

Mercy Watson



THE RUNAWAY BEST-SELLING SERIES BY



Kate DiCamillo



illustrated by Chris Van Dusen

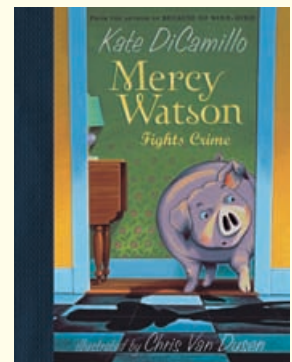
*Mercy Watson
to the Rescue
Teachers' Guide*
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*Mercy Watson Goes for a Ride and
Mercy Watson Fights Crime
Teachers' Guide*

Mercy Watson



Goes for a Ride



About the Book

Every Saturday, Mercy and Mr. Watson go for a ride in Mr. Watson's convertible. Despite much cajoling from Mr. Watson, Mercy insists on sitting in the driver's seat. Mercy relinquishes the wheel only after Mrs. Watson promises toast upon their return. One Saturday, Baby Lincoln hides in the backseat and surprises Mr. Watson. Mercy seizes the opportunity and jumps into Mr. Watson's lap while the car is speeding down the highway. When Officer Tomilello attempts to pull over the speeding car, Baby Lincoln stops the car by putting her foot on the brake pedal. Officer Tomilello assesses whether "laws have been broken" and "tickets must be written," but ultimately escorts the gang home, where they all feast on toast.

For Discussion

- Should Mr. Watson have been given a ticket? Why or why not?
- Baby Lincoln hid in the backseat of Mr. Watson's car. Is that a safe thing to do? Explain.
- On page 35, Eugenia Lincoln says, "That is my point exactly. I do think. And apparently, I am the only one around here who does." What does Eugenia mean by this statement?
- Mr. Watson pulls out of his driveway very quickly. "Mr. Watson is a forward-looking man. He does not believe in looking back." (p. 10) Discuss the double meaning in this statement.

What Folly!

Eugenia Lincoln refers to Mr. Watson's Saturday drive with Mercy as "folly." Ask students what they think *folly* means, based on the conversation between Eugenia and Baby (pp. 14-15). Then have students use a dictionary to look up the exact meaning of the word. Have them think of synonyms for *folly* (such as *foolishness* or *recklessness*). Question students as to what they consider to be folly, and then put their "follies" into writing. Each child's thought of what is considered silly or foolish could be one leaf in a class bulletin board entitled "Fall Follies." Continue to challenge students to use such words in their creative writing.

Recap with Captions

Mr. Watson and Mercy go through the same ritual every Saturday before they go on their drive. On page 17, the events are depicted in a series of small illustrations. If possible, photocopy this page (one for each student). Have students cut out each picture and glue the pictures onto a large piece of construction paper in proper sequence. Then have students summarize the story so far by writing captions for each picture. If photocopying is not an option for you, copy this one page onto an overhead transparency and do the same activity together as a whole class.



Ongoing Adventures

On page 11, Mr. Watson exclaims, “We’re off on an adventure!”—which on that particular Saturday proves to be quite true. Have students brainstorm other adventures that Mr. Watson and Mercy might have. Use this writing exercise to promote creativity and originality. Students should try to include as many characters in the Mercy Watson series as they can (such as Officer Tomilello, the Lincoln Sisters, and the firemen Ned and Lorenzo). Incorporate art by turning the finished stories into piggy tales (see below).

Piggy Tales

Have students transfer their finished adventure tales onto lined paper cut into 8-inch circles. Each student will need two large 9½-inch paper plates, as well as one egg carton cup to use as the nose. Have students paint both the plates and the cups pink and let them dry. Have them draw nostrils on the nose with a black marker or crayon and glue it onto one of the plates. They may then draw eyes and a mouth on the plate. Next, have them cut triangles out of pink construction paper to be used for the pig ears and glue them onto the outer tops of that same plate. The pig face is now complete. Have them poke a pink pipe cleaner twisted into a pig tail into the middle of the other plate. They may need to use a sharp pencil to create the hole. These are now the front and back covers needed for the pig tales. Punch one or two holes along the side of the plates and the story paper, making sure all the holes line up. Then have students run yarn or binder or book rings through the holes to complete the book.



