

Jack the Tripper

By Gene Barretta

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Common Core State Standards-English Language Arts-Reading Literature, Grade 2

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as *who, what, where, when, why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

Focus

Students will listen to Jack the Tripper and discuss key details provided in text and illustrations.

Activation

Introduce author Gene Barretta to students and share information about him by using his website www.genebarretta.com. Explain that we will be reading a book written by Gene Barretta that deals with honesty.

Pre Reading Conversation:

- What is honesty?
- Do you know any famous liars? Pinocchio & The Boy Who Cried Wolf (explain the stories)
- What happens when we tell a lie? It starts out small and gets bigger. There are personal consequences and other consequences.
- How do your actions influence others?
- What would happen if you made lying a habit? The more that we lie, the harder it becomes to tell truth from lies. We have to tell more lies to cover up what we told.
- Will people want to be my friend?
- What does it takes to be a person of integrity?
- Have you ever lied?

Post Reading Conversation:

- How did lying influence the characters and the plot of the story?
- Discuss the identity of Jack the Tripper at the end of the story. (Need to infer through clues) Most of the kids will guess the headmaster, Mrs. Thatcher, and Dr. Dizzie. We can eliminate Mrs. Thatcher because she is a girl. We can eliminate the headmaster because he is pictured with Jack the Tripper. Could it be Dr. Dizzie? Clues: He says "Anything Goes;" the monkey is with him; he knows about Polly's book report.

Vocabulary:

jittery
 tense
 “Anything Goes”
 wise
 confession
 headmaster
 declared
 cancel
 costume
 devastating
 consequences
 integrity
 honesty

Dr. Dizzie’s Attributes:

- He likes to say “Anything Goes!”
- He has a monkey.
- Likes to dress up in costumes
- Wise
- Strange
- Founder of the school
- Jack the Tripper

Notice the silhouette in headmaster’s office. They look like they are making a deal. People shake hands when they make a deal.

Other Points to Discuss:

- Why was Polly dressed as Pinocchio for the Dizzie Day celebration?
- Look at Dr. Dizzie’s expression on Thursday. He looks puzzled. He is suspicious about what he is witnessing.
- Winston ate the candy. The kids notice he is fat and he never actually says he ate the candy- he burps. When do people burp? Sometimes you burp after you eat something. There is also a candy bar behind his back. (Infer) The author did not come right out and tell us.
- Notice Gene Barretta’s use of ellipsis. It helps us read the story with expression.
 - I... I... I...
 - Until...
 - How strange it was...
- Refer to the picture where the children are sitting outside the headmaster’s office. Do you think the children should be punished? How do you think they should be punished?
 - Lose recess
 - Detention
 - Call their parents

- No parade
- Some kids even say a spanking
- They need to apologize
- Great use of similes/ literary devices
 - Her feet felt as heavy as stones
 - Her legs were as wiggly as worms.
- Once Polly lied why did all the kids start lying?
 - Polly got out of doing her report, they got candy, they were treated nicely...
- Once Polly told the truth why did all the kids start telling the truth? (They were coming clean.)
- Was it right to confess? Why or Why not?
- Why do we need to be responsible for what we say and do?

Character Counts/Student character building attributes:

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Inferring

Guided Instruction 1:

- Turn Jack the Tripper into “solve the mystery-who is Jack the Tripper?”
- Explain to students that together you will solve a mystery.
- Don’t forget to use your inference skills.
- Explain the page set-up, dark blue areas are different from colored portion, what does that mean?
- As you read the story, page by page, gather clues from the pictures and text.
- Allow student discussion to try and figure out before the end.
- Have students make predictions as to Jack’s identity and provide evidence.

Guided Instruction 2:

- Create a Reader’s Theater! Great timing is October’s “Kid’s Love a Mystery Month.”
- Attached is a PDF of Jack the Tripper in the form of a play.
- Students choose their parts and perform the story.

PLAY BEGINS ON THE NEXT PAGE FOR PRINT-OUT. IT IS FIVE PAGES.

JACK THE TRIPPER

By Gene Barretta

CHARACTERS: 20 total characters, plus full class participation.

There are a few lines that can be read by the full class.

Narrator 1
 Narrator 2
 Narrator 3
 Narrator 4
 Narrator 5
 Narrator 6
 Narrator 7
 Narrator 8

Students:

Polly
 Catherine
 Winston
 Mary
 Reggie
 The Twins (2 readers)

Adults:

Mrs. Fletcher
 Headmaster
 Dr. Dizzie
 Monkey
 Jack the Tripper (read with a dark sinister voice)

LOCATION: Benjamin Dizzie Elementary School

NARRATOR 1: Monday. Polly was the first student at Benjamin Dizzie Elementary to go down.

POLLY: “I got tripped! . . . ”

NARRATOR 2: . . . she cried out, as she stumbled into the classroom.

POLLY: “I was minding my own business, just thinking about my book report – my extra long book report – when out of nowhere, there he was!”

FULL CAST: “WHOOOOOOOSH!”

NARRATOR 3: Everyone gasped.

POLLY: “All I saw was a black top hat and cape . . . “

NARRATOR 4: . . . Polly shivered . . .

POLLY: “He grabbed my extra long, extra wonderful book report and ran.”

NARRATOR 5: Mrs. Fletcher tried to calm her.

MRS. FLETCHER: “Oh, don’t worry about your book report, dear. You must be terribly shaken.”

