



Dinosaur Bob and His Adventures with the Family Lazardo

by William Joyce

Teacher's Guide

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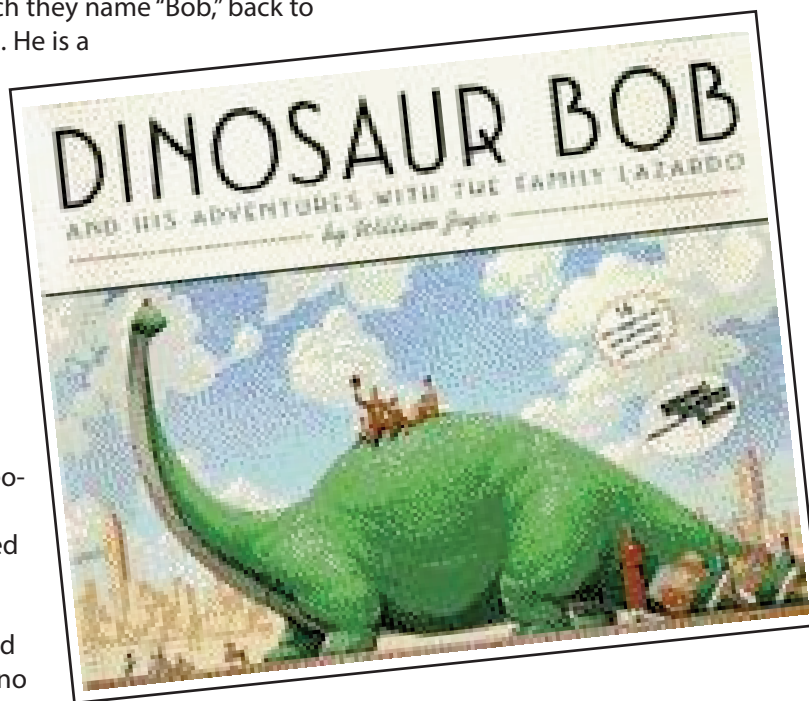
Synopsis

The Lazardo family is taking their annual pre-baseball season vacation when young Scotty Lazardo finds a dinosaur on a side-trip to Africa. The family decides to take the giant creature, which they name "Bob," back to the United States with them. He is a very large pet, but he is quite talented. He can blow a mean trumpet, play baseball, and dance the hokey poky! It is 1929 (according to a sign illustrated in the book), an optimistic time America and in the Lazardos' idyllic hometown of Pimlico Hills.

Back in Pimlico Hills, the Lazardos' hometown, the people are amazed by the dinosaur, and he is welcomed by all, with the exception of the mayor's wife, Mrs. DeGlumly, who is jealous and critical. However, he causes no real problems, until one day when he joins the town dogs in a game of car chasing. Bob, being rather huge, is able to catch a car, and he is arrested for disturbing the peace. He is put in jail, and the mayor (under pressure from his wife) decrees that Bob must be sent back to Africa the next day. Everyone in the town (except Mrs. DeGlumly) is saddened by this. However, Dr. Lazardo has a plan, and in the middle of the night he disappears, returning with Bob, whom he has busted out of jail. The Lazardos then go "on the lam," running away with Bob. However, they soon become homesick.

Shortly thereafter, the Pimlico Pirates, the town's baseball team, have their opening game of the season. Their surprise new team member is none other than Bob! He hits a homerun, winning the game (the Pirates' first-ever win). He is a town hero. Finally, Bob kisses Mrs.

DeGlumly, startling her out of her grumpiness, and the mayor declares Bob can stay. Everyone cheers and does the hokey poky. That night, the Lazardos have a barbecue, and they dance and sing late into the night in celebration.



Timeline

In Africa

On their annual family pre-baseball season vacation, the Lazardos find a dinosaur, whom they name Bob. They decide to keep him and return with him to their beloved hometown, Pimlico Hills.

In Pimlico Hills

Bob creates quite a stir; he is beloved by most, but is received grumpily by the mayor's wife, Mrs. DeGlumly. All goes well until Bob is arrested for chasing cars with the neighborhood dogs (he accidentally smashes up the car).

- In jail** Bob is jailed for car-chasing and is to be sent back to Africa. The Lazardos and the townspeople (except for Mrs. DeGlumly) are despondent. Finally, Dr. Lazardo, with assistance from his family, breaks Bob out of jail in the middle of the night.
- On the lam** The Lazardos go on the lam with Bob, but soon become homesick. Spurred by Bob, they decide to return home.
- Back home** On opening day for the Pimlico Pirates, it is revealed that Bob is the newest member of the team. He scores the winning homerun and gives the Pirates their first win ever. Amid universal acclaim (he even wins over Mrs. DeGlumly), it is decided that Bob can stay. The whole town does the hokey pokey.
- That night** The Lazardos have a celebratory cook-out, then dance and sing into the night.