Mercy’s Seat Belt Crusade

Mercy flew out of the car because she was not wearing a seat belt. Discuss the importance of wearing a seat belt. Have students create a seat belt campaign, using Mercy as the mascot. You may wish to contact the local police department to see if a police officer (reminiscent of Officer Tomilello) can come speak to students regarding safety in general (perhaps to include bike helmets as well as seat belts). The National Safety Council has an ABC motto: Air bag safety; Buckle everyone; Children in back! It might be fun to try to design a similar campaign.

Vocabulary

displeased (p. 12); menace (pp. 12, 45); caromed (p. 53); prodigy (p. 60)



“Bon Voyage!”

Mercy Watson



Fights Crime



About the Book

One night Mercy Watson hears the familiar sound of the toaster screeching across the counter, but instead of finding Mrs. Watson making toast, she discovers Leroy Ninker, a thief. Disappointed that she will not be getting toast, she falls back to sleep in the doorway, blocking the thief's exit. As Leroy munches on a piece of butter candy and tries to climb over Mercy, she wakes to the delicious buttery smell and takes off with Leroy on her back. The Watsons and the Lincoln Sisters are awakened by the noise and call for help. When firemen Ned and Lorenzo and Officer Tomilello arrive at the scene, Mercy has pinned the thief to the ground and made the morning headlines. (In reality, Mercy had simply been searching for the butter candy in Leroy's shirt pocket.)

For Discussion

- When Baby tells Eugenia that she hears a “Yippie-i-oh” sound outside, Eugenia asks if she had been eating pie before bed again (p. 34). Why would Eugenia ask such a question? Do you believe that eating before bed will give you nightmares?
- Firemen Ned and Lorenzo comment that their job is an interesting one (p. 55). What events occurred that would make them say that?
- Everyone except Mercy is quoted in the newspaper regarding Mercy's capture of the thief (pp. 67-69). Pretend you are Mercy. What would you say?

Do You Hear Something?

“Screeeeech, went the toaster. . . . Clannngggg, went the toaster.”

(p. 7) The toaster makes noise—a sound Mercy clearly recognizes—when Leroy moves it. Here's an activity to help students distinguish between different sounds. Go to the library or media center to obtain a tape of various sounds or create your own by taping the noises that different objects make. Play the tape to students and have them try to identify what is making the sound.

Give Me a Clue—Descriptive Writing

Leroy Ninker puts his loot into a bag. Use this concept by placing an object into a bag (without the students' knowledge). Then give the class various clues to the object's identity. Students will have to use your description to guess what the object is. Repeat this as many times as seems necessary. Use this activity as a prelude to a descriptive writing exercise. Explain to students that they were able to name the object based on the description you provided. Conduct a mini-lesson on adjectives, then have students practice describing numerous items. As a final activity, have students incorporate descriptive writing into their creative writing.



Extra! Read All About It!

Mercy's capture of Leroy Ninker makes the front page of the morning newspaper. Various neighbors and witnesses are quoted in the newspaper article. Hold a class discussion about the elements of journalism and how it differs from fiction. If possible, read aloud some simple news-related stories (classroom newspapers can be a good source). Have students practice becoming journalists by writing their own version of "Pet Pig Captures Thief."

A Cowboy's Dream

Leroy Ninker is described as a small man with a big dream (p. 4). Leroy dreams of becoming a cowboy. Ask students about their dreams. What would they like to become? Whom do they idolize, and what steps might they need to take to fulfill their dream?