NARRATOR 6: In fact, the whole class was shaken, and a bit stirred. But they were smiling by photo time.

NARRATOR 7: After all, the annual Dizzie Day Parade was only four days away. Dizzie costumes! Dizzie candy! Dizzie dancing!

NARRATOR 8: The parade was a strange one, but then so was the school’s founder, Dr. Dizzie.

NARRATOR 1: Yes, he was wise. Sure, he was noble. Yet, he combed his hair with a fork and his best friend was a monkey!

MONKEY: Hoo Hoo.

NARRATOR 2: Every year, Dr. Dizzie led the Dizzie Day Parade with the bold command, . . .

FULL CAST: “ANYTHING GOES!!!!”

NARRATOR 3: Tuesday. The children worked hard to finish their parade costumes. Suddenly Winston burst through the door.

WINSTON: “I got tripped! . . . “

NARRATOR 4: . . . he shouted, as he dropped an empty candy box onto his desk.

WINSTON: “The tripper is still out there. And now he’s eating our parade candy!”

MRS. FLETCHER: My goodness, you poor boy . . . “

NARRATOR 5: . . . said Mrs. Fletcher.

MRS. FLETCHER: “Well, we can always get more candy. The important thing is that you’re safe.”

NARRATOR 6: Wednesday. Mrs. Fletcher alerted the headmaster. The headmaster alerted the police. The police patrolled the halls.

NARRATOR 7: But the tripper struck again. Catherine sobbed . . .

CATHERINE: “He said his name was Jack.”

NARRATOR 8: Mary turned to her mother as they left the school and added . . .

MARY: “It’s Jack the Tripper. Mommy, I want to go home.”

NARRATOR 1: Thursday. The next day was no better. Reggie got tripped and so did the twins.

REGGIE: “I got tripped!”

THE TWINS: “He got us both with one boot!”

NARRATOR 2: The headmaster offered the children toys and sweets. He even replaced their torn clothes. He shouted, . . .

HEADMASTER: “Jack the Tripper must be stopped!”

NARRATOR 3: Friday. The whole town was tense and jittery. Parents rushed to the school and demanded answers.

NARRATOR 4: They searched every cranny, nook and crack for clues. Still, it was Dizzie Day, and the children arrived at the school in their costumes chanting . . .

FULL CAST: “ANYTHING GOES! ANYTHING GOES! ANYTHING GOES!”

NARRATOR 5: But instead, everything stopped. Dr. Dizzie made a devastating announcement.

DR. DIZZIE: “I’m afraid there can be no parade. Not when Jack the Tripper is lurking.”

MONKEY: Hoo Hoo!

NARRATOR 6: The students’ jaws dropped. Their eyes popped. Polly jumped to her feet!

POLLY: “Wait! Please don’t cancel the parade! I . . . I . . . I . . .

MRS. FLETCHER: “What is it, dear?”

NARRATOR 7: . . . asked Mrs. Fletcher. Polly continued, . . .

POLLY: “I lied! There is no Jack. And I never wrote that book report. It’s true, I did trip . . . but I was alone.”

NARRATOR 8: And then Reggie stood up.

REGGIE: “Please don’t cancel the parade. I lied too. You treated Polly so well . . . I figured, why not?”

NARRATOR 1: Then the twins stood up.

THE TWINS: “We lied to get our names in the paper.”

NARRATOR 2: Then Catherine and Mary stood up:

CATHERINE AND MARY (together): “We lied because it worked for Winston.”

NARRATOR 3: Winston pulled some parade candy away from his mouth. His confession was short and sweet.

WINSTON: BUUUUUUURPPPP!

NARRATOR 4: Every child had something to add. Dr. Dizzie and Mrs. Fletcher were shocked!

DR. DIZZIE AND MRS. FLETCHER (together): WWWHHHAAAATTTT?!?!?!?

MONKEY: HOOO HOOO!

NARRATOR 5: The only parade Dr. Dizzie would lead that day was out of the classroom and down the hall to the headmaster’s office.

NARRATOR 6: The children sat nervously on a bench outside the headmaster’s office. Moments later, the headmaster opened his door.

HEADMASTER: “Polly! Come in here now!

NARRATOR 7: . . . he roared. Polly slid down off the bench. Her feet felt as heavy as stones. Her legs were as wiggly as worms.

NARRATOR 8: And she never heard the approaching shuffle and crunch of big buckled boots, until . . .

FULL CAST: WHOOOOOOOOOOSH!!!

NARRATOR 1: She tripped! She flew! She flipped! She sailed past all her friends. Everyone screamed and scattered. A dark figure leaped forward.

JACK THE TRIPPER: “Let me know when you finish that book report, Polly. I’d love to read it.”

NARRATOR 2: Then he was gone. The headmaster stepped into the hall. The children circled him, shouting . . .

FULL CAST: “Jack the Tripper is here! Jack the Tripper is here!”

NARRATOR 3: But the headmaster just shook his head. He didn’t believe them.

HEADMASTER: “Yes, and a horse has five legs. Enough of this nonsense. Polly, get up off the floor.”

NARRATOR 4: So, was it Jack?

NARRATOR 5: It looked like him.

NARRATOR 6: Judging by the clothes.

NARRATOR 7: Yet, as he ran, how strange it was . . .

NARRATOR: That he called out . . .

FULL CAST: ANYTHING GOES!!!!

END