Author Sketch

William Joyce was born in 1957 in Shreveport, Louisiana, in a family he characterizes as “a congenial horde of southern screwballs,” and both his artistic leanings and much of his source material come from his eccentric upbringing. His authorial debut was inauspicious: “It was in the second grade. We had a contest at my school to see who could write the best kids’ book. Mine was called *Billy’s Booger*. I did not win. I was sent to the principal’s office.” Undaunted, Joyce kept drawing and writing, eventually going to Southern Methodist University where he first studied illustration (he has said he got bad grades in art school because he had already established a style and wouldn’t change it for his instructors), and then filmmaking. Today he is a highly successful author, illustrator, and collaborator on films and animated television shows, including the series *George Shrinks* on PBS and *Rolie Polie Olie* on the Disney Channel, and the movies *Robots* and *Meet the Robinsons*. He says of his work, “I love what I do. It’s like getting paid for recess.” Joyce still lives in Shreveport with his wife and



two children, where he works and runs his charity for hurricane victims, the KatrinaRita Foundation. He’s also creative director of an art gallery in Shreveport called Artspace, and artist-in-residence at Centenary College in Shreveport.

Critic’s Corner

Famed illustrator, author, and filmmaker William Joyce wrote and illustrated his first children’s book when he was in the second grade and has been working professionally since 1983, when he illustrated *Tammy and the Gigantic Fish*, by Catherine and James Gray. In 1985 he wrote and illustrated *George Shrinks* (1985), which won an American Library Association Best Book Award and a SMART Award and was a Reading Rainbow Book. More success in a variety of media have followed, including recognition for *Santa Calls* (ALA Notable Children’s Book, School Library Journal Best Book, Golden Kite Award Honor Book, American Bookseller Pick of the Lists book, New York Public Library’s “One Hundred Titles for Reading and Sharing”), and the television series *Rolie Polie Olie* (two Emmy Awards). *Dinosaur Bob and His Adventures with the Family Lizardo* won a George C. Stone Center for Children’s Books Recognition of Merit Award, the New York Public Library award, an ALA Booklist Editors’ Choice Award, and a Reading Rainbow Book award. Critics called it “wacky, in the best sense of the word” (ALA Booklist) and “a campy extravaganza” (*Publishers Weekly*). *Time Magazine* wrote, “William Joyce’s plot and pictures provide laughter, thrills, and, most important, a happy ending.”

Selected other Works by William Joyce

Books

William Joyce has written and illustrated over twenty-five children’s books, including:

- George Shrinks* (1985)
- Santa Calls* (1993)
- Rolie Polie Olie* (1999)
- Snowie Rolie* (2000)
- Leaf Men and the Brave Good Bugs* (2001)
- Big Time Olie* (2002)
- A Day with Wilbur Robinson* (2006)

Films

- Toy Story* (1985) – created conceptual characters
- A Bug’s Life* (1998) – created conceptual characters
- Robots* (2005) – creator, produce, production design
- Meet the Robinsons* (2007) – concept, characters, story,

design
Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) – opening title sequence

Television

Rolie Polie Olie (1998), Disney Channel – won three Emmy Awards
George Shrinks (2000), PBS

Bibliography

“William Joyce (writer)”:
 <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Joyce_(writer)>
 “The World of William Joyce,”
 <www.harperchildrens.com/williamjoyce/homepage.htm>
 “William Joyce,” <www.williamjoyce.com/>
 “National Center for Children’s Illustrated Literature—William Joyce,”
 <http://www.nccil.org/experience/artists/joycew/index.htm>

Cross-Curricular Sources

“William Joyce Teacher Resource File,”
 <falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/joyce.htm>

Objectives

- Objectives
1. To get a sense of American small-town society in the 1920s
 2. To learn the truth of the adage, “you can’t judge a book by its cover”
 3. To discover the continent of Africa
 4. To learn about baseball

Meaning Study

Below are ideas and questions that arise from the text. Explain each in context.

