Desperate Librarians
or
When You Need a Few New Ideas
by Judy Freeman

It's that time of year. Your energy is flagging, your good ideas are drying up, and the kids are cutting up. Your crying out for a recharge, and a vacation to Paris is not in the cards. You know what they say: a change is as good as rest. Desperate for a few good teaching ideas to get you up and running again?

Here is your one-stop shopping list of some memorable recent titles for reading aloud, booktalking, storytelling, creative drama. For each title, we'll explore a range of follow-up activities, or, as I like to call them, "germs"—easy-to-implement ideas and strategies which you can take and grow or germinate as you see fit for your study. Included is a list of related titles in case you want to flesh out your story hour or lesson into a longer thematic with your students additional good books on the same theme, topic, or by the same author.

Note that most of these books are picture books. Though some may seem to be designated for, grades K-2, there splendid choices to use with all grades, K-6, as the starting point for easy, fun, and creative follow-ups. Picture ideal for exploring genres and literary devices, such as character, setting, plot, theme, and voice. Think of their books, from which you can jump off in any direction.

PICTURE BOOKS

The Importance of Books and Reading; Following Directions

Thomas, Shelley Moore. Take Care, Good Knight. Illus. by Paul Meisel. Dutton, 2006. (Gr. PreK-2)

When the old, old wizard asks his three little dragon friends to look after his cats for a few days, they are happy. The wizard has left them a note with written instructions and drawings showing just what to do. It says, "Give the cats food from the cupboard. Put the cats to sleep in their bed at night." Unfortunately, the do not know how to read. Following just the pictures, the dragons conclude the wizard wants them to take the cats to the lake, put them in the cupboard, and take them camping under the stars. Not surprisingly, the cats are not happy. Luckily, their friend and protector, the Good Knight, intervenes. This new addition to the Good Knight series is the same beginning chapter book format, but is instead a regular-sized picture book, with full-bleed watercolor illustrations. The green dragons and lots of wide-eyed kitties. One of those "you really need to know how to read to get all world" books, it's not preachy, just funny.

Germ:
Ask your listeners what other needs the three dragons might have where reading would be important. And ma-to-life connection. Ask: "Why is it important to know how to read? What's so great about reading, anyway? How did it change your life?" Make a poster of their responses to hang in your classroom or library for some extra reading.

This story is also perfect as a kickoff to a following directions exercise. Cut and paste, modify, or rewrite the "(http://novelst4.epnet.proxy2.lib.uwo.ca:2048/NovApp/novelist/print.aspx?sid=95A39...)
Follow Directions?" worksheet below to fit the needs of your children, grades 1 to 6. As you hand out a copy to complete, say to the group, simply, "Let's see how good you are at following directions."

What usually happens is they don't follow the directions at all, and it's quite amusing to see them pounding on bowing, and singing. One third grade teacher told me, "I did a version of this activity when I was in third grade changed my life." I did it, too, when I was in college, and, along with most of the other students, made a fool of this day, I read directions carefully.

**CAN YOU FOLLOW DIRECTIONS?**

**Directions:**
**Read everything before you do anything.**

1. Write your name on your paper.
2. Write your birthday underneath your name.
3. Count on your fingers how many months there are until your next birthday.
4. Raise your hands, holding up a finger for each month until your birthday.
5. Smile if you like birthday cake and ice cream. Laugh out loud if you LOVE birthday cake and ice cream.
6. If you are younger than ten, pound on the table and call out, "I am young!"
7. If you are older than ten, pound on the table and call out, "I am old!"
8. If your birthday is this month, stand up, point to yourself, and sing out, "Happy birthday to me!"
9. If your birthday is not this month, stand up, bow, and sing out, "Happy birthday to you!"
10. Now that you have read everything, do only number 1 on this page.

**Related Titles about Literacy**

- **Auch, Mary Jane, and Herm Auch.** *Souparchicken*. Holiday House, 2003.
- **Bloom, Becky.** *Wolf!* Orchard, 1999.

**Other Titles in the Good Knight Series**

- **Thomas, Shelley Moore.** *Get Well, Good Knight*. Dutton, 2002.
- **Thomas, Shelley Moore.** *Good Night, Good Knight*. Dutton, 2000.
- **Thomas, Shelley Moore.** *Happy Birthday, Good Knight*. Dutton, 2006.

