



The Paper Wagon

martha attema

illustrated by Graham Ross

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AR Quiz # 87647

About the Book

The rooster has been stolen by the fox. What is the little hen to do? Go to the shed and build a paper wagon, that's what. Two little white mice pull her paper wagon, and the little hen heads for the fox's house deep in the forest. On the way she meets a shiny needle, a hairy black spider, a fat cat and a big red brick. They all hitch a ride and want to help her save the fox from the rooster. Will they be on time to rescue the rooster?

About the Author

Born in the Netherlands, **martha attema** still collects folktales from Friesland. During the day, she works as a grade-one teacher in North Bay, Ontario. At night she likes to read and write stories. She now lives in a town named Powassan in the straw-bale house she helped build with her husband. She is very concerned about the environment, and together with her husband, she teaches students and adults how to take better care of our planet.

About the Writing

The story of *The Paper Wagon* was inspired by an old folktale from Friesland. After martha had read the tale, she found it so hilarious and absurd that she wanted to do something with it. During her research she discovered that the tale must have been recorded in the 1700s, the same time the folktale "The Bremen Town Musicians" was written. She realized she needed to make many changes to this story, because it was very violent and had a terrible ending. She thanks author/editor Maggie de Vries for suggesting that she should write this story for the Orca Echoes series.

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections*Prereading Ideas*

- Looking at the cover, who do you think are the main characters in this story?
- Where do you think the wagon is going?
- Do you think the two mice are strong enough to pull the heavy wagon?
- Can you tell what the wheels are made of?
- Who do you think is the strangest character on the wagon? Why?

Classroom Discussion Questions

1. In this story, the little hen is trying to rescue the rooster from the fox. When the little hen is on the way to the fox's house, the needle, the spider, the cat and the brick offer to help her, and she takes them along. Discuss how in this case it is better for the hen to try and rescue the rooster together with the other characters, instead of alone.
2. When the rescue operation becomes difficult, does the little hen give up? Give some examples of how she perseveres.
3. Discuss how the characters teach the fox a lesson. Do you think it worked? Why?
4. Would a paper wagon hold that many characters? Give a reason. How much do you think a little paper wagon would hold?
5. In the end, the little hen forgives the fox. Do you agree with her decision? How did the fox feel? How did it make you feel?

*Suggested Activities***Character Education**

Through discussion and role playing, students can get involved in the following topics related to this story: co-operation, perseverance, friendship, compassion and forgiveness.

Language Arts

- Write a short paragraph about your favorite character in the story and mention at least three things about this character.
- Write a new plan, how you would trick the fox.
- Write a poem about your favorite character and share it with the class.

- A list of difficult words: delicious (p.7) aroma (p.7) tender (p.7) herbs (p.8) scooted (p.8) parsley (p.8) chives (p.8) rosemary (p.8) sneaking (p.10) dangled (p.10) harnesses (p.12) injured (p.12) crease (p.13) swiftly (p.14) reins (p.16) tailor (p.18) ruins (p.23) rubble (p.23) scampered (p.36)

Math

Discuss and learn how to make the paper wagon using one square piece of paper. Fold it into 16 squares. In small groups discuss what would be the best choice for wheels (apples, marshmallows, cucumber slices, carrot slices). Each group selects different types of wheels. Predict which paper wagon will roll faster down the ramp. The one with apples, the one with cucumber slices, the one with carrot slices or the one with marshmallows. Test the wagons on a ramp. Make a graph to show if your predictions matched the outcome.

Science

Find some information on spiders and do a research project. Glue your information on Bristol board and display in the classroom.

Art

Make the paper wagon out of construction paper. Create the characters out of Plasticine, paper or valuable junk.

Drama

Make the characters out of paper bags. Turn a large box into a puppet stage. With a partner, students write and perform a scene from the story using the repetition from the text.

Making Soup

As a large group activity, ask each child to bring one vegetable from home. With adult assistance, the vegetables will be boiled and stirred. Let the soup simmer for about 30-45 minutes. Eat with crackers or French bread. The students write the recipe for the "Little Hen's Homemade Soup."

Other Titles and Websites of Interest

On chart paper compare and contrast the following stories. Find similarities and differences with the story of *The Paper Wagon*.

The Bremen Town Musicians

Henny Penny

The Little Red Hen

Stone Soup

Read books that have bad foxes and wolves like *Little Red Ridinghood*, *The Three Little Pigs*, *The Wolf and the Seven Kittens*, *The Gingerbread Man* and *Jemima Puddle Duck*.

Other Books by the Author from Orca Book Publishers

Daughter of Light

Hero

A Time to Choose

Awards and Reviews

A Time to Choose—Blue Heron Award winner, ALA Best Book nominee, Geoffrey Bilson Award nominee and Arthur Ellis Award nominee

Daughter of Light—Sydney Taylor Award finalist

Hero—Elementary Teachers' Federation Writer's Award winner, Silver Birch nominee, IODE Violet Downey nominee

"The plot of *The Paper Wagon* is remarkably silly. The reader is meant to suspend disbelief, appreciate the foolishness of it all and get a few laughs." —*CM Magazine*