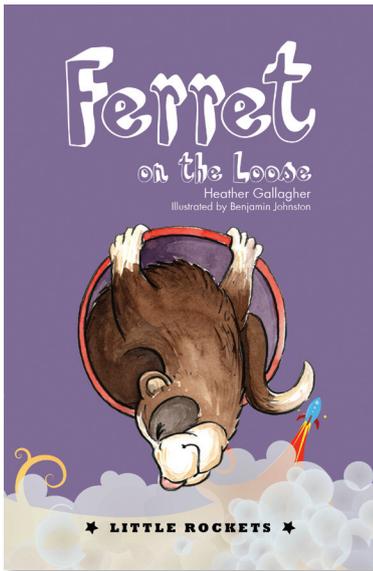


TEACHERS' NOTES

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Ferret on the Loose

Written by Heather Gallagher

Illustrated by Benjamin Johnston

Synopsis

Lucy has been training her pet ferret, Flash, for the annual Fastest Fearless Ferret Race. But Lucy and Flash are up against stiff competition with the rest of the Upton Ferret Society equally keen to win the golden cup. Then, as the competition approaches, Flash is suddenly nowhere to be found. Did he runaway? Or was Flash ferret-napped?

Author Motivation

The author's motivation in writing this book was to create a fun story that would help kids question the idea of winning at all costs.

Author Background Information

Heather grew up in Melbourne's eastern suburbs but now lives by the sea with her husband and two daughters. As a child, she loved reading and was inspired to become a writer by her Grade 4 teacher, Mrs Cunningham, who read one of her stories out to the class. Heather went on to become a journalist and has worked for many different newspapers and magazines. She loves writing stories for children. *Ferret on the Loose* is her first book with New Frontier.

Illustrator Background Information

Benjamin had a lot of fun capturing ferrets in action – at least on the page, as they are far too quick in real life! Ben is a children's book illustrator when he manages to find the time in between life as a full time architect and father of two fabulous girls.



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Educational Applicability

The theme of this book is competitiveness. It illustrates the problems with the notion of 'winning at all costs'. It allows children to learn about ferrets.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Before Reading the Book

1. Share with the children some competitions you've been in and ask them to offer their own examples. How did the children go and how did they feel about it? Ask them how important they think it is to win.
2. Talk to the children about pets and compromises. Who has what pet? Was that the pet you wanted or did your parents say you had to have something else? How do you look after your pets?
3. Make a list of things you know about ferrets.
4. Do you have a brother or sister? Do they sometimes annoy you?

After Reading the Book

1. Flash was a mischievous ferret. What were some of the naughty things he did in the story?
2. Who do you think should have won the Fastest Fearless Ferret race? Can you think up some reasons why?
3. Lucy has a brother, Sandy, and a sister, Alice. How is her relationship with her little brother different to her relationship with her big sister? Do you have siblings? Do they annoy you?
4. This story is based on a real life event called the Fine Cotton Affair. Ask the children to be detectives – can they find out what the affair was? How do you think it was used to make up the story in the book?

ACTIVITIES

Design

Draw a picture of a ferret or another animal that you think might get up to naughty tricks.

Language

Ask the children to say Flash was the Fastest Fearless Ferret five times as fast as they can. Does anyone know what this phenomenon is called? (tongue-twister)

Emotions

Lucy goes through a range of emotions in the story. Have the children identify the illustrations that depict anger, pain, frustration, surprise and worry. What other emotions could be drawn on Lucy by an illustrator?

Creative Writing

Think up a crazy name for your fictional pet ferret and think of one or more very naughty things he does. Now write a story about it.



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