**Making Connections with Books; Story Chains**

- **Donaldson, Julia.** *Charlie Cook's Favorite Book*. Illus. by Axel Scheffler. Dial, 2006. (Gr. PreK-4)
Curled up in his favorite chair, a boy called Charlie Cook is reading his favorite book, all about a pirate who financed containing a book about Goldilocks, who is reading Baby Bear's favorite book about a bold and fearless kid reading a book . . . Succeeding book characters read about a well-read frog, a jewel thief, a greedy crocodile, full circle, a ghost who "... put her head back on again to read her favorite book . . . about a cozy armchair, called Charlie Cook." Amiable pencil, ink, watercolor, colored pencil, and crayon illustrations are drawn inside like book pages, so it feels like you are reading a book within a book.

Germ:
To recap this circular story, look at the titles on the book spines drawn on the endpapers, which will help children whole sequence. Ask your readers to describe their favorite books, and then to speculate what books their favorite character might like to read.

Or have them create a more expansive Book Chain. We want our readers to segue from one book to another in a sequence. For this associative game, you can use picture books, fiction titles, or both, depending on the age of the audience.

Below is an example of a Book or Story Chain. As you describe each link, hold up the book and show its cover. Each title leads to a related one, until you come full circle back to the original book.

Sample Book Chain:

- Gritch the Witch from *Piggie Pie* (by Margie Palatini; Clarion, 1995) is reading . . . *The True Story of the Pigs* (by Jon Scieszka; Viking, 1989).
- Charlotte, the spider from *Charlotte's Web*, is reading . . . *The Spider and the Fly* (Mary Botham Howitt, illustrated by Tony diTerlizzi; Simon & Schuster, 2002).
- The fly from *The Spider and the Fly* is reading . . . *Hit Fly Guy* (by Tedd Arnold; Scholastic, 2005).
- Fly Guy is reading . . . *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly* (by Simms Taback; Viking, 1997).
- The Old Lady is reading . . . *I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Pie* (by Alison Jackson; Dutton, 1997).
- That Old Lady is reading . . . *Piggie Pie*.

Working in small groups, have children first think of a book character they know and love, and then decide which character is reading.

They can present their Book Chains aloud, holding up the actual books if possible, and even make posters, illustrating drawings of each character.

Related Titles about Readers and Reading


Other Books by Julia Donaldson


Introducing Nursery Rhymes and Parodies; Personification


When somebody put on a phonograph record with that "Hey Diddle Diddle" tune, the Dish and the Spoon could ran away once again, sailing together to New York City where they soon became a famous act in vaudeville. A tells it, the Dish acquired a taste for the high life, and before long their money was gone. Unable to pay back a the sharp and shady Carving Knife Gang, the Dish and Spoon turned to bank robbery, but were quickly captured deported. What a sad, sordid (and wildly funny) tale the Spoon tells, and how far the fall for the hapless coupl after Spoon does his time in prison, they are ultimately reunited and redeemed. The aura of silent melodrama movies infuses Mini Gray's action-packed paintings which burst with clever details.

GERM:
For the younger set, first review the nursery rhymes they know and recite or sing them together. Show them I nursery rhymes from the 398.8 shelves of your library. To introduce the original rhyme on which Mini Grey's s pull out various props from a picnic basket: an old flowered plate and a big spoon, and a puppet or toy cow, cat and fiddle, too. Have eight children at a time take charge of one item each and recite the rhyme, acting it out with props. See below for some other amusing picture books which take on "Hey Diddle Diddle" with attitude.

Students can rewrite and illustrate the nursery rhyme with new sets of rhyming words. Here's an example crea kindergartners at Van Holten School in Bridgewater, New Jersey:

Hey Diddle Diddle, the cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the sun.
The little dog laughed to see such sport,
And the hot dog ran away with the bun.

Older readers can write up and illustrate sagas of other nursery rhyme characters. What became of Miss Muff What are Jack and Jill doing these days? How's Humpty Dumpty feeling?