1. Why aren’t the Lazardos afraid of Bob when they meet him?
(Bob is frighteningly .large, and certainly he is a strange and unexpected creature to find roaming around in the twentieth century. However, the Lazardos are eccentrics who also know that you can’t judge a book by its cover. They are very friendly to Bob, and he is very friendly to them. As an herbivore (Bob appears to be a brontosaurus), he would eat plants and would be harmless to the Lazardos.)
2. How does Dinosaur Bob adjust to live among humans?
(Bob adjusts well. He learns to dance and to play the

trumpet. He also discovers that he is a great baseball player. Most importantly, the humans see that Bob is a good friend.)

3. How does Dinosaur Bob get into trouble with the police?
(While trying to be friendly, he joins in a game of car-chasing with the town dogs. But, unlike the dogs, Bob really is able to catch the car, lifting it off the road He is then arrested.)
4. How does Bob get out of trouble?
(Dr. Lazardo rescues Bob, then goes on the run with Bob and the rest of the family. After returning to Pimlico Hills, Bob gets a job as the newest member of the Pimlico Pirates baseball teams. He gives the Pirates their first-ever win and becomes a hero. After that, he is allowed to stay.)
5. In the illustration of the Lazardo family floating down the Nile, we see two large stone monuments on the bank. What are they and where are they?
(These giant stone structures are found in Egypt, a northern country on the continent of Africa bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The Nile is the largest river in the world, and it runs through Egypt. In the illustration in the book, the foremost monument is the Sphinx. According to Egyptian mythology, the sphinx was a creature with a lion’s body and a man’s head. This particular sphinx depicts Harmachis, the god of morning. The other monument behind the Sphinx is a pyramid. There are many of these in Egypt. Used as a giant tomb for burying royalty, the pyramid has a square base with four triangular sides that come to a point at the top of the structure. Valuable treasures and artifacts, as well as mummies, have been found in pyramids.)
6. This story is set in 1929. We know this by the title of the movie listed on a sign in an illustration. What other clues in the book tell us that the story is set in the 1920’s?
(Types of automobiles, styles of clothing and uniforms, the kind of train the Lazardos ride on, cameras and microphones, art deco-style lettering on signs over business establishments, heavy references to exotic cultures that were in vogue during that era—e.g., Africa, conga dancing, the bodyguard Jumbu.)
7. Are the Lazardos a wealthy family?
(Yes. The father is a doctor. The family takes regular trips to far-away places, and such excursions are

expensive. They have a bodyguard. They live in a beautiful large home with a large yard. Finally, they seem to have much leisure time at their disposal. The Lazardos are living during the Roaring Twenties, when the country was wealthy and played heartily—a time of prosperity before the Great Depression of the 1930s.)

Word Study

Have students locate definitions for the following words introduced in the story:

1. **safari:** a hunting trip in eastern Africa
2. **Nile River:** the longest river in the world, running south to north into the Mediterranean Sea in northern Africa
3. **conga:** a dance from Africa, brought to the New World by slaves and adopted in Cuba; it is a line dance in which participants dance around a room in single file, repeatedly taking three steps to the conga beat followed by a kick.
4. **to book passage:** to make travel reservations on a boat—in this case, on the luxury ocean liner the Lazardos used to bring Bob with them back to the United States.
5. **berth:** a bed or sleeping area on a ship.
6. **Central Park:** huge, famous park in the middle of Manhattan, in New York City.
7. **headline:** the title of a newspaper article
8. **“on the lam”:** running away from the police
9. **stadium:** a sports field with bleachers
10. **outfield:** the part of a baseball diamond that lies between the bases and the bleachers or ballpark walls; the infield is the part of the diamond that contains the four bases
11. **baseball diamond:** the playing field for the sport of baseball
12. **dugout:** the place where the players sit while waiting to bat
13. **innings:** a time designation in baseball; an inning is completed when each team has batted and made three outs
14. **bases:** corners of a baseball diamond; runner must tag all four to score
15. **home plate:** the fourth base, which must be tagged to score a run; also, the place from where the batter must hit the ball
16. **strides:** long steps
17. **bongos:** small drums, connected to each other in pairs, that are played with the hands
18. **kazoos:** musical instruments made up of small metal or plastic tubes and played by humming into the tubes to make buzzing sounds

