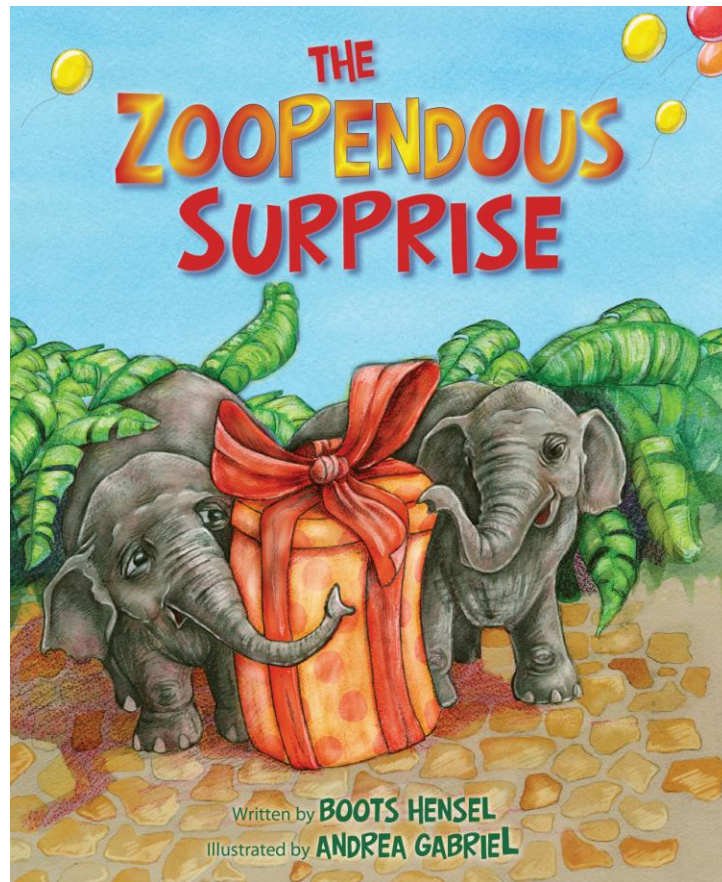


A Teacher's Guide to
THE ZOOPENDOUS SURPRISE

Written by Boots Hensel
Illustrated by Andrea Gabriel



The Zoopendous Surprise Text © 2009 Carol Lynne Hensel; Illustrations © 2009 Andrea Gabriel;
Book design by Jill Ronsley.; Published by Pleasant St. Press. ISBN-13: 978-0-9792035-5-8

PRAISE FOR THE ZOOPENDOUS SURPRISE

"Between the voices that can be used for each animal, the colorful and beautiful illustrations and the suspense of trying to figure out what is going to happen, *The Zoopendous Surprise* is a book that your children will love hearing and reading again and again." ~ Petula Renee Wright, Atlanta journalist

The Zoopendous Surprise will be a great hit." ~ Wayne S. Walker, reviewer for *Stories For Children Magazine*

"The Zoopendous Surprise is a delightful book, sure to capture the imagination of any child. ...It provides just enough suspense to keep even the youngest kids involved in the story." ~ Beth Eavenson, book reviewer

STORY SUMMARY

Elephants Mary and Ellen know that *something* special is going to happen at the zoo, but what? They ask the other zoo animals, but no one will reveal the secret. Come along with Mary and Ellen as they discover the “zoopendous” surprise!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Writing has always been one of Boots Hensel's favorite things to do. She enjoyed a career as a nurse and, upon retiring, started her own business faux painting and creating murals. Her daughter's untimely death in 2004 inspired Boots to write *The Zoopendous Surprise*, the true story of two special elephants. Ms. Hensel lives in Florida with her husband and two dogs, two cats, and a crazy cockatiel. She enjoys spending time with her oldest daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren, who live close by. Learn more about Mary, Ellen and Boots at www.bootshensel.com.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



Andrea Gabriel earned a degree in art from Western Washington University in 1995. She has created artwork for clients ranging from McGraw Hill to Zaner-Bloser to the U.S. Government. Aside from painting, she is also a children's author whose books have received numerous awards, including the Bank Street College's Best

Children's Books of the Year for *My Favorite Bear* (Charlesbridge, 2003). Learn more about Andrea's work at www.andreagabriel.com.

PRE-READING

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

Ask students to tell about a time when they have been pleasantly surprised. Brainstorm a list of animals that children have seen at the zoo. Next to each animal, write a surprise that each animal might like.

- *The student will use background knowledge of subject and pre-reading strategies.*

TAKE A BOOK WALK

Show the front cover of *The Zoopendous Surprise*, pointing out the title, author and illustrator. Ask what they think the title means. Can they think of a word that sounds like *zoopendous*? Do any of the cover illustrations hint at what the surprise might be?

