

EDUCATIONAL GUIDE & ACTIVITY SHEET

Michele McAvoy

THE GORILLA PICKED ME!

Illustrated by Valentina Carboni



About the Book:

Olive felt ordinary. Always last to be picked for teams at recess and a crumpled valentine thrown on her desk. **Olive** blended in. Until one day at a dance with her daddy she's picked from the crowd by the dancing gorilla! It is in that moment that **Olive** realizes she is, in fact, special. THE GORILLA PICKED ME! is a fun, sentimental story that reminds children - they are not ordinary! There is an underlining mystery in the story (see if you can spot the clues!)

About the Author:

Michele McAvoy is an award-winning children's book author from New Jersey. As a child, she read Judy Blume and drew Garfield comics. For her 10th birthday, she asked for a pink typewriter. Now all grown-up (typewriters near obsolete) Michele loves bringing joy to children through her own stories. THE GORILLA PICKED ME! is her second children's picture book. Her first picture book entitled MY SUPERHERO GRANDPA is the recipient of a 2016 Children's Moonbeam Book Award. Her third picture book entitled COOKIE & MILK is slated for release in Fall 2019 with Cardinal Rule Press.

About the Illustrator:

Valentina Carboni is a creative living in Rome, Italy. She has a degree in Graphic and Multimedia Design and has studied under master artists in the art of illustration, attending the Roman School of Comics and the International School of Illustration, to name a few. Valentina loves children's literature and entertainment through content that transmits values. THE GORILLA PICKED ME! is Valentina's debut American picture book.

Think About This:

- Talk about the difference between an Author and an Illustrator and how each contributes differently to the final book (the author providing the story and the illustrator providing the illustrations.)
- Consider the difference in geographic location for Ms. McAvoy (New Jersey) and Ms.

Carboni (Italy). Given the great distance, how might they have worked together to create the book.

Pre-Reading Discussion Questions

Observe the front cover:

- Describe the action. Explain what the child is doing in this illustration. Predict how the child is feeling in this illustration. How do you know how she is feeling? (Smiling, looking upwards, the title ends with an exclamation point.)
- The title of the book is THE GORILLA PICKED ME! Discuss if they think it's a real gorilla or a fake gorilla and why? Discuss where and how they think the child was picked by a gorilla.

Observe the back cover:

- Examine the illustration. Tell what they see in the picture.
- Make a connection with the illustration on the front cover and on the back. Explain how the two go together.
- Read the description of the story printed on the back cover. Ask whether they think the book will be in rhyme or not rhyme?
- Talk about the language used in the description, particularly the words that describe traits of the main character- "quiet", "shy", "not showy", not "loud".
 - Explain how words like these could describe how someone acts or feels.
- Predict what THE GORILLA PICKED ME! is going to be about.

Post-Reading Discussion Questions

- Examine Olive's body language in the first 6 pages. How does her body language relate to how she may be feeling in those pages.
- Talk about how what we feel effects how our body moves/acts.
- Talk about the different words Olive uses to describe herself on page 1-2 "plain" "simple" "ordinary" and "not neat."
 - ◆ Ask if they think she looks plain, simple or ordinary
 - ◆ Talk about how sometimes we feel a certain way inside even though it's different from how others see us on the outside
 - ◆ Talk about the Definition of Self-Esteem- a confidence and satisfaction in oneself.
- Examine pages 7-8 when Olive is with her daddy.
 - ◆ Ask how they think Olive feels in this illustration with her daddy.
 - ◆ Ask if she feels different than the prior pages and why they think she feels different (Olive's body language, her smile, the words used- "delighted.")
 - ◆ Talk about what the term "loved me for me" means. Ask if there is someone special in their life who "loves them for them."
- Examine pages 8-9- At the dance. Observe the different relationships presented at the dance (a grandfather, mothers and fathers.)
- How is Olive feeling on page 10 when her father needs to step away?