What a Character

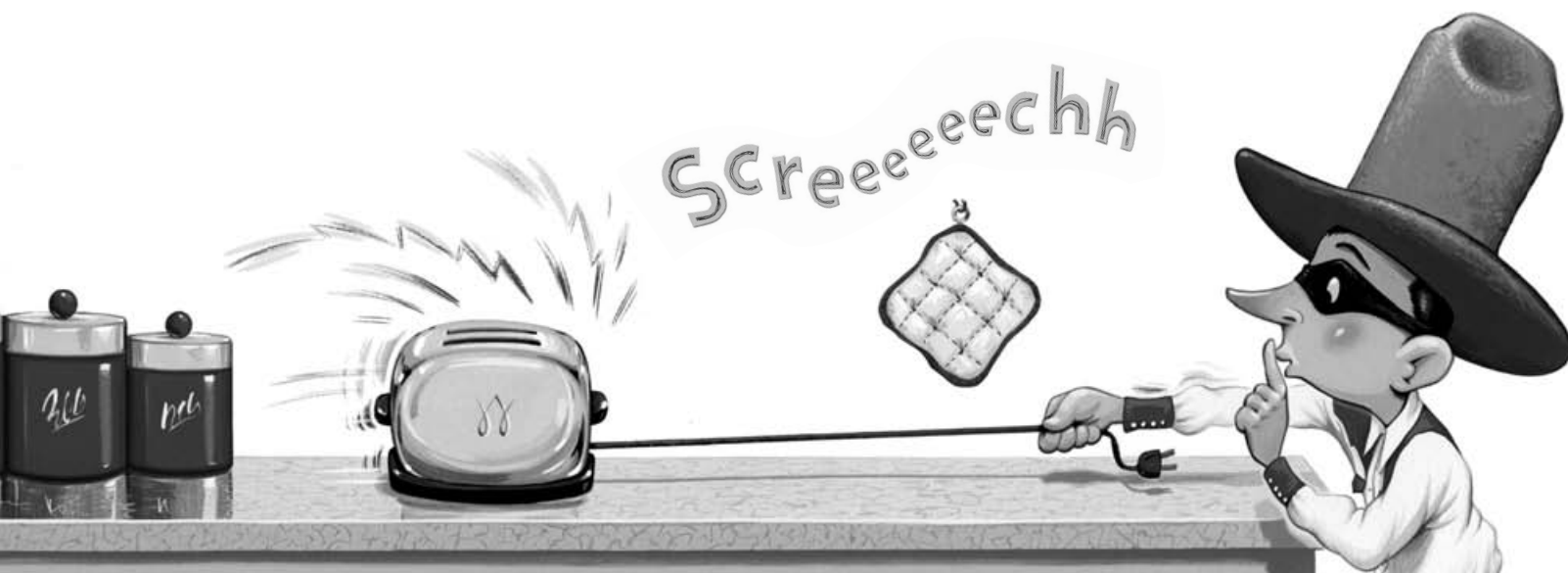
Create a character study by copying the blank table below onto large chart paper. Work on the chart together as a class. Students can refer to any of the books in the Mercy Watson series to help complete the character study. All characters in the series should be included. Activities such as this help students in their own writing by encouraging them to focus on story organization, character, dialogue, and setting.

(Sample Chart)

Character name	What does he/she like?	What does he/she do?	Favorite scene

Vocabulary

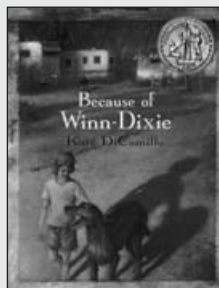
refreshment (p. 45); snuffle (p. 49); sly (p. 67); reforming (p. 69)



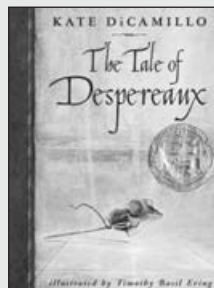
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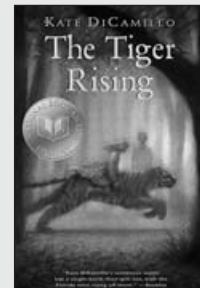
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