- *The student will identify parts of a book.*
- *The student will make predictions about text content using pictures, background knowledge, and text features (e.g., title, illustrations).*

VOCABULARY BOOST

The vocabulary below might be new for your students. Guide them in using either text or picture clues to decipher meanings...

...using text and picture clues			
delivery truck	canopy	encounter	plucking
lounge	drooping	enclosure	trumpet

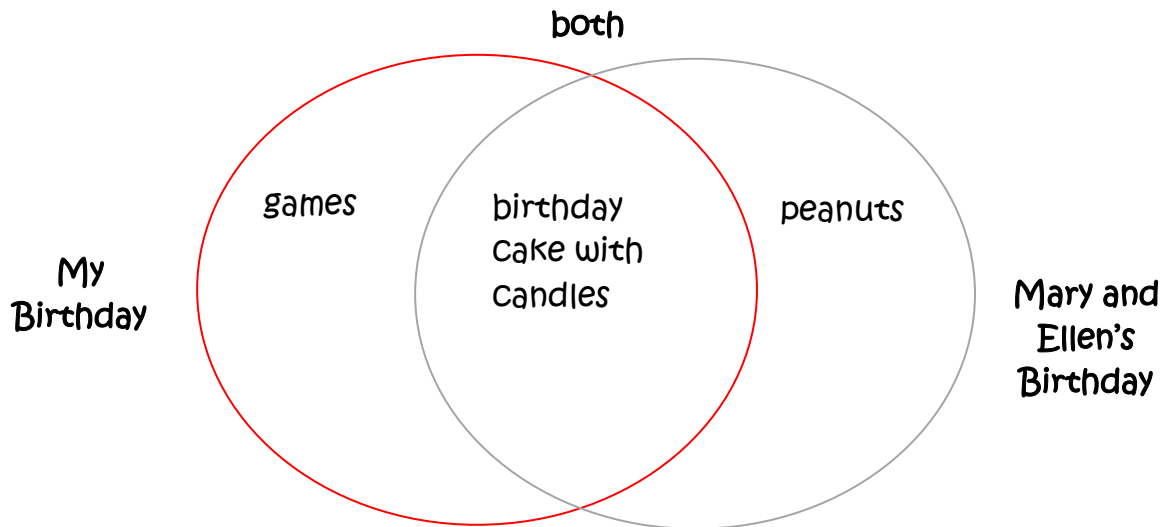
...using text only			
rumble	eager	lag	mischievous
bamboo	chatty	swoop	lumbering
summoning	attempt	scrumptious	screeches

Encourage students to use vocabulary from the book when retelling and discussing the story.

- *The student will use new vocabulary that is introduced and taught directly.*
- *The student will communicate effectively when retelling stories read and heard.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the surprise for Mary and Ellen? (*knowledge*)
2. Who knew about the surprise? (*comprehension*)
3. Draw a Venn diagram like the one shown below. How are your birthday celebrations different from Mary and Ellen's party? How are they similar? (*application*)



4. How do Mary and Ellen feel about Nyla and Sydney the lions? How do you know? (*analysis*)
5. What do you think Mary and Ellen's wish might be? Why do you think so? What would you wish for if you were an elephant? (*synthesis*)
6. Did the zoo animals make the right decision not to tell Mary and Ellen about the surprise? Is it a good idea not to tell a friend about a surprise, even if the friend wants to know? (*evaluation*)

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

SURPRISE, SURPRISE!

As the book is read for the first time, keep track of the clues found on each page using a t-chart, as in the sample shown below (see following page for student copy of graphic organizer). After each clue is recorded (either in writing or pictures), have students make a prediction as to what the surprise might be. Allow students to revise their predictions as the clues unfold.

I noticed:		Predictions:
The zookeepers are whispering to each other,	so maybe...	...the zookeepers are planning a surprise for the zoo animals.
The zookeepers are carrying a large gift,	so maybe...	...today is the birthday of one of the zoo animals.
A delivery truck unloads balloons and a long table,	so maybe...	...since animals don't eat from tables, maybe the party is for someone who works at the zoo.

- *The student will make predictions about text content using pictures and background knowledge.*

NAME: _____

PREDICTIONS GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Write or draw clues from the story that lead to Mary and Ellen's big surprise.

I noticed:	so maybe...	Predictions:

What is your conclusion? _____

Did you guess the surprise? _____

Did you change your prediction during the story? If so, what made you change your mind? If not, why were you sure that your prediction was correct?