All readers can make Wanted Posters. Have students work in pairs or trios to create a portrait of a nursery rhy and a profile in the following categories. Here's what one second grader at Van Holten School wrote:

**WANTED:** The Muffin Man  
**CRIME:** The Little Old Woman's children are missing.  
**CLUES:** There were muffins all over the yard where the children used to be.  
**POSSIBLE SUSPECT:** The Muffin Man, for leaving muffins around her yard.  
**REWARD:** Whoever finds the children will get $100. Please return them.

Related Titles about Hey Diddle Diddle

Stevens, Janet, and Susan Stevens Crummel. *And the Dish Ran Away with the*

Other Nursery Rhyme-Related Picture Books


Other Books by Mini Grey


The Alphabet and Alliteration


In his first children's book, comic-book illustrator Bob McLeod offers up a splendid alphabet of 26 superheroes and female, with an alliterative sentence describing each one's powers and defenses against bad guys. "Astro-alarm for an alien attack," is the caption for the first muscular hunk, gliding through space in his skintight blue spacesuit. "He avoids asteroids! He has asthma!" are other comments on his page. Then there's Bubble-Man ('Goo Girl ("Gross!"), Laughing Lass ("Her lips are like, large!")), and even Power Pup ("Protects pups from the p-""). Children will pore over each garish and gorgeously colorful picture. McLeod says, "I drew it on paper, inked it and india ink, and scanned it into the computer and colored it digitally with Photoshop." The result is, like, WO

GERM:
Children can draw themselves as superheroes, devising a name, an alliterative description of special powers, a home, a uniform, and a background scenario. One third-grader at Adamsville School in Bridgewater, New London, captioned her drawing as follows: "The Super Smelly Sorcerer soars high above seagulls shooting smelly stuff from Somerville. She smells skunked while putting spells on slimy slugs."

Related Titles about Superheroes and Action Figures


Related Titles Using Alliteration

Characterization; Best Friends in Books

Henkes, Kevin. *Lilly's Big Day*. Illus. by the authors. Greenwillow, 2006. (Gr. PreK-2)

"It will be the biggest day of my life," says insouciant mouse Lilly when her beloved teacher Mr. Slinger announces planning to marry Ms. Shotwell, the school nurse. Seeing her practicing her flower girl steps, Lilly's parents asl Slinger has actually asked her to be in his wedding. "Not yet," she tells them. When Mr. Slinger breaks the sh that he has asked his own niece, Ginger, to be the official flower girl, he offers Lilly a job as Ginger's assistant. ceremony begins, Ginger freezes, too scared to walk down the aisle, but Lilly's quick thinking saves the day.

GERM:
Talk about weddings and how they work, or even stage a mock wedding: make tissue paper flowers, sing a rel Comes the Bride," blow wedding bubbles (no messy cleanup), drink cider, eat cupcakes, and, of course, put or do Interpretive Dance: the Flower Girl. Introduce Lilly in her companion books: *Chester's Way* (1988), *Julius, I the World* (1990), and *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* (1996).


Lilly is a strong-willed and unforgettable character. Ask your listeners to speculate what other characters in chi might be Lilly's best friend. Who would be her worst enemy? What she would be like as a friend? Have children draw a story of what they'd do if they got to spend a day with Lilly.

Discussion Point: What other book characters would you like to have as a best friend (or worst enemy) and wh

Personification, Point of View, and Setting


Brrrr! It's cold and dangerous in the place where Papa Shivers and his family live, all huddled together for warm cardboard box. Grandma says, "Cold we are and cold we'll always be." When Papa sets off to find a warmer pl on Buttery Cliff, and is taken away by a monster, which children will see is a big human hand. One by one, the taken away until only young Sonny is left. Zelinsky's deliciously busy pastels show a whole other side of the re the inside. You'll never look at refrigerator magnets the same way again.

GERM:
Listeners will delight in reciting the bedtime story Mama tries to tell to Sonny each night, ending with an "OUC the "PHOOMPH" noise of the refrigerator door closing; and identifying all the geographical areas and foods in tl book would also make a great Reader's Theater for your actors to perform.

Talk it over: Where else might the Shivers go and what trouble might they get into in, say, the laundry room c yard?

