



Teacher's Notes

Written by Sarina Dickson

Story Summary

A Lion in the Meadow was first published in 1969 and has remained a firm favourite with children and their adults for close to 50 years. The story explores themes of imagination and reality, fact and fiction. In this heartwarmingly funny and vibrantly illustrated story, bestselling author Margaret Mahy invokes the power of imagination and the joy of imaginary friends for young readers.



Margaret Mahy (1936–2012) is one of New Zealand’s most celebrated children’s writers. She is the author of more than 150 titles, which have been translated into many different languages and sold around the world. Appointed to the Order of New Zealand in 1993, Mahy also won many global prizes for children’s writers, including the Carnegie Medal and the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Award.

‘It is in the nature of books, that they have the capacity to make you feel powerful about what you can alter and achieve in your life’ - Margaret Mahy

Suggested Shared Reading Questions

- † What is a meadow? What is another word we can use for a meadow?
- † What does 'nonsense' mean? Ask for examples of nonsense sentences.
- † What other characters do you notice in the pictures?
- † What was the family doing before the boy saw the lion?
- † The boy says the lion is big and yellow. What other words describe the lion in the picture?
- † What does 'whiskery' mean? What are some other 'whiskery' animals?
- † What other animals live at the little boy's house?
- † Do you think the boy feels listened to by his mother?
- † Does his mother believe the boy about the lion?
- † What does the boy's mother give him to help him go out in the meadow?
- † Does the matchbox help the boy, or make things worse?
- † What does the lion eat?
- † Can you imagine what the little boy's name might be?
- † The lion says, 'some stories are true and some aren't'. How can we tell if a story is true or not?

Suggested Activities

Adjectives

Using the double page spread of the dragon illustration make a list of adjectives about the dragon. As a group/class choose another animal and together add adjectives to make it into an imaginative creature. Ask the children to draw the creature as they imagine it, using the adjectives they previously listed together.

Story Starter

Show the children an empty matchbox. Together cast a spell over the matchbox to fill it with a magical creature. The children can then draw or write a story about what is now in the matchbox.

Dragon's Perspective

We don't learn a lot about the dragon in the story. Write 3-5 things about the dragon that you think the little boy, or his mother, should know.

Co-operative Games

Play 'Sleeping Lions' or adapt a game like 'Octopus' into 'Dragons'.

STEM

Use a classroom STEM resource (e.g. lego) to design and build a dragon trap. If no resources are available, draw and label a design to catch a dragon.

Food Tech

Work together on an apple dish for the lion e.g. Ask each child to bring an apple to school, and work together to peel and chop the apples for a crumble to cook and share. Invent a recipe for dragon food to entice the dragon into a trap.

Popular for 50 Years

In 2019 it will be 50 years since *A Lion in the Meadow* was first published. Can the children find someone in their family or community to interview about what life was like when the interviewee first read the book? Is it possible to find someone 50 years older than the children in the class to come and speak to them about why they liked the book as a child and share some memories of how childhood has changed since then?