ELEPHANT MATH



Both Mary and Ellen were born in 1951. How old are they now?



Mary weighs 10,343 pounds, and Ellen weighs 6,656 pounds. Who weighs more? How much more?



How much is a ton? How many tons does Mary weigh? Ellen? (Note: Calculate weights to the nearest ton or find exact conversions, depending upon students' readiness.)



Ellen is about 7 feet tall, and Mary about $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet tall. Who is tallest? By how much? What are their heights in inches? Yards? How tall are you? How many times taller are Mary and Ellen than you?

- *Solve word problems involving simple joining and separating situations.*
- *Solve addition and subtraction problems that involve measurement.*
- *Compare and order objects indirectly or directly using measurable attributes such as length, height, and weight.*
- *Compare and order objects according to descriptors of length, weight, and capacity.*
- *Compare and order multi-digit numbers through the thousands.*

MAP IT!

Ellen and Mary are Asian elephants. Mary comes from Burma, and she lived in Florida before coming to the Little Rock Zoo in Arkansas. Ellen comes from Thailand. She lived in New York City before she was sold to the Little Rock Zoo.

Find the places Mary and Ellen have been on a map or globe. Who has traveled the farthest? Find where you live on the map. How far would you have to travel to visit Mary and Ellen now? Make elephant footprints from paper and map Mary's and Ellen's routes to Arkansas. Use different colored footprints for each route and provide a map key.

- *Use maps to identify different types of scale to measure distances between two places.*
- *Explain that maps and globes help to locate different places and that globes are a model of the Earth.*



CHARACTERS

Make a chart to analyze the animals' character traits by noting how they act and speak in the story. Use the data to draw conclusions about the animals' personalities. See sample chart below to get started:

Animals:	How they act/things they say:	Conclusion (character traits):
Mary	gentle; usually lags behind; scared of lions; notices the party table right away	kind, cautious, observant
Ellen	mischievous; sneaks bites of bamboo; scared of lions	playful, cautious, sneaky
Mahale the chimp	chatty; knows about things before the other animals; always swinging	busybody, active
BJ the giraffe		
Nyla and Sydney the lions		
Einstein the Owl		
the zookeepers		

How would you characterize yourself? Make a list of things you do and say, then draw conclusions about your own character traits. What character traits do you look for in a friend? A teacher? A parent? A pet?

- *The student will analyze elements of characterization.*

WHAT'S IN THE BOX?

Mary and Ellen are curious when they see the gift-wrapped box carried through the zoo. Take a piece of paper and fold it in half. On the front, decorate it to look like a gift. Glue ribbons on the top, if you'd like. On the inside, write something surprising about yourself that your classmates might not know. Do you have a hidden talent? Have you been to an interesting place? Do you have a secret wish? Add an illustration to go with your words. Display the gift boxes on a bulletin board that says: "We're Full of Surprises!"

- *The student will produce, illustrate and share a finished piece of writing.*

FOLLOW THE CLUES

Sometimes words and illustrations give us hints. Turn to the page near the end of the story where Mary and Ellen are having a bath. The author doesn't come out and tell us how the elephants feel, but there are clues we can follow to find out how Mary and Ellen are feeling. Read the words on this page and study the pictures. Can you come up with enough clues to infer how the elephants feel? Use the graphic organizer on the following page to help.

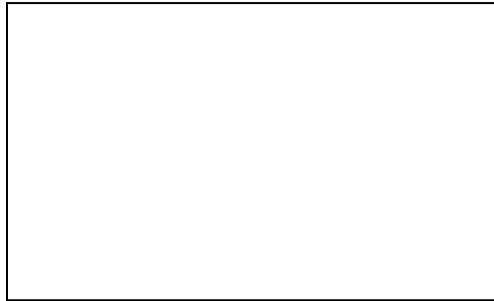
- *The student will determine explicit ideas and information in grade-level text, including but not limited to relevant supporting details, implied message, and inferences.*

Name: _____

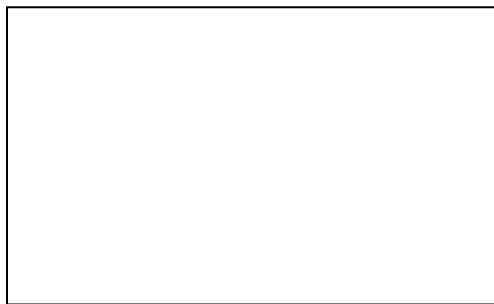
FOLLOW THE CLUES!

MAKING INFERENCES USING TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS


Write or draw the clues you find that help you to infer how Mary and Ellen are feeling in this scene.



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Mary and Ellen feel _____.