Children can bring in refrigerator magnets and write stories about their perceived adventures. Carol Diggory S* Fight!* is another look at what goes on inside the refrigerator late one night.

Related Titles about Food


Related Titles about Personification


Map Skills


"Simon, please try not to lose anything today," says his older sister Adèle as they head home from school thro streets of Paris. In short order, as they wend their way through the open air market, the park, the natural hist the outdoor puppet show, and the art museum, Simon loses his drawing, books, scarf, gloves, hat, crayons, kr and sweater. Lucky for him, all the kind and helpful folks they meet along the way show up at his house later to return everything he has left behind. What makes this book such a pleasure to pore over are the meticulous pen and ink and watercolor illustrations that give you a dazzling virtual tour of early twentieth-century Paris in

GERM:
First off, this is a finding book. Each item that Simon loses can be spotted somewhere in the picture. His scarf, is snagged on the tooth of a huge dinosaur skeleton at the natural history museum. (In a nod to Ludwig Beme *Madeline*, you'll even spot Miss Clavel leading a line of little girls in the park.) If you have a Smart Board, you can each picture up on the screen so kids can see all the details and scout out Simon's missing possessions.

Second, it's a book just waiting to be incorporated into your maps lessons. Have them use map terminology to location of each item, such as, "Simon's knapsack is under the cat, east of Simon, and south of the strawberry an old map of Paris on the endpapers with a legend identifying the street or place where Simon loses each item that map and have children locate each place. Children can map their own routes home from school. Draw an in your classroom or library and photocopy it for each small group of explorers. Hide a series of small items (such crayons, a toy, or a box of animal crackers) in the room, and mark their locations on the map with an X. Each then use the map to locate one of the objects.

Related Titles about Paris


Related Titles about Finding and Losing Things


Related Titles about Maps and Mapping
Ernst, Lisa Campbell. *Stella Louella’s Runaway Book.*

Related Titles Written and/or Illustrated by Barbara McClintock


Appreciating the Absurd; Making Butter


It's summer, but as young dairy farmer Manny says, "You can't exactly go on vacation when you have five hug
Nevertheless, the resourceful boy loads Bossy and all the other cows aboard a fleet of buses for a road trip to
The pen and ink and watercolor illustrations are deliriously funny, with little sidebars of cow facts and balloon
the cows' very silly comments and lots of mishaps along the way. They sing "Old MacDonald" on the bus, and
make a pit stop to use the restrooms, it takes a very long time. The double page spread of cows in the Niagara
shop is a riot. And when they run out of cash, the cows go into the butter business, jumping over the falls with
barrels of cream.

GERM:
Older students can investigate basic facts about Niagara Falls in a book, encyclopedia, or online
(http://www.niagara2.lib.uwo.ca:2048 and http://www.niagarafallsstatepark.com.proxy2 lib.uw contain basic information). Make a list of questions for them to answer, such as: How high are the American
Canadian Falls? (180 feet versus 170 feet)Who was the first European traveler to document and describe the F
writing? (French priest, Father Louis Hennepin, after accompanying explorer LaSalle on his a 1678 expedition)
name of the boat that you can ride for a tour of the Falls? How much does it cost for a ride? (The Maid of the
for adults; $6.75 for children 6 to 12; free for kids 5 ands under) How much would it cost for your whole famili
will vary) What is the weather at the Falls this time of year? (answers will vary)

Bossy the cow says, "Next summer we should go to Washington!" Kids can map out that trip, figuring how the
there and what they'll see.

Bring in a carton or two of heavy cream so kids can find out first hand how to churn it into butter. There’s a re
back inside cover of the book. Whether you are shaking the cream in a container or whisking it with a wire whi
eggbeater, sing a rousing chorus of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" as you work. Take a break midway when the
into whipped cream and give everyone a taste. When it gets to the butter stage, spread it on crackers for all to

Meet another tortoise who goes over Niagara Falls in Sunny Boy!: The Life and Times of a Tortoise by Candace

Related titles about Cows


**Related Titles about Niagara Falls**


**The caldecott Medal; Looking at Fantasy; Ocean Studies**


On a summer's day down the shore, a blonde-haired boy investigates the unusual old-fashioned box camera at his feet. "Melville underwater camera" it says on the case. Taking the roll of film he finds to the one-hour print is dumbfounded by the resulting color prints of vibrant underwater life. There's a red mechanical fish, a blue octopus, a book to his young'uns, and a spaceship with little green-faced aliens taking their own photos of seahorse. unusual is the last print of a girl holding a photo of a boy holding a photo. The boy examines the picture with his glass and then uses his microscope to find that the photos date back several generations to the turn of the last century.

