

THE MARZIPAN PIG

The Marzipan Pig

By Russell Hoban

Themes: Feelings, Growth and Change, Music

Grade Level: 2–6

Running Time: 30 minutes

SUMMARY

This story's themes are the continuity and connections of life. The title character, a marzipan pig, falls behind a sofa and gets eaten by a mouse. The story then shifts to the mouse. The mouse, after a series of adventures running up and down a clock, goes outdoors and gets eaten by an owl. The owl ingests sweetness along with the mouse and falls in love with a taxi. The owl learns to ride in the cab and even figures out how to pay for his fare. Meanwhile, under the owl's tree, a flower grows. A bee visits the flower. Overcome by its sweetness, the bee falls asleep. Attempting to fly home at night, the bee lands in a window inhabited by a hibiscus. The hibiscus flower persuades the bee to dance for her by the moonlight. Meanwhile, another mouse watches the hibiscus flowers fall. This mouse makes herself a dance dress out of hibiscus petals. Her attempts to be a flower get her dropped out of a window, dumped in a postman's bag, and tossed to the owl. She escapes the owl, gets back inside and takes refuge in a package that has arrived in the mail. It proves to be another marzipan pig. The mouse eats the pig. At the end of the story, the mouse is dancing through the night in her hibiscus dress.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will watch and listen to a story told in relay form.
- Children will identify with feelings such as

loneliness, sadness, happiness, sweetness, and love.

- Children will appreciate how events, things and people in life are connected.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Introduce the story title and make sure students know what marzipan is. Ask them to predict the kinds of adventures that might happen to a pig made of candy. After someone predicts the pig will get eaten, warn students that the pig isn't the only thing that gets eaten in the story. Explain that the story will shift from character to character and encourage them to be on the lookout for what ties the characters together. Explain also that the story is set in Great Britain, where some words are different. The word "commons" is used instead of "park," for example, and the letter "p" is used to stand for "pence," or British pennies.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Ask students to recall details of the story's complicated plot. Then ask them to identify what ties each main character to the next main character. Elicit answers such as "sweetness" and "love." Ask students how they felt about each main character. Encourage them to identify and empathize with loneliness, sadness, fear, and other negative feelings.

Connect the story to storytelling and writing. Bake some gingerbread or sugar cookies in the shapes of animals, toys, flowers and people. Distribute the cookies at random. Then tell a relay story, with each student eating the cookie at the end of his or her section. Tape record the story and play it back to the class.

Connect the story to music and dance by having students compose and perform a musical version of the story. Encourage them to simplify the plot rather than acting out every scene. The program presents many musical possibilities. Students might want to write a song to the tune of "Hickory Dickory Dock," compose their own words for "When the Saints Go Marching In" and perform a hibiscus ballet. The long conversation between the owl and the trumpet-playing cabdriver will be especially amusing for students to act out.

Connect the story to science by having students diagram the plot in terms of food chains and food webs. Make sure they include the people, especially the boy who thought he was getting a replacement for his lost marzipan pig.

Other videos in the **Critics' Choice Collection** available from Weston Woods include:

Jazztime

The Story of the Dancing Frog

by Quentin Blake

Five Lionni Classics *by Leo Lionni*

Nightingale *by Hans Christian Andersen*

The Little Match Girl

by Hans Christian Andersen

The Red Shoes *by Hans Christian Andersen*

The Marzipan Pig *by Russell Hoban*

Whitewash *by Michael Sporn*

The Talking Eggs

Ralph S. Mouse *by Beverly Cleary*

Runaway Ralph *by Beverly Cleary*

The Mouse and the Motorcycle

by Beverly Cleary

Uncle Elephant *by Arnold Lobel*

Stanley and the Dinosaurs

based on the book STANLEY by Syd Hoff

CALL 1-800-243-5020 TO ORDER THESE AND OTHER WESTON WOODS VIDEOS!

This guide may be photocopied for free distribution without restriction