

How Do Dinosaurs Say Good Night?

by Jane Yolen

The Blue Sky Press (A Scholastic Imprint)

A Reading and Discussion Guide

Prepared by the Massachusetts Center for the Book

Massachusetts
Honor Book
2001



SUMMARY:

Excerpted from Publishers Weekly, c2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Set to a lilting bedtime beat, this rollicking rumpus of a tale ups the humor ante in a familiar scenario by substituting dinosaurs for children: "How does a dinosaur say good night when Papa comes in to turn off the light?" In a series of snappy lines, Yolen ... highlights a variety of postponement antics, some familiar (moping, sulking and demanding "one book more!"), some of a distinctly dinosaur variety--"Does a dinosaur slam his tail and pout? Does he throw his teddy bear all about?" Teague makes hay with the text, and as always his illustrations are a flurry of sly madcap inspiration. He chooses the winged Pteranodon (spelled out in ABC blocks on the bedroom floor) as the character who throws his teddy bear while flying about the room; for "Does he swing his neck from side to side" it's the snake-headed Apatosaurus who does the swinging. Under his sure direction, the sight gag never grows stale, and the sight of a T-Rex puckering up for a kiss, or an enormous Stegosaurus crammed into a tiny bed and daintily turning off the light switch with the tip of his tail, is sure to elicit giggles. As the endpapers reveal, there's a cast of 10 dinosaurs featured here, and sharp eyes will enjoy spotting their proper names tucked into each illustration.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES:

This book suggests discussion and activities concerning bedtime and that perennially favorite topic -- dinosaurs.

1. How do you say good night in your family? Lead the group in a discussion of family bedtime rituals. Ask each child to draw a picture to illustrate his or her family's practice. When the pictures are complete, ask the children to write short descriptions to go along with their drawings, if they are able, or help them with this task.
2. To extend this activity, photocopy enough copies of the pictures to distribute one to each member of the group. Ask the children to organize the pictures into a

book, giving it a title and drawing a cover. Help them publish their books using simple binding methods (a stapler, string and hole punch, etc.). When the books are finished, you might ask the group to share their titles and cover art -- followed by a discussion of the very different titles and covers that were created from the same pictures.

NOTE: Make coloring books by asking the children to draw (but not color) their family bedtime pictures. Then photocopy the drawings for the books on white paper.

3. How do people say good night in countries all over the world? If the children are old enough, or if they are working with their parents, you can ask them to research the way to say good night in a language of their choice. Alternatively, you can provide them with this information, and then have the group practice the many ways to say good night.
4. To extend this activity, post the good night words on a large world map. Ask the children to create their own book of good nights by copying these words onto individual pages of a book. To create interesting outlines for the pages, you might provide a stencil in the shape of a bed or blanket.
5. Jane Yolen's book also leads to wonderful discussions of dinosaurs. Using reference books from the library, ask children to match the illustrations to specific types of dinosaurs. From there, you can lead a discussion of favorite dinosaurs.
6. Ask each child to draw his or her favorite dinosaur, either by copying one from a book on hand or by creating one from his/her imagination. Again, if you copy the drawings before children color them, you can have terrific coloring books about dinosaurs for enjoyment at home.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Excerpted from Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, c2000

http://www.penguinputnam.com/nf/Author/AuthorPage/0,,0_1000018278,00.html

Born and raised in New York City, Jane Yolen now lives in Hatfield, Massachusetts. She attended Smith College and received her master's degree in education from the University of Massachusetts. The distinguished author of more than 170 books, Jane Yolen is a person of many talents. When she is not writing, Yolen composes songs, is a professional storyteller on the stage, and is the busy wife of a university professor, the mother of three grown children, and a grandmother.

All of Yolen's stories and poems are somehow rooted in her sense of family and self. **The Emperor and the Kite**, which was a Caldecott Honor Book in 1983 for its intricate papercut illustrations by Ed Young, was based on Yolen's relationship with her late father, who was an international kite-flying champion. **Owl Moon**, winner of the 1988

Caldecott Medal for John Schoenherr's exquisite watercolors, was inspired by her husband's interest in birding.

With a versatility that has led her to be called "America's Hans Christian Andersen," Yolen, the child of two writers, is a gifted and natural storyteller. Perhaps the best explanation for her outstanding accomplishments comes from Jane Yolen herself: "I don't care whether the story is real or fantastical. I tell the story that needs to be told."

HELPFUL LINKS:

Explore the following websites for additional discussion and activity ideas:

Scholastic, Inc: <http://www.scholastic.com/familymatters/read/all/storyhour/saygoodnight.htm>

Reading is Fundamental: <http://www.rif.org/parents/activities/activity.msp?View=249>

WebMARC: http://www.libsci.sc.edu/miller/Dinosaurs_GoodNight.htm

Other Links:

<http://www.janeyolen.com/forteachers.html>: Interviews and other information about Jane Yolen from her website.



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