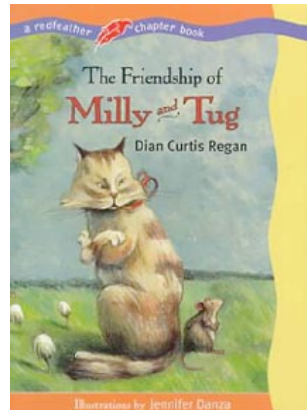


THE FRIENDSHIP OF MILLY & TUG Teaching Guide



SUMMARY:

As heartwarming as they are humorous, these five easy-to-read stories seamlessly blend the battles and joys of one special friendship.

Ever-determined Tug (a mouse) shows up Milly (a cat) in a spelling bee. Milly gets even when she scares Tug silly with a story about her cousin, Dagger, who is a quick and quiet cat. And, when Tug sets out into the wilderness to seek good fortune, danger follows. But Milly, his very best friend, comes through.

BEFORE READING:

1. Discuss the title and cover art with students. Who are Milly & Tug? How can a cat and mouse be friends? Why is this unusual?
2. Read the back cover. What does "rare" mean? What does "best dinner" mean?

Discuss animal instincts. Would a cat and mouse ever be "friends" in real life?

Can students think of other stories in which "natural enemies" are friends? (Tom & Jerry)

3. Look at the table of contents. Since this is a beginning chapter book, students may not have not been introduced to contents pages.

Discuss each chapter title and predict what the chapter will be about. Encourage students to imagine what conflict or problem the chapter holds.

Discuss the concept of "story=conflict" with a simple theme:

Boy has no gift for Dad's birthday. (Conflict/Problem)

Tries to buy gift, but has no money. (Story building with tension)

Discovers he can make the perfect gift. (Climax)

Father loves gift. (Resolution)

4. Make flashcards for new vocabulary words, such as: chickadee, petunia, yodel, drama, crew, stunt, knapsack, fortune, meadow, spooky, dagger, dedication, and hollyhock.

WHILE READING:

CHAPTER ONE: THE SPELLING BEE

1. Host a spelling bee. Choose teams. Set the rules for the contest. In addition to using words from the book, ask each student to contribute one new word to the contest.

2. What are silent letters? How do they change a vowel sound? Put a list of words on the board and have students go to the board and put a slash through the silent letters.

Possible words: dough, island, bean, clothes, cocoa, daughter, doubt, eight, friend.

3. Plurals: when do we add /s/ or /es/?

4. Introduce homophones: be/bee, flour/flower, red/read, etc.

5. What is a "master speller"? Can anyone name a "master" of something? (ie: master basketball player, master singer, master hopscotch player?)

How does the word "master" relate to "ringmaster" (at a circus) or "taskmaster" (a teacher!)?

CHAPTER TWO: MILLY'S PLAY

1. Define and use the following words in a sentence: posed, fans, famous, branch, weep, pranced, toppled, style, bowed.

2. What is the significance of the names: Angora and Aunt Rhodant? Make up other "cat names" and "mouse names."

3. What is a stunt? What was Tug's "stunt?"

Write simple or silly "stunts" on pieces of paper and have students draw one to perform in front of the class: a somersault, jump off a chair, wiggle their ears, whistle Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, skip once around the room, sing the alphabet song, etc.

4. What happens to a verb when you add /er/or/ar/ to it? (Act/actor, sing/singer, play/player). The verb becomes a noun.

Give verb lists and challenge students to find all the nouns that turn into "real" words, with the addition of /er/or/ar. (ie: some words may not be common or make sense: turn/turner.)

5. Discuss plays. What plays have students seen?

6. What is the difference between a comedy and a drama? A musical and an opera?

CHAPTER THREE: GOOD FORTUNE

1. What is good fortune? Do you have to "seek" good fortune or can it come to you?

2. What kind of a noise woke Milly? Try to make the noises Tug made based on the description in the story.

3. What is a hero? Ask students who their heroes are? Why?

4. What is yodeling? Can anyone in the class do it?

5. What did Tug mean by "supper crunchies?" Have student invent a recipe for Milly's supper crunchies. What ingredients would please a cat?

6. Trace Tug's journey by drawing his starting point on the board, then adding to it as the story is read. What does a meadow look like? Who lives there? What about a forest? How does it differ from a meadow? What kind of foliage surrounds a lake?

7. Collect pieces of bark, leaves, and twigs and let students build a boat like Tug's and try to sail it in a tub of water.

8. What did Tug mean when he said "I found good fortune?" What did he find?

9. What would you consider "good fortune?" Where would you look for it?

10. Study the pictures in the story. Is Tug really alone on his trip? How does he get out of the pond? Do you think Milly followed him the entire time?

11. Where does Tug's trip end? (The drawing on the board should be a circle.)

CHAPTER FOUR: TUG'S BEDTIME TAIL

1. What is a dagger? What are other names for it? (Knife, blade, cutlass, scalpel, dirk, lancet) Have students look up each word and discuss why there are so many names for one object.

2. Discuss (or introduce) synonyms. What other common objects have more than one name. (eg: Book=reader, speller, text, textbook, primer, tome, manual, handbook, guidebook, edition, publication, story.)

3. Study the moon. Discuss its phases. What kind of moon was in the story?

4. Discuss fainting. What would cause you to faint? Are fainting and sleeping the same thing? Why did Milly think her bedtime tale worked on Tug?

5. Study the pictures. Something is happening in the illustrations that isn't happening in the text. (Milly collects fireflies in a jar to light the night.) Tell the story that the words don't tell.