**GERM:**

Wiesner's latest wordless fantasy is filled with marine life frolicking in a most un-fish-like way. Ask your viewer voice-over narration as you turn each page. Before revealing the final page, ask them what they think the boy with his extraordinary camera.

Children can then write captions or dialogue for each of the photos of underwater life. For instance, what book octopus be reading aloud, and what is the story he is reading? (It would be so helpful if the publisher would make mini-posters of those underwater pictures; in the meantime, an extra copy of the book will do.)

On the final page, we see a girl on a faraway beach retrieving the camera from the water. What kinds of photo when she develops the film? Children can draw those fantastical underwater scenes, photo-style, based both on the images and their imaginations.

Note that this is Wiesner's fifth Caldecott Medal! He won silver honors for *Free Fall* and *Sector 7*, and gold medals for *Three Pigs* and *Tuesday*. He's a one-man Caldecott lesson for introducing the medal. Find out more about the medal at: http://www.ala.org.proxy2.lib.uwo.ca:2048/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawds/caldecottmedal/caldecottmedal.html

Here is a good interactive swimming song to sing after reading with Flotsam.

**The Swimming Pool Song**

(To the tune of "Sailing, Sailing, Over the Bounding Main")

Swimming, Swimming (arms do crawl stroke)  
In my swimming pool (make rectangle with index fingers)  
When days are hot (fan face with hands)  
When days are cold (Hug arms)  
In my swimming pool (make rectangle with index fingers)  
Side stroke (do side stroke with arms)  
Breast stroke (do breast stroke with arms)
Fancy diving too (with hands together, dive up and down)  
Don't you wish that you had (wag index finger)  
Nothing else to do (hold palms open)  
But . . .

The first time, sing the whole song as you do each motion. The second time, leave off the first line ("Swimming and just do the pantomime. Each time you repeat the verse, leave off one more line, and just pantomime the giggles), and end with only one word spoken: "BUT."

**Related Titles about the Ocean**

- **Cowan, Catherine.** *My Life with the Wave.* Lothrop, 1997.

**Other Wordless or Near-Wordless Adventures**

- **Faller, Regis.** *The Adventures of Polo.* Roaring Brook, 2006.

**Other Weird Adventures**


**Other Books by David Wiesner:**

- **Wiesner, David.** *Sector 7.* Clarion, 1999.

**NONFICTION**

**Truss, Lynn.** *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: Why, Commas Really Do Make a Difference!* Illus. by Bonni Putnam, 2006. (Gr. 1-6)

Based on the author's best-selling adult book of the same title, this amusing illustrated guide to the well-place just the ticket for punctuation-deficient children and their anxious teachers. First there's the joke about the pen because of misplaced comma, brings a sandwich and his bow and arrows to the library and then eats, shoots and arrows. The Introduction states, "Commas can create havoc when they are left out or put in the wrong spot." Each of the sentences is accompanied with a pair of whimsical pen-and-ink and watercolor illustrations that sure show the comma or lack of comma can make. "Eat here, and get gas," it says below a picture of cars filling up at the pump, facing page, "Eat here and get gas" shows a woman at a restaurant catapulting through the air, fueled by the...
just eaten.

**GERM:**
Make a sentence strip for each page, sans the comma, and have children decide, after examining each illustrat
punctuate each sentence. At the back of the book is explanation and thumbnail picture of each example. Pair t
Robin Pulver's *Punctuation Takes a Vacation* for a fresh look at grammar rules we struggle to master, though t
go a long way in making the subject (and verb) more invigorating.

