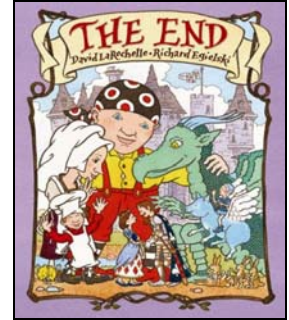


Teaching Guide for *The End*

Written by David LaRochelle
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Summary:

In this fairy tale told backwards, a clever princess makes a bowl of lemonade and starts a chain reaction that involves a hungry giant, an enormous tomato, 100 bunny rabbits, a frightened dragon, and a kind-hearted knight.



Questions to Ask Students Before Reading:

- What familiar phrase begins many fairytales? (*Once upon a time...*)
- What familiar phrase *ends* many fairytales? (*And they all lived happily ever after.*)
- *The End* is a very strange title for a book! Why do you think this story might have such an unusual title?
- Look at the characters on the front and back covers and on the first two pages. Who do you think they are? What do you think they might have been doing at the castle?

As You Are Reading:

- *The End* provides plenty of opportunity for **prediction**. Before turning the pages, have students predict how each “because...” phrase is going to end. Children may also wish to join in every time the word “because” is repeated.
- Don’t stop once you’ve reached the end of the text! Keep turning the pages and you’ll discover the princess buying lemons at the market, and on the last two pages, sitting lonely outside the castle.
- Point out the dedication, copyright, and title pages. Explain that in most books these features are found at the front.

After Reading:

- In your own words, and using the pictures as a guide, you and your class can try telling this story in the opposite direction, beginning with “Once upon a time...” Why do you think the author wrote this story backwards in the first place? Which way do your students like better?
- Explain that the phrase “when pigs fly” means that something is unlikely to happen. In this story, however, pigs really *do* fly! Ask your students to name some of the other unlikely things that happen in this tale.

- Even though he is never mentioned in the text, the elf on the flying pig is an important character. Ask your class how he helps the princess. Does he remind them of another imaginary character, one we often associate with Valentine’s Day? (Cupid)
- In Europe, storks are considered a sign of good luck. If a stork builds its nest on your roof, you will supposedly have a happy marriage. How many times in *The End* can your class find the stork that Richard Egielski drew?
- Characters often change during a story. Ask your students which characters they think changed during the course of this book. How did they change? Physically? Emotionally?

Thinking Skills

Sequencing Challenge

Write the major events of the story on large pieces of construction paper:

Once upon a time a princess made lemonade.
 There were no lemons left at the market.
 The cook could not make lemon cheesecake for dessert.
 The hungry giant threw a temper tantrum.
 Etc.

Mix them up, give one to each student, and see if the class can arrange themselves in the proper time sequence, beginning with “Once upon a time” and ending with “They all lived happily ever after.”

Students may then wish to act out the events, first in one direction, and then backwards!

Cause and Effect

Discuss with your students the difference between *cause* and *effect* (a *cause* is an event that triggers something else to happen; an *effect* is the event that happens as result).

In this story, many of the events are both causes *and* effects. List a cause from the book on the board and see if your students can name the resulting effect:

<u>Cause</u>		<u>Effect</u>
a teacup hit the tomato	→	the giant tomato rolled down the hill
the tomato rolled down the hill	→	the bunny rabbits got scared and ran into the cave

Character Comparison

Have your students compare the dragon in *The End* with the dragon in David LaRochelle’s *The Best Pet of All* (illustrated by Hanako Wakiyama, Dutton, 2004). Use a Venn diagram to compare their similarities and differences. Which would your students rather have for a pet? Why?

Invite your students to draw pictures of their own dragons. Encourage them to be creative. Their dragons could breath fire...or bubble gum! Their dragons might be huge or tiny. Perhaps their dragons will like to read books or even drive racecars.

Writing Activities

Introducing...ellipses!

Ellipses (i-lip-seez) are punctuation marks (...) that mean something more is coming. Explain that authors sometimes use these three dots to create suspense and to encourage the reader to guess what is going to happen next. Ellipses can be found on almost every page of *The End*.

Tell your students that they can use ellipses in their own writing, too. They might enjoy finishing these suspenseful sentences:

The children crept up the attic stairs, pushed open the trapdoor, and discovered...

The strange sound outside our tent got closer and closer, and louder and louder, until suddenly...

"Pack your suitcases!" said my mom. "We're going on a trip to..."

Or they might wish to write their own sentences using ellipses to help make them more suspenseful.

Writing Your Own Backwards Tales

Individually or as a group, students can try writing their own backwards stories. Starting with one of these sample endings (or one of their own), can your class work its way backwards to "Once upon a time..."?

And they finally found the buried treasure. They found the buried treasure because...

And the monster never bothered the children again. It never bothered the children again because...

And everyone fell fast asleep. They fell fast asleep because...

Cross-Curriculum Ideas

Students can practice their measuring skills when they follow this easy recipe for lemonade:

*Ingredients: 6 lemons
 1 cup of sugar
 6 cups of cold water*

Cut the lemons in half. Squeeze into a measuring cup. You should have about one cup of lemon juice. Mix the juice and sugar in the cold water until the sugar dissolves. Serve with ice.

Makes 6 glasses.

Ask your students how many lemons they would need if they wanted 12 glasses of lemonade? 24 glasses? 3 glasses?

About the Author

David LaRochelle is a former elementary school teacher. He has written picture books, puzzle books, and a novel for young adults. He has also illustrated many books written by other authors, including *The Bookstore Valentine* by Barbara Maitland (Dutton, 2002).

David has stacks and stacks of notebooks and sketchbooks filled with ideas for stories and drawings. The idea for *The End* started with something he scribbled in one of his notebooks: *Write a backwards story*. It wasn't until years later that he went back to that idea and began writing this fairy tale.

You and your class can learn more about David, try your hands at some of his puzzles, and view the creative pumpkins he has carved, at his website: www.davidlarochelle.net.

About the Illustrator

Richard Egielski has illustrated dozens of books for children, including *Hey, Al*, by Arthur Yorinks, which won the Caldecott Medal in 1987.

For *The End*, Richard first sketched the pictures in pencil, then outlined them with a brush in sepia ink, and finally colored them with watercolors. He said for this book he was partially influenced by John Tenniel, the artist who drew the original pictures for *Alice in Wonderland*. Compare John Tenniel's pictures with Richard's. Do your students think they look similar? Can your class find references to all the suits in a deck of playing cards in Richard's illustrations for *The End*?