CHAPTER FIVE: A TRUE STORY

1. Discuss the difference between a true story and a made-up story. Introduce the terms "fiction" and "non-fiction."

2. Give each student the opportunity to tell the class about his/her favorite book.

3. Discuss the parts of a book: title, cover art, dedication, copyright page, contents, story, flap copy, and author bio.

4. Every story has a beginning, middle, and end. Dissect this story and decide where each part falls.

5. Have students write a "how we met" story about a fellow classmate.

6. Why do you think the illustrator started this story with the picture on page 48?

AFTER READING:

1. Discuss friendship. Talk about what makes a good friend and how two people become friends.
2. Find pen pals. Ask another class or school. Correspondence can be sent in bulk. Or, find a school online and e-mail a query about setting up a pen pal exchange. Students at the Venezuelan school listed on the author's website are interested in exchanging letters with students in America. (<http://www.diancurtisregan.com>)

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM:**MATH:**

*Discuss scorekeeping. How are different sports scored?
(Baseball=runs, football=touchdowns, basketball=baskets, etc.)

How is a spelling bee scored?

What about games students play in gym? (Soccer, track events, etc.)

Have students invent math problems for the rest of the class using any sport: (ie: If the Tigers hit a homerun and the bases are loaded, how many runs do they get? 4)

(If Jennifer runs 6 miles in 60 minutes, how many minutes does it take her to run each mile? 10 minutes.)

(If Eric won four games of checkers and Anthony won seven games, how many games did they play in all? 11)

This project can be more appealing if you use bordered paper with appropriate themes. (Bordered paper can be made from computer graphics or bought commercially.)

*Calculate distances: How big was Tug's meadow? How deep was the lake? How tall were the trees in the forest?

WRITING ACTIVITIES:

*Assemble small groups to write a "beginning, middle, and end" based on their dissection of "A True Story." Give topic ideas (ie: a trip to Grandma's house, visiting a gas station, going to the doctor, etc.)

*Make up a story about different animals who are friends. (ie: a cow and a giraffe, a hippo and a bunny, etc.)

*Write a "true" story (nonfiction) about either cats or mice. What do they look like? What do they eat? Where do they live? What scares them? Etc.

*Pretend that Tug wrote letters home to Milly on his journey. Pair off students, and have one write as Tug, while the other answers as Milly.

ORAL & LISTENING SKILLS:

*Host "Fan Day," and invite students to tell the class what they are a fan of. Dress the part: a football fan, a fan of Olympic skating, an autograph seeker, a fan of astronauts, movie stars, etc.

*Poetry.

Have students write:

F
R
I
E
N
D
S

Then create a poem, using each letter as the first word of the line. Recite to the class.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

*In Good Fortune, Tug almost drowned. Discuss swimming and boating safety.

*In Tug's Bedtime Tale, Milly talked about Dagger hunting for fun. Discuss hunting as a sport.

*Hold a mock debate or trial with one person defending the right of a mouse to be best friends with a cat, and vice versa.

SCIENCE:

*Discuss predators. All predators' eyes face forward. The eyes of animals of prey are on the sides of the head, facing opposite directions.

Which kind of eyes do cats have? Mice? What does this mean in

reference to predators and prey?

Based on the above, which of the following animals would be predators and which would be animals of prey?

Horses, monkeys, rabbits, humans, snakes, bears, pigs, chickens, deer, lions, elephants, sharks.

*A Hawk tries to catch Tug in the forest. Why? What other kinds of "dangerous" animals could Tug have encountered in the forest? In the meadow? On the lake?

CRITICAL THINKING:

*Discuss the origin of names and how they often reflected one's status in life (Sir, Duke, etc.), their occupation (Miller, Taylor/ tailor, etc.) or their family (John's son=Johnson)

*Have students invent an explanation for the names of Aunt Rhodant and Angora. How do they think Milly got her name? Tug?

*Ask students to discuss how their last names might relate to their ancestors' jobs or position in life.

Expand: Have students "interview" parents or grandparents about their genealogy. Ask them to write down the surnames of relatives as far back as they can remember. Plot the answers on a Family Tree.

Online, students can go to: <http://www.familysearch.org>, and type in their family name to see if information about the lineage of that name has been recorded.

Find a name reference book in the library and have students look up the ancient meanings of their names. (Eg from the author: Diana is Latin and means "Goddess of the Moon." Curtis is French and means "courteous." Regan is Celtic and means "royal or king".)

*Why is the story of how Milly & Tug met positioned as the last chapter in the book? Do you think it should be the first chapter? Why or why not?

ART and BULLETIN BOARD IDEAS:

*Draw a frieze illustrating all the aspects of Milly and Tug's friendship.

*Create a map showing Milly's house, the meadow, the forest, and the pond. Plot Tug's journey.

COMPREHENSIVE SKILLS:

*Act out Milly's play. Appoint a "crew" and a director. Perform for other classes or younger grade levels. Ask the music teacher to provide background music. Discuss with students when the music should be fast, cheerful, scary, or sad.

*Have students invent another play for Milly and Tug to act in. It can either be based on one of the other stories in the book or it can be a new adventure.

*Categorization. Using Tug's strategies in The Spelling Bee to categorize flowers, birds, and other nouns. (eg: FLOWER=rose, orchid, lily, pansy, dandelion, etc.)

Give students (or small groups) thirty seconds to name as many items as they can in a certain category. (This is a great time filler while waiting in line or for other students to finish a task.)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Special thanks to Tonya Pember for creating this guide. Ms. Pember has been a Speech/Language Pathologist for twenty years and tutors high risk students in reading. She is an avid children's literature fan who collects ABC books. Arthur, Madeline, Clifford, Curious George, and Snoopy share her desk space.