Cathy Lyttle, fourth-grade teacher at Adamsville School in Bridgewater, New Jersey, had her students write an
new pairs of sentences, using Truss's book for guidance and inspiration. One child wrote, "Kevin roasted marst
his sister and his friend ate them all." On the other side of the page, the next sentence reads, "Kevin roasted r
and his sister, and his friend ate them all." Why, commas really do make a difference! (Especially to Kevin's si:

**Related Titles about Punctuation**


**POETRY AND FOLKLORE**

**INVENTED ANIMALS**

**Prelutsky, Jack.** *Behold the Bold Umbrellaphant: And Other Poems*. Illus. by Carin Berger. Greenw
(Gr. 2-6)

Revisiting the scrambled animal motif of *Scranimals*, the beloved children's poet Jack Prelutsky offers poetic ar
descriptions of seventeen new and zany creatures, from Bizarre Alarmedillos to the tearful Zipperpotamus. C
is this an arresting book to examine, with collage illustrations that look old-fashioned and weirdly new at the s
incorporating background paper taken from notebooks and old ledgers and music scores.

**GERM:**
Brainstorm a new list of portmanteau-like animals. Think of an object and see if the beginning or ending letter
with the name of an animal, as in the author's Pantherometer, a black cat whose tail shows the temperature
can then compose a poetic description of the animal's characteristics, and craft a portrait. Fourth-graders at Ol
in Branchburg, New Jersey, made collage illustrations and wrote about wonderful new creatures they dreamed the
Podigator (1-pod + alligator), the Chican (chicken + Campbell's soup can, a la Andy Warhol), and the fork
porcupine with forks for quills).

For more portmanteau wordplay, read the poem "Jabberwocky" from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glas:
to Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and then share chapter six, where Alice meets up with Humpty-Dumpty i
word-by-word explanation of the confusing poem. Find the poem online at
http://www.sabian.org.proxy2.lib.uwo.ca:2048/Alice/lchap06.htm and duplicate copies for all to read with yo

Do note that in 2006, the Poetry Foundation named Jack Prelutsky the first Children's Poet Laureate. Find mon

**Related Titles about Mixed-Up Animals**


Other Titles by Jack Prelutsky


GEOGRAPHY POEMS AND PICTURES


Poet Diane Siebert has written rhyming odes to twenty-six towns, monuments, and natural wonders across the poems are accompanied by large evocative illustrations, with mediums including acrylic, collage, watercolor, oil and photography that celebrate "the colors, diversity, and rich textures of America." A map at the front of the pinpoints the setting of each poem, starting with Lucy the Elephant, the six-story elephant-shaped building do in Margate, New Jersey, my own state.

GERM:
Children can research and write poems and create accompanying art about the swell places where they live.

Siebert’s introductory poem, "American Towns" lists almost twelve dozen "... towns across the USA / Whose fun to see and say." Get out those maps and atlases and find some more towns to read and rhyme together I’ll found in New Jersey:

Bridgeton, Bridgewater, and Old Bridge,Ridgewood, Ridgeway, and Glen Ridge.

RELATED TITLES ABOUT AMERICA


Other Books by Diane Siebert


TELLING STORIES: TRICKSTER TALES FROM AMERICAN FOLKLORE

If we want our children to understand fiction, they need to hear lots of stories. Here are three fabulous collecti folktales, anecdotes, and family stories that you can read or tell.

McKissack, Patricia C. *Porch Lies: Tales of Slicksters, Tricksters, and Other Wily Characters*. Schwartz & Wade, 2006. (Gr. 4-8)
Don't you wish you had a front porch where friends and neighbors gathered on hot summer evenings to tell stories as you do. Patricia McKissack has retold some of the porch lies she heard on her grandparents' porch in Nashville, back in the days of the Brooklyn Dodgers, which takes us back a little bit. Porch lies are funny tall tales told by of silver-tongued bad actors who charmed their victims while bamboozling or outsmarting them. There are ten here, and they're about devilish fellows like Pete Bruce who charms Miss Martha June's Mama into giving him a coconut cream pie; Mingo Cass who never pays off his debts because he claims all has is a hundred dollars t
t favorite, Noble "Cake" Norris, first to perfect the blues harmonica, who, after he wakes up dead finds he's too heaven and too good for hell.

