



If Wendell Had a Walrus

Written by Lori Mortensen,
Illustrated by Matt Phelan

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Picture Book
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Educational Activities for Teachers and Librarians

ABOUT THE BOOK

In this heartwarming story about friendship and imagination, a boy named Wendell dreams of getting a pet walrus. Together, they'd ride bikes, tell jokes, and have a grand time. If only he could find one!

But looking for a walrus turns out to be its own adventure, one with an unexpected and happy result.

Acclaimed author Lori Mortensen and *New York Times*-bestselling illustrator Matt Phelan have created a sweet, playful, memorable book that kids are sure to request again and again.

THEMES

- Walruses
- Jokes
- Imagination
- Friendship
- Character Education: creativity, problem solving, and patience.

BEFORE YOU READ

- Discuss the meaning of imagination.
- Have students imagine what they see in the clouds.

AS YOU READ

- Discuss why Wendell wanted a walrus.
- Have students look for reasons why a walrus may not be the best companion for Wendell.

AFTER YOU READ

Art

- Wendell was good at seeing pictures in the clouds. Have students draw pictures of what they see in the clouds.
- Have students draw their own picture of Roger, the walrus.
- Wendell thought of many fun things to do with Roger. Have students draw pictures of what they would do if they had their own walrus.
- Wendell tried to get a walrus several different ways. Have students draw ways they would try and get a real walrus.

Character Education

- Wendell said he wanted a walrus. Have students discuss what he might really want.

- Wendell was so intent on getting a walrus, he didn't notice the other boy at first. (Did the students notice him?) What did Wendell do to make a real friend?
- In the end, Wendell and Morrell had something in common. Have students discuss how they can find out if they share common interests with others.

Geography

- Walruses are fascinating creatures. Use a map to show where walruses live around the world.
- There are three sub species of walruses. What are their differences and similarities? Use a map to show where they live and why.

Language Arts

- Wendell and Morrell enjoyed telling jokes. Ask students to write their own whale, walrus jokes, or under-the-sea type of jokes.
- Wendell wanted a stupendiferous, cosmically colossal type of day. Have students come up with their own superlative expressions for a really great day.
- Wendell came up with several ways to get a walrus. Have students write the different ways they would get a walrus.

Research

- Ask students to research walruses. Where do they live? What are their similarities and differences?
- What do walruses do with their tusks?
- What is a group of walruses called?
- Hunting for tusks once endangered walruses. What is endangering them today?

Social Studies

- Wendell wanted a walrus. But he really wanted a friend. Have students discuss ways to make a friend.

- Ask students to discuss why Wendell and Morrell could be good friends.

Fun Walrus Facts

- The scientific name for walruses is *Odobenus Rosmarus* which is Latin for tooth-walking sea horse.
- Walruses are so huge they are called the King of the Arctic, and weigh up to 3,000 lbs. That's the weight of a small car.
- Both males and females have tusks. Tusks are long teeth that never stop growing.
- Walruses live in separate herds. Males in one, females in another.
- Blubber beneath their skin helps walruses survive temperatures as low as -35 degrees Celsius (-31 degrees Fahrenheit).
- Walruses can stay underwater for up to 30 minutes.
- Male walruses are called bulls, females are called cows, and babies are called calves.
- Walruses live between 30-40 years in the wild.

Holidays and Observances

January

- 13 - Make Your Dream Come True Day
- 31 - Inspire Your Heart with Art Day

February

- 7 - Send a Card to a Friend Day
- 8 - Kite Flying Day
- 11 - Make a Friend Day
- 20 - Love Your Pet Day
- 21 - Card Reading Day

March

- 3 - If Pets Had Thumbs Day

April

- 1 - National Kite Month
- 2 - Children's Book Day
- 8 - Draw a Picture of a Bird Day
- 14 - Look up at the Sky Day
- 15 - World Art Day
- 23 - Take a Chance Day
- 27 - Tell a Story Day

May

- 1 - National Bike Month
- 1 - National Bike Week (third week)
- 18 - National Bike to Work Day

June

- 8 - Best Friends Day
- 8 - World Ocean Day

July

- 1 - International Joke Day
- 24 - Tell an Old Joke Day
- 30 - National Day of Friendship

August

- 1 - Friendship Week (third week)
- 5 - Friendship Day
- 9 - Book Lover's Day
- 16 - National Tell a Joke Day

September

- 6 - Read a Book Day
- 10 - Swap Ideas Day
- 13 - Positive Thinking Day
- 26 - National Shamu the Whale Day

October

- 27 - National Tell a Story Day

November

- 13 - Young Readers Day
- 24 - National Walrus Day

December

- 1 - Write a Friend Month
- 7 - Letter Writing Day



BIOS



Lori Mortensen has never had a walrus--but she has plenty of good friends and is the award-winning author of over 70 books and 350 stories and articles. Recent releases include *Chicken Lily*, (Henry Holt), *Mousequerade Ball* (Bloomsbury) illustrated by *New York Times* bestselling illustrator Betsy Lewin, and *Cowpoke Clyde Rides the Range* (Clarion) a sequel to *Cowpoke Clyde & Dirty Dawg*, one of Amazon's best picture books of 2013. When she's not letting her cat in, or out, or in--she's tapping away at her computer, conjuring, coaxing, and prodding her latest stories to life. To learn more about Lori's books and other activity guides, visit her website at www.lorimortensen.com.



Matt Phelan has illustrated many books for young readers, including *Xander's Panda Party* by Linda Sue Park and *What Are You Waiting For?* By Scott Menchin, but this is his first walrus book. The creator of the graphic novels *The Storm in the Barn*, *Around the World*, *Bluffton*, and *Snow White*, lives in Ardmore, Pennsylvania. Visit his website at www.mattphelan.com.