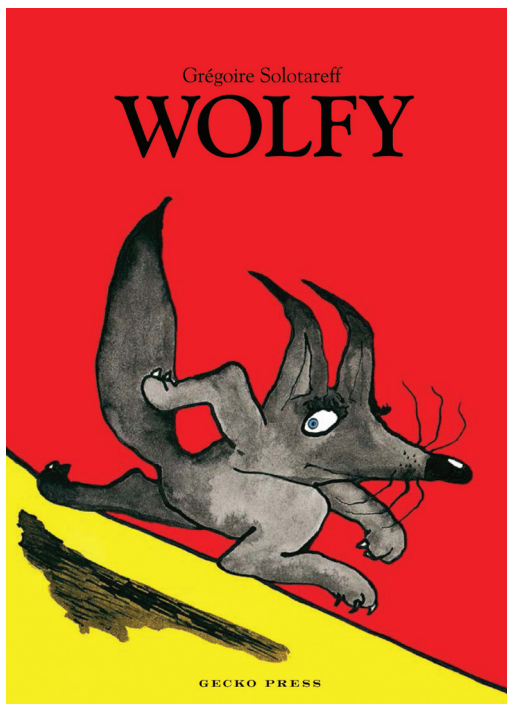


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Teaching Notes



Wolfy

By Grégoire Solotareff

Synopsis

Once upon a time there was a rabbit who had never seen a wolf, and a young wolf who had never seen a rabbit.

The pair meet and become good friends. Tom the rabbit teaches the wolf to play marbles, read, count and fish. Wolfy teaches Tom to run very, very fast.

But eventually their friendship is tested by the classic game *Who's-afraid-of-the-big-bad-wolf?*

Can the little rabbit and the young wolf remain best friends in all the world?

The Author

Grégoire Solotareff was born in 1953 in Alexandria, Egypt, where he spent his early childhood, moving to France with his family as a boy.

He began his career in medicine then published his first children's book in 1985. Since then he has published over 150 books for young people which have been translated throughout the world.

Themes

Wolfy is a wonderful story that explores themes of friendship and fear – who we choose to become friends with and how we form and deal with fears.

Friendship—Wolfy and Tom are unlikely friends. One is a wolf and the other a rabbit. However, they are quick to develop a friendship despite this.

Fear—A key reason that Tom and Wolfy become friends is that they don't pay attention to the fears and stereotypes we might expect them to have of each other. Wolfy does not view Tom as food to hunt and Tom chooses not fear Wolfy, until their game goes too far.

Stereotypes—A stereotype is a set idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong. For example, old people are forgetful or pigs are messy. This concept may be difficult for some younger readers to understand. However, others will have some awareness of stereotypes and how we often judge or preconceive people – and animals!

Level One Activities—Text (before and while reading)

1. Before you read the book, look at the cover (front and back) of the book. What can you tell about the story from the title, font, illustrations, and blurb? Think about the colours and style of illustrations and what they might tell you about what sort of story this is.

2. Either on your own or in pairs find the definition (meaning) of the following words that appear in the story and then use them in a new sentence:

- Accident
- Burrow
- Swore
- Gobbling
- Mistook
- Promise

3. Fear. Think about things that you are afraid of, why you might be afraid of them, and how you might change your mind about this. For examples, some people are scared of spiders, but many spiders are very small and harmless, they make beautiful webs, and do good things like catch flies and other indoor pests.

4. Friends. Think of two different animals who wouldn't usually be friends, then think of three reasons why they could actually be good friends. Discuss in pairs then share with the class.

Level Two Activities—Responding to the text (while reading)

1. Look at the first picture of Wolfy and his uncle. How does the picture make you feel? Think about the colours and shapes and sizes of the wolves and landscape. Why do you think Grégoire Solotareff has drawn them this way? Compare this picture to the first picture of Tom on the previous page. Do you think this picture is meant to make you feel a different way? Are there clues about what sort of characters they are in how the pictures are drawn?

2. Is Tom correct to think that wolves eat rabbits or is this a stereotype? What are some stereotypes about other animals? You might like to consider sheep (stereotype = followers, sloths, elephants, owls, dogs, cats, snakes).

3. When Tom is fishing with Wolfy, how do we know Tom feels differently about Wolfy compared to the other rabbits? How is this shown in the picture?

4. Wolfy realises that he has made Tom very afraid with the Who's-afraid-of-the-big-bad-wolf? game. Can you think of a time when you – or someone you know - has made someone else feel scared by mistake? How did you – or they – make it better? Do you have advice for other people about what to do when people are scared? What are good ways to calm down or reassure people? Discuss in pairs.

5. Look at the page that shows Tom's bad dream. How has Grégoire Solotareff shown that it is a bad dream? Think about the colours he has used, what the picture shows, and the sizes of different objects/characters in the picture.

Level Three Activities—Creating based on the text

1. Do you remember the first time that you saw a rabbit (or another animal)? Write a very short story describing what it was like the first time you saw a rabbit (or another animal) in real life. What do you remember about how they looked, moved, sounded, or smelled like?
2. Wolfy and Tom play Who's-afraid-of-the-big-bad-wolf? Do you know any other games about animals? Either teach other people in your class a game about animals or create your own in pairs. Make sure that it has clear rules and that people know how to “win”.
3. When Wolfy leaves Tom he sets off for the mountains carrying a bundle, which is a bag or sack made of cloth on the end of a stick that some people use instead of backpacks. Make your own bundle and pack it with supplies for an overnight trip.
4. Grégoire Solotareff uses only a few colours in each of his pictures. Draw your own picture of a rabbit or a wolf using only three colours.

Level Four Activities—Beyond the text

1. Hunting. At the beginning of the story, Wolfy's uncle is taking him hunting. With your class discuss what you know about hunting. Do you think that animals hunt differently from humans? Do you know of any rules for hunters? What are you allowed to hunt and what are you not allowed to hunt? What do you have to do to ensure that people are safe when hunting?
2. Burial. Tom helps Wolfy bury his dead uncle. Have you ever buried a pet? Did you do anything special, such as hold a ceremony (funeral) or put the pet in a box? Why do you think it's important to give animals and humans a funeral?
3. Full moon. Grégoire Solotareff has drawn a full moon in the picture of Wolfy and his uncle. Some people believe that wolves howl at full moons. This could be a stereotype (not necessarily true). Using the library or the Internet, find out if wolves really do howl at the moon and four more facts about these animals.
4. Tom lives in a burrow. What are some names for other places where animals live? For example, birds live in nests. Try and come up with at least four answers.
5. There are other well-known stories about wolves including Three Little Pigs and Red Riding Hood. Do you know why wolves are often “bad” characters in stories? How has Grégoire Solotareff shown that Wolfy is not just a bad character, but actually a good friend? Discuss in pairs.