TITLE: THE GORILLA PICKED ME! SUITABLE- AGES 4+

- ◆ Ask if anyone has ever felt their "stomach in knots." What types of situations may make kids scared, nervous or anxious. Talk about how different situations feel different for different people. Some people may get stage fright, some may be nervous when they meet new friends, some may feel nervous when taking a test.
- On page 12, talk about the pinky-promise. Ask if anyone has ever done a pinky-promise. Talk about what it means to make a promise.
- On page 13, again observe the family relationships presented at the dance. Explain how different people could have different special someone's in their lives.
- Page 14- Ask if they were surprised by how the gorilla looked. Ask if they think it's a real gorilla or fake gorilla (and who guessed correctly from the opening questions.)
- Talk about the kazoo and if they know what is kazoo is? (*you can purchase an inexpensive kazoo from Amazon to show the children what a kazoo is.)
 - ◆ What words would they use to describe the gorilla?
- How is **Olive** feeling on page 15? Lonely. Ask what they can do to help others when they feel lonely. (If someone feels lonely on the playground or cafeteria how could they help?) If you have a buddy bench in the playground, talk about it how they can use the buddy bench.
- Is **Olive** feeling better on pages 16, 17 and 18 when she is dancing with the gorilla?
 - ◆ Talk about how it feels to be picked from a crowd. Ask whether they like to be picked from a crowd or not and why?
- Ask how **Olive** is feeling after the dance with the gorilla and if it's different from how she felt at the very beginning of the story.
 - ◆ **Story Arc**- Every story should have a beginning, middle and end. Talk about the story Arc here.
 - In beginning we see how **Olive** felt ordinary, like she blended in at school.
 - In the middle **Olive** is still in school but at a special dance and how she deals with various emotions at one time, happy with her dad, nervous when he leaves, alone and then finally happy when she is dancing with the gorilla.
 - At the end, **Olive** feels happy and special.
 - ◆ Ask if they think **Olive** will feel special or ordinary at school the next day and why?
- Talk about how no child is ordinary. That every child is special in their own way.
- The 'theme' of a story is defined as the main idea or true meaning of a story. Identify the theme of THE GORILLA PICKED ME!.
Tell what the story is really all about.

CLUES CLUES CLUES!



The big mystery in the story - Who is in the gorilla suit?

- Ask who they think is in the gorilla suit? And why?
- Ask if they saw any clues that would hint who was in the gorilla suit.

Clues:

- ❖ Compare the touch on Olive's cheek by her dad on page 11 with the touch on her cheek by the gorilla on page 19
- ❖ Compare the dad's skip on page 13 with the gorilla's sashay on page 20.
- ❖ Compare the curtained doorway where the dad exited and the curtained doorway where the gorilla appeared. Are they the same?
- ❖ Talk about how Olive's father returned right after the gorilla left.
- ❖ Compare the father's hands and the gorilla's hands.
- ❖ See if they can spot the one final clue at the end.
 - ◆ Ask what is in the dad's back pocket on the last page.

It's not always easy to talk about our feelings.

- Thankfully, we have the wonderful world of emojis to help us share how we feel without having to say a word.
- Children love emojis. Explore with them that like Olive, everyone, even you, has moments when they don't feel happy or at their best. It is during these times when you need a friend the most.
- Use the "Today I'm Feeling" activity to allow children to express themselves daily in a less vulnerable way.
- Use the "I'm Feeling 'Meh'" necklace to allow children to ask for companionship without having to actually "ask" for it. Similar to a buddy-bench on the playground.

TODAY "I'M FEELING" CARDS

Today I'm Feeling:



Today I'm Feeling:



Today I'm Feeling:



Today I'm Feeling:



Today I'm Feeling:



Today I'm Feeling:



I'M FEELING 'MEH' NECKLACE

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED:

1. 'MEH' EMOJI CUT OUT.
2. CRAYONS/MARKERS/STICKERS/EMBELLISHMENTS (YOUR CHOICE!).
3. YARN CUT LONG ENOUGH FOR EACH STUDENT TO MAKE A LONG NECKLACE.
4. CHILD SAFETY SCISSORS

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. CUT OUT THE 'MEH' EMOJI (INCLUDED)
2. HAVE EACH CHILD COLOR & DECORATE THEIR OWN 'MEH' EMOJI.
3. ADULT- CUT THE YARN LONG ENOUGH TO FIT LARGE (LOOSELY) AROUND THE CHILD'S NECK.
4. PUNCH A HOLE AT THE TOP OF THE 'MEH' AND PULL THE YARN THROUGH.
5. TIE THE YARN IN A KNOT.

VOILA!
YOU HAVE YOUR VERY OWN '
I'M FEELING 'MEH' NECKLACE'!

**TELL CHILDREN TO USE THEIR NECKLACE ANYTIME
THEY FEEL LIKE THEY NEED A FRIEND.**

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"MEH" EMOJI