**GERM:**
You'll have a mighty fine time reading aloud these African American yarns. See if you or any of your students like porch lies they've heard that they like to share.

### Related Titles of African-American Folktales

- **Lester, Julius.** *The Tales of Uncle Remus: The Adventures of Brer Rabbit.* Dial, 1987
- **San Souci, Robert D.** *Sister Tricksters: Rollicking Tales of Clever Females.* August House, 2006.

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**San Souci, Robert D.** *Sister Tricksters: Rollicking Tales of Clever Females.* Illus. by Daniel San Souci House, 2006. (Gr. 3-6)

In a jocular collection of eight well-told tales from down South, meet Molly Hare, Miz Duck, Miz Grasshopper, and Goose, the sassy female counterparts to the usual male tricksters we know from African-American folklore. Mo time, these quick-thinking gals outsmart, out talk, and outrage their less clever male opponents, Mistah Slickry Mistah Bear. Each story includes a comical full-page color illustration of the animals decked out in their finest c

**GERM:**
This is an important, welcome, and downright hilarious collection of stories; except for the Virginia Hamilton br *Stories and When Birds Could Talk & Bats Could Sing*, uppity female tricksters do not often make an appearance in literature for children. With its colloquial language and the outrageous behavior of all the characters, you'll war with some of Julius Lester's Brer Rabbit stories for a rip-roaring storyline. A fascinating Introduction describes author found the stories, explains their origins, and defines their place in American folk literature.

### More Trickster Tales from American Folklore:

- **Doucet, Sharon Arms.** *Lapin Plays Possum: Trickster Tales from the Louisiana Bayou.* Farrar, 2002.
- **Lester, Julius.** *The Knee-High Man and Other Tales.* Puffin, 1985.
- **Lester, Julius.** *The Tales of Uncle Remus: The Adventures of Brer Rabbit.* Dial, 1987

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A dozen sprightly folktales introduce American kids to a wide range of stories with roots in Spain and Latin Am enlivened further with one or two full page color illustrations.

**GERM:**
Read the chapter at the front, "To Begin a Story" to compare all of the different opening lines in Spanish, inclu una vez," the equivalent of "Once upon a time," but also delightful beginnings like "Cuentan los que lo vieron," translates as "Those who saw it say that . . . ."

You'll find stories that remind you of other stories. See how Doña Jicotea the river turtle beats Venado the dee which you can compare with the Aesop fable, "The Tortoise and the Hare." Catalina the fox outwits Martin the will put you in mind of a *Brother Rabbit: A Cambodian Folktale* retold by Minfong Ho and Saphan Ros. And see *Little Horse of Seven Colors* is similar to the Russian variant *The Little Humpbacked Horse* retold by Elizabeth

Share my folk and fairy tale chant with your listeners. Snap your fingers and have them repeat the refrain for (When I was a school librarian, thanks to this chant, all of my students knew that Miss Freeman's favorite nurr 398.2.)

**LOOK FOR 398.2** (1983 by Judy Freeman)

If you want a good story, let me tell you what to do: **Look for 398.2**
Ogres, leprechauns and goblins all are waiting there for you: **Look for 398.2**
Prince or princess in hot water, trouble with a witch's brew: **Look for 398.2**
Fierce and fire-breathing dragons, shiny scales of green and blue: **Look for 398.2**
Find a tale from every country, from Australia to Peru: **Look for 398.2**

Take a closer look at your library's 398.2 collection. Hand out a fairy tale book to each pair of children. Have ti over, taking note of the title, the country of origin, the beginning and ending sentences, the characters, and th't Say, "Who has a beginning that starts differently than 'Once upon a time'?” and have them read aloud their fir Compare and contrast the other elements as well. Your folk and fairy tale books will fly off the shelves.

**Related Titles of Hispanic Folklore:**

**González, Lucia M.** *Señor Cat's Romance and Other Favorite Stories from Latin America*. Scholastic, 1997.
**Montes, Marisa.** *Juan Bobo Goes to Work: A Puerto Rican Folktale*. HarperCollins,
2000.
**Pitre, Felix.** *Juan Bobo and the Pig: A Puerto Rican Folktale.* Lodestar, 1993.
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