Student Involvement Activities

1. From a public library, locate some conga music records. Play some songs for each class, then mimic the sounds and beats using kazoos and bongo drums. Teach your students the conga dance to supplement the musical lesson.
2. Learn more about the culture and “fads” of the 1920’s by locating books about the area and finding old movies of the period. Movies by director Mac Sennett are particularly relevant for showing the exotic tastes and flamboyant attitudes of the time. You may wish to have a special 1920’s film festival and ask students to dress in character for the event.
3. Make a map of Africa, indicating the Nile River and other important bodies of water, as well as the geographical borders of the various countries. Discuss the widely varying cultures present in the different regions of Africa.
4. Write short reports about the history of baseball. Topics may include famous players, great moments, the origin of the sport, and more.
5. Dinosaur Bob resembles a Brachiosaurus, a type of dinosaur that actually lived in prehistoric Africa. Compare and contrast Bob’s living habits and physical traits with those of a real Brachiosaurus. For example, Bob is a good athlete, while Brachiosaurus was slow.
6. Help students to become interested in world events and reading newspapers. Show them the parts of a newspaper (examples: headlines, bylines, masthead, nameplate, dateline, index, editorial section). If needed, consult a basic journalism text for reference. Then, follow up with one or both of these activities:
 - Ask each student to find one news article and circle all unfamiliar words in it. Have the students look up the words to help them build their vocabularies. Repeat this exercise once a week for a period of several weeks.
 - Create your own class newspaper. Assign the duties of producing the paper to groups of students. For example, one group could serve as “reporters,” while another writes headlines. Use word processors to group the text and headlines.

Vocabulary Test

Draw a line from each word on the left to its meaning on the right.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. stride | a line dance from Africa |
| 2. bongo | a long step |
| 3. kazoo | where baseball players sit while waiting to bat |
| 4. berth | running away |
| 5. headline | type of drum |
| 6. lam | hunting trip in eastern Africa |
| 7. safari | part of a ball diamond beyond the bases |
| 8. dugout | musical instrument that makes buzzing noises |
| 9. conga | the title of a newspaper article |
| 10. outfield | place for sleeping on a ship |

Comprehension Test

Part I: Sentence Completion (10 points)

Finish each sentence below with the correct word(s).

1. Dinosaur Bob lives with Dr. _____ and his family.
2. The family went on a trip to the continent of _____.
3. The family lives in the town of _____.
4. The name of the baseball team is the _____.
5. The family visited _____ Park in New York City.
6. The stone monument that looks like a lion with a man's head is called a _____.
7. Dinosaur Bob chases _____ with the town dogs.
8. This story is set in the year _____.
9. The large bump in the outfield is really _____.
10. The family's bodyguard, named _____, smiles for the first time at the end of the story.

Part II: Matching (5 points)

Match the letter for the correct answer to the description from the story.

- _____ 1. Thinks Bob is a "menace."
- _____ 2. Says nothing.
- _____ 3. Is the head of an unusual family from Pimlico Hills
- _____ 4. Place where Bob and the Lazardos eat 7,500 hot dogs
- _____ 5. Team of which Bob is a member

- a. Jumbu
- b. Mrs. DeGlumly
- c. Central Park
- d. Pimlico Pirates
- e. Dr. Lizardo

Part III: Essay Questions (20 points)

Write an extended paragraph answering the following questions:

1. What other types of animals might the Lazardos have brought home from Africa? How would their adventures have been different?
2. Now that he's on the team, how will Bob's life change? Make up a follow-up story telling of Bob's new life as town hero.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY TEST

1. stride – a long step
2. bongo – type of drum
3. kazoo – musical instrument that makes buzzing noises
4. berth – place for sleeping on a ship
5. headline – the title of a newspaper article
6. lam – running away
7. safari – hunting trip in eastern Africa
8. dugout – the place where the baseball players sit while waiting to bat
9. conga – a line dance from Africa
10. outfield – part of a ball diamond beyond the bases

COMPREHENSION TEST

Part I: Sentence Completion (10 points)

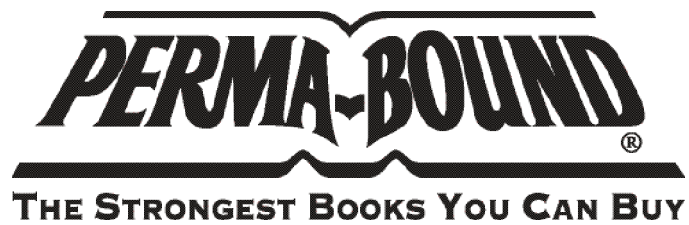
1. Lizardo
2. Africa
3. Pimlico Hills
4. Pirates
5. Central
6. sphinx
7. cars
8. 1920
9. Dinosaur Bob
10. Jumbu

Part II: Matching (5 points)

1. b
2. a
3. e
4. c
5. d

Part III: Essay Questions (20 points)

Answers will vary.



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