



Teaching Notes: *Mr Darcy and the Christmas Pudding*

Written by Alex Field
Illustrated by Peter Carnavas
Published by New Frontier Publishing

SYNOPSIS

Mr Darcy and the Christmas Pudding is the third book in the Mr Darcy series. Each character has been taken from Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. In this series each lovable character is given the appropriate animal manifestation to reflect their personality. Mr Darcy is a duck, Bingley a horse, Caroline Bingley a cow and Maria Lucas, a mouse. In this book Mr Collins is introduced. He is a cat.

Mr Darcy loves making his famous Christmas pudding. But what happens when Mr Collins drops by unexpectedly?

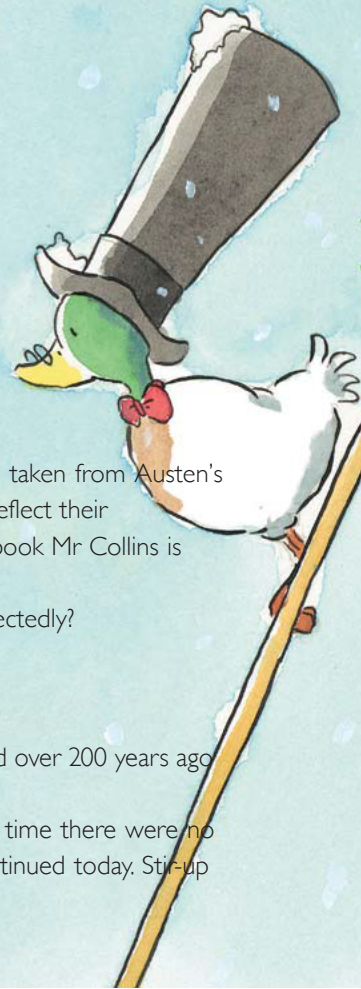
AUTHOR MOTIVATION

The author is a great admirer of Jane Austen's novels particularly *Pride and Prejudice*, which was first published over 200 years ago (1813). This delightful series came to Alex after one of her friends named their family duck Mr Darcy.

Keen to stay true to the Regency traditions, Alex researched the Regency Christmas. Although at the time there were no Christmas trees, no Santa Claus and no Christmas stockings, there were other traditions that are still continued today. Stir-up Sunday, the day the Christmas pudding was made, is just one of those traditions.

"Banned by the Puritans in the 1660s for its rich ingredients, the [plum] pudding and its customs came back into popularity during the reign of George I. Known sometimes as the Pudding King, George I requested that plum pudding be served as part of his royal feast when he celebrated his first Christmas in England after arriving from Hanover to take the throne in 1714. By 1740, a recipe for 'plum porridge' appeared in Christmas Entertainments. In the Victorian era, Christmas annuals, magazines, and cookbooks celebrated the sanctity of family ... and the tradition of all family members stirring the pudding was often referenced...Poorer families made the richest version of plum pudding that they could afford...Even workhouse inmates anticipated a plum pudding on Christmas Day."

- *Food and Cooking in Victorian England: A History*, Andrea Broomfield [Praeger: Westport CT] 2007 (p. 150-151).



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Stir-up Sunday is central to this book. It is the day Mr Darcy and his friends come together to make Christmas pudding. Stir-up Sunday traditionally takes place five weeks before Christmas, and the delicious aromas that fill the house mark the beginning of the Christmas festivities. Every person in the household, including the children, takes a turn to stir the mixture and make a wish. This year, Stir-up Sunday falls on Sunday 23rd November.

EDUCATIONAL APPLICABILITY

This book takes a couple of the themes from Austen's original novel *Pride and Prejudice*, including charity and family.

Christmas was only referenced fleetingly in *Pride and Prejudice* - "Mrs Bennet had the pleasure of receiving her brother and his wife, who came as usual to spend Christmas at Longbourn." Christmas was all about families coming together.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Before and during reading the book:

1. Have you heard of Stir-up Sunday?
2. Do you bake at home with your family for Christmas?
3. What food do you eat on Christmas day?
4. How do you think children would have celebrated Christmas 200 years ago?
5. What are the Christmas traditions you most enjoy?

After reading the book:

1. Discuss the tradition of Stir-up Sunday.
2. Have you heard of mistletoe? What other evergreens do we use to decorate our home at Christmas time?
3. What is missing from this book that we use today to celebrate Christmas?
4. Discuss when the Christmas tree first became a Christmas tradition (Prince Albert was responsible for this tradition).
5. Discuss the food you would cook to celebrate Christmas.
6. Language: Two different words are used to describe the fire – 'roaring' and 'crackling'. Describe the meaning of these words. Discuss why you think they would need a fire.
7. Emotions: Discuss why Mr Darcy leaves Mr Collins outside. Why is he persuaded to let him in? What does it mean to be charitable? Why do we associate this with Christmas?



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Draw a picture of a tradition your family share at Christmas.



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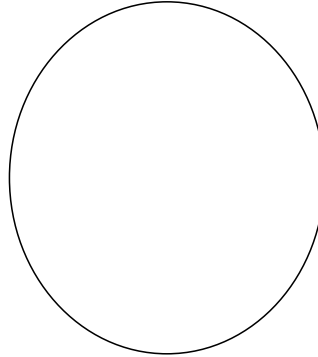
Mr Darcy and the Christmas Pudding

Storybook Review



My favourite character

I like this character because



My favourite part of the story

I like this part because _____

A large empty rectangle for drawing a scene or part of the story.

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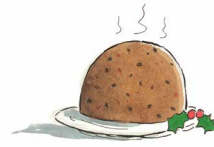
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Mr Darcy and the Christmas Pudding

Word Search

Can you find all the words?



Name: Class:

O	C	A	Z	R	R	U	O	P	M	B	Y	X	E	E
A	H	U	Q	V	M	N	H	P	J	R	S	V	J	Q
E	R	T	U	D	Q	R	J	L	S	S	S	J	G	L
S	I	V	U	G	I	M	Q	H	O	U	W	K	W	B
S	S	V	U	N	Z	O	B	L	L	A	Q	E	F	Y
G	T	G	F	L	K	X	N	W	H	W	E	S	J	W
Y	M	N	O	O	I	Z	M	K	F	E	S	L	Z	N
X	A	I	E	L	N	M	K	X	R	P	O	E	S	C
K	S	D	Y	S	Y	E	E	W	P	F	N	R	X	K
S	E	D	N	R	E	P	A	W	S	G	U	P	X	Z
C	L	U	A	U	E	R	X	H	A	A	R	J	Y	C
J	U	P	J	R	S	C	P	Z	M	B	X	W	B	S
Z	S	L	E	I	C	B	L	O	G	Y	R	I	S	S
I	Y	K	B	T	H	Y	N	U	Z	P	P	O	Q	V
L	R	O	N	S	D	M	Y	F	A	H	F	U	V	L

Christmas
Pudding

Mistletoe
Stir

Presents
Sunday



