

THE BEAST OF MONSIEUR RACINE

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Themes: Friendship/French Culture

Grade Level: K-2

Running Time: 9 minutes, animated

SUMMARY

THE BEAST OF MONSIEUR RACINE takes place in France where a retired tax collector, Monsieur Racine, raises perfect pears. He is offered millions of dollars for his prize-winning pears, but refuses, deciding to enjoy his pears himself, the true "fruits" of his labors.

One night, all but one of the pears are stolen by a strange "something." Monsieur Racine booby traps the remaining pear as a way to catch the thief. The thief turns out to be a strange looking Beast, which Monsieur Racine eventually tames by offering it delicious treats. Monsieur Racine and the Beast develop a wonderful friendship, during which time Monsieur Racine studies the Beast and reports the existence of this unusual creature to the Academy of Sciences in Paris.

Monsieur Racine and the Beast are invited to the Academy where Monsieur Racine is offered a fortune for the Beast. Monsieur Racine refuses, preferring the on-going friendship of the Beast.

The story ends with the discovery that the Beast is actually two children in disguise. Monsieur Racine appreciates the cleverness and endurance of the children and befriends them both.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will appreciate the value of

friendship.

- Children will explore the things that make people happy.
- Children will investigate creative thinking.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book, THE BEAST OF MONSIEUR RACINE, with children.

Talk with the children about their special friends. Ask:

- What do you like most about your special friend?
- What kinds of things do you do together?
- What happens when you and your friends don't agree about things?
- What do you do to solve your problems?
- How do you and your special friend show that you care for one another?
- What kinds of things do you do together?
- What happens when you and your friends don't agree about things?
- What do you do to solve your problems?
- How do you and your special friend show that you care for one another?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the Beast in the story. Ask:

- If this were really a Beast, rather than two children in costume, where do you think it would have come from?
- What would its parents look like?
- What kinds of things would it eat?

Then have children use art supplies to create their own unique Beasts. Have them write stories about the Beasts' adventures to comple-

ment their works of art. Display the Beasts and the stories in the classroom to share with the other classes.

Talk about the choices Monsieur Racine made in the story. Ask:

- Do you think Monsieur Racine's choice to keep his pears, rather than take money for them, was a good one? Why?
- What would you have done if you were Monsieur Racine?

Discuss the way the children in the story decided to dress up as a Beast. Ask:

- Do you think the children had a good idea when they decided to do this? Why?
- How would Monsieur Racine's life been different if the children had not chosen to do this?
- What other things might the children have chosen to be in order to meet Monsieur Racine?
- How do you think Monsieur Racine would have felt if the children decided to come to his home as themselves?
- Do you think they would have become friends? Why? Why not?

Dramatize the friendship between Monsieur Racine and the Beast by making a pear tree, choosing a retired tax collector and two children to disguise themselves as the Beast by crawling underneath a blanket.

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