GOOD SENSE(S)

How do Mary and Ellen use their senses in the story? Make a chart like the one below to record students' answers:

Mary and Ellen use their sense of _____	to _____.
sight	
hearing	
smell	
touch	
taste	

How do we use our senses every day? Pop some popcorn in class and have students write about the experience. How were all five senses used?

- *The student will identify ways an author makes language choices that appeal to the senses, create imagery, and suggest mood.*
- *Recognize the five senses and related body parts.*
- *The student will draft writing by writing about a familiar experience.*

AUTHOR INTERVIEW WITH BOOTS HENSEL



Author Boots Hensel with birthday girls Mary and Ellen.

1. When did you know you wanted to become a writer?

When I was eight years old, I won a writing contest, and in sixth grade I was a reporter for my school newspaper. In college I loved to write, but went a different direction and became a nurse. It wasn't until my daughter, Mary and Ellen's zookeeper, passed away from cancer in 2004 that I realized I wanted to write a story in her memory. It is something that is allowing me to journey through the most difficult

time in my life. I have re-kindled my love of writing and now know my favorite thing to do is write for children! They make a great audience!

2. Once you got the idea for *The Zoopendous Surprise*, what happened next? Did you jot it down right away? Let it simmer?

Once I had the idea I began writing as fast as I could, as though if I didn't get it all down, it would be lost. I became obsessed with the process. It was my passion.

Sometimes I would set it aside for a couple days once I had it all written and then read it again and work on areas that needed fine tuning. Little did I know the real work was in the re-writing!

3. What was the most challenging part of writing this book? The most rewarding?

The challenge for me was learning to show the story and not tell everything, to let the illustrations carry 50% of the story. After learning in college to write descriptively, it was most challenging to not describe everything.

The most rewarding part for me was my relationship with my editor. She was my supporter and it was exciting to see she cared as much about my elephant story as I did.

To see my story evolve from words in a spiral notebook to a completed children's book is the greatest reward a children's author can have.

4. How did the illustrations come about?

My publisher chose the illustrator. The publisher finds an illustrator whose illustrative style will be a good match for the story. When I found out Andrea Gabriel accepted the job, I looked at her illustrations for other books she had done and I was thrilled she wanted to illustrate my book. She was kind enough to agree to have the girl zookeeper look like my daughter. Through my publisher I sent a picture of my daughter and Andrea did a wonderful job of capturing how my daughter looked.

I was able to see the illustrations along the way and had a couple of requests for changes, which were accepted. I'm grateful for the wonderful relationship that grew between my illustrator, the editor and me. A real collaborative effort.

5. Do you have a writing routine?

Not at all. Once I attempted to write on a schedule and found it to be too confining. When the ideas come, I immediately begin writing no matter when or where I am.

6. How did Mary and Ellen end up at the Little Rock Zoo?

Mary, an Asian elephant born in Burma in 1951, was sent to Germany in 1968 so that Gunthr Gable Williams could bring her to Venice, Florida. She lived on the circus train and performed with the other elephants until another elephant injured her in 1999. Due to her injury, she was retired from the circus. She was donated to the Little Rock Zoo in 2000, where she was introduced to Ellen, the only other Asian elephant. They now are inseparable.

Ellen, an Asian elephant born in Thailand in 1951, was brought to New York City and then sold to the Little Rock Zoo in 1954. She lived with an older Asian elephant named Ruth until Ruth's death in 1978. She loves to please and thrives on consistency. She is happy to have Mary as her companion and they enjoy their time together, including daily walks around the zoo.

7. Did they really have a birthday cake and blow out the candles? If so, what was their cake made of?

Yes, they had a big 55th birthday celebration with a real birthday cake. It was made the same way our birthday cakes are made. They love sweet foods including cake, but the girls have to watch their figures, so the cafeteria ladies also made them a Jell-o "cake" with fruit in it to see what they would do with it. Unfortunately for their zookeepers, Mary and Ellen sucked the Jell-o in their trunks and sprayed it all over! That was fun for them. No candles however; they don't like fire.

8. Whose idea was it to throw a surprise party for the elephants?

Their zookeepers thought of the idea and it just escalated from there. Everyone got involved and the entire community was invited to the celebration.

9. Do Mary and Ellen have the same birthday?

Yes, they were born the same year, but to make it fun, the Zoo celebrates their birthday on the same day as well. Mary and Ellen like doing things together, including celebrating their birthdays.

10. Do other animals at the zoo have birthday parties?

Yes, the zookeepers do things that are fun for their animals. Anytime an animal has a birthday, the zookeepers make it a big celebration! Mary and Ellen's birthday was a big party because it was their 55th birthday.