

Living Things Are Linked

A RETELLING OF AN AFRICAN TALE

by Dina McClellan

Once there was a chief who was a stern ruler. He demanded that all in the village obey him. The people in the village always did as the chief wished.

Only one person was not afraid of the chief. That was his grandmother. She did not follow all the chief's rules and she spoke her mind.

READ & RESPOND

Literary Elements

Describe the chief. How do the other characters in the story feel about him?



One night the chief couldn't sleep. The frogs outside were making too much noise. This was a serious problem for the chief.

He woke up all the people in the village. "If I can't sleep, no one will sleep," he said. "Get rid of all the frogs!"



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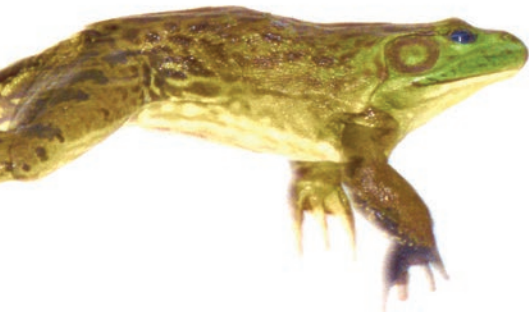
READ & RESPOND

Visualize

What words on this page help you to visualize the frogs?



So the people caught all the frogs. They moved them to a different village. Later they felt sad. They did not think the frogs should have to move. The people were afraid of the chief.



Only the chief's grandmother was not afraid. "You'll be sorry," she said. "All living things are linked. Even you and the frogs."

The chief had to laugh. "How could frogs be linked to a big chief like me?" he said.



READ & RESPOND

Literary Elements

List two big events that happen on this page of the story.

Soon it was time for the harvest. Everyone in the village had to gather beans and sweet potatoes. It was hard to work outdoors. The air was full of mosquitoes. Thousands of them!

The chief stayed in his hut while others worked. The mosquitoes found him there. He couldn't sleep or think. There was too much buzzing! The chief was covered with bites.



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READ & RESPOND

Visualize

Reread this page. What would you hear, see, taste, smell, or feel if you lived in the village?



“Get rid of the mosquitoes!” the chief said. “I want every last one gone by morning!”

“Why didn’t you take my advice?” said the grandmother. “We are in this mess because you made the people move the frogs.”

The chief paid no attention to her. Again he told the villagers to get rid of the mosquitoes.



READ & RESPOND

Literary Elements

What problem does the chief have now? What is his solution?

People did their best. Still, they couldn't move mosquitoes like they could move frogs. There were too many. The next day there were even more.



The chief gave another order. "This time, move them ALL!" he said.

The people tried again. They did their best. They still couldn't get rid of all the mosquitoes. There were just too many.



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READ & RESPOND

Visualize

How do you think the chief feels when he sees that there are more mosquitoes than ever? Which words help you to know?



“You should have left those frogs alone,”
said the grandmother.

“What are you talking about?” said the
chief. He was very upset.

“Don’t you know that frogs eat
mosquitoes? That’s why you need frogs!”
the grandmother said.

At last, the chief
learned his lesson. He
found out the hard way
that all living things are
linked.



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READ & RESPOND

Literary Elements

How does the story end? Does the chief change? Explain.

Reread and Respond



1 Is the chief a good listener? How can you tell?

Hint

For clues, look on pages 42, 44, and 46.

2 Why do the people do whatever the chief tells them to do?

Hint

For clues, look on pages 42 and 44.

3 How is the chief's grandmother unlike the other characters in the story?

Hint

For clues, look on pages 42 and 44.