

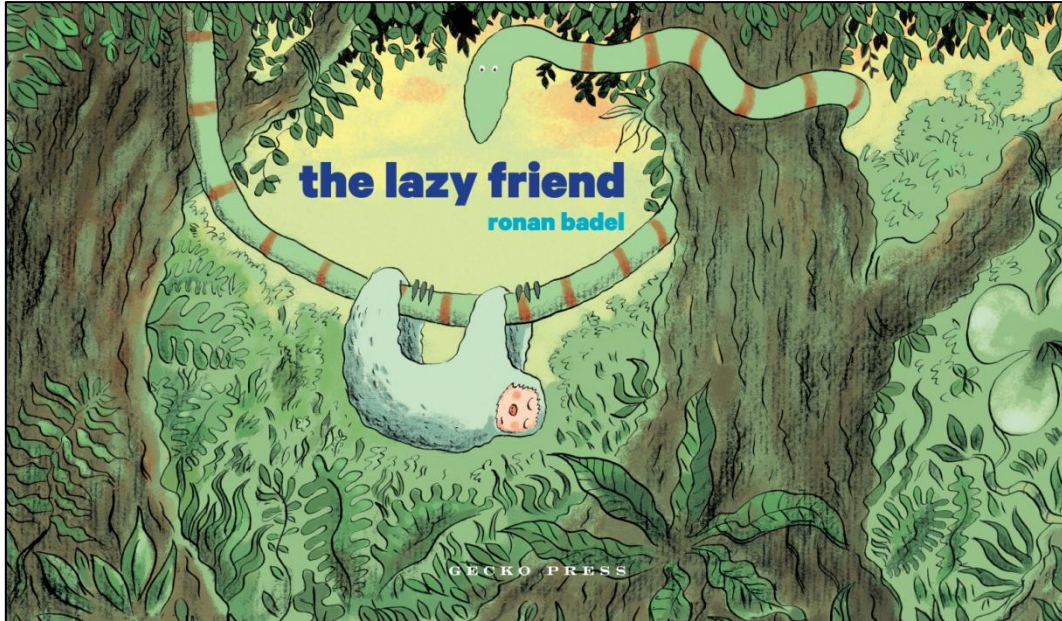


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Teaching Notes

The Lazy Friend

by Ronan Badel



Synopsis

The sloth lives in the jungle with some excellent friends who care about him very much. When sloth's tree is cut down and he is taken away on a truck, his friends must do everything they can to get him home safely.

He leads them on an enormous adventure, even though he is fast asleep the whole time.

The Author/Illustrator

Ronan Badel was born in 1972 in Brittany, France. He studied art in Strasbourg, taught illustration at an art school in Paris, and now lives in Brittany where he works full-time as a children's books author and illustrator.



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Themes

This wordless, humorous and adventure-filled picture book has several themes.

The themes of hazards and the dangers they entail are evident. As snake becomes an unwitting participant in this perilous adventure he encounters many hazards, both natural and manmade, from stalking crocodiles to rickety bridges.

The themes of bravery, courage, determination and heroic deeds in the face of adversity are illustrated throughout the book as snake's dramatic adventure into the unknown unfolds.

The themes of friendship and loyalty are the catalyst for snake undertaking this dangerous adventure. While snake faces hazards and imminent danger, sloth is oblivious to them and thanks to the concern and loyalty of his friends is safely brought home. Despite his lack of awareness of the dangers that were overcome these friends are relieved and overjoyed to see sloth returned unharmed.

Further themes that are explored are those of nature, environmentalism and the threat of humans. The environment in which sloth, snake and their friends live is threatened by humans. The potentially harmful and dangerous consequences of the logging industry on the animals, their habitat and their survival are made clear.

Activities

1. Before reading the book, look at the cover image and title. Discuss what you think this story might be about?
2. This is a wordless picture book. Imagine you have been commissioned to write some text to accompany each illustration. Write one or two sentences for each.
3. Focus on the snake character from the book. Write a personal account of the incidents from the snake's point of view. Include how the snake would describe the physical dangers, the environment, and the other characters it encounters, as well as its feelings about what is happening around it.
4. An adjective is a describing word. Look at the title of the book. Which word is the adjective? Do you think this adjective is a good descriptive word for the sloth and his characteristics or actions as illustrated in the book? Why/why not? Think of an adjective to describe one of your friends. Use your phrase as either the title of, or the inspiration for, a poem and/or short descriptive story about your friend.
5. The blurb on the back of the book states that this is 'an adventure story about a sloth who does absolutely nothing'. Pick another unlikely character or object to use as the central character in your own adventurous short story, for example, an inanimate object from your classroom, such as a pencil. Write, illustrate, bind and publish your own children's picture book of your story for younger children.



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6. Choose one of the double page spreads from the book, such as when the crocodiles pursue snake and sloth down the river. Either describe the scene orally in pairs or write a descriptive paragraph or poem based on what you can see.
7. Choose one of the animals from the book to investigate, for example, the sloth. Find out where sloths live. What is a sloth's natural habitat, call, food, predators, etc. Present your findings to your class. Create a diorama of it and its natural habitat.
8. The book is set in a jungle. In pairs, locate a jungle in the world to research. Investigate its location, climate, animals, plants, how travellers get to it, what they might see, what natural and human threats are present, etc. Present your findings to your class.
9. The only human in the book is involved in logging. What do you know and feel about the logging industry, particularly in jungles? Investigate the impact logging has on the jungle you studied in question eight above. In groups, create either a pro or anti-logging campaign. The campaign could include elements such as pamphlets, scripts for school talks, radio jingles, posters, slogans, etc.
10. Snake's actions in saving his friend are heroic. Research and interview someone from your family, school, local area or country who has done something you consider heroic. Present your findings in the style of a biographical entry in an encyclopaedia.
11. Examine the illustrations in the book. Do you like the style? What colours are used? What kinds of lines and textures are used? Choose your favourite illustration from the book and create your own artistic interpretation of it, for example, a painting, drawing, photograph, model, poem, etc. Or, design your own illustrations for the cover.
12. Choose two illustrations from the book. Carefully study each of the animals and their expressions. What range of emotions is evident? How has Ronan Badel achieved these feelings in the illustrations? (Think about colour, size, composition, etc). Draw your own picture that expresses another emotion, such as sadness, happiness, fear, or love.
13. In groups, adapt the book for a puppet theatre performance in your classroom. Devise a script, create scenery, choose music and make puppets to represent each character. Act your adaptation out for your class. If you have access to a video camera, tape it.
14. Write a plot summary of the book.
15. Review the book for your favourite magazine or website. What do you like about it? Why? What did you dislike about the book? Why? Give it a rating, such as stars, or a number out of ten.
16. Write a short bibliography of the author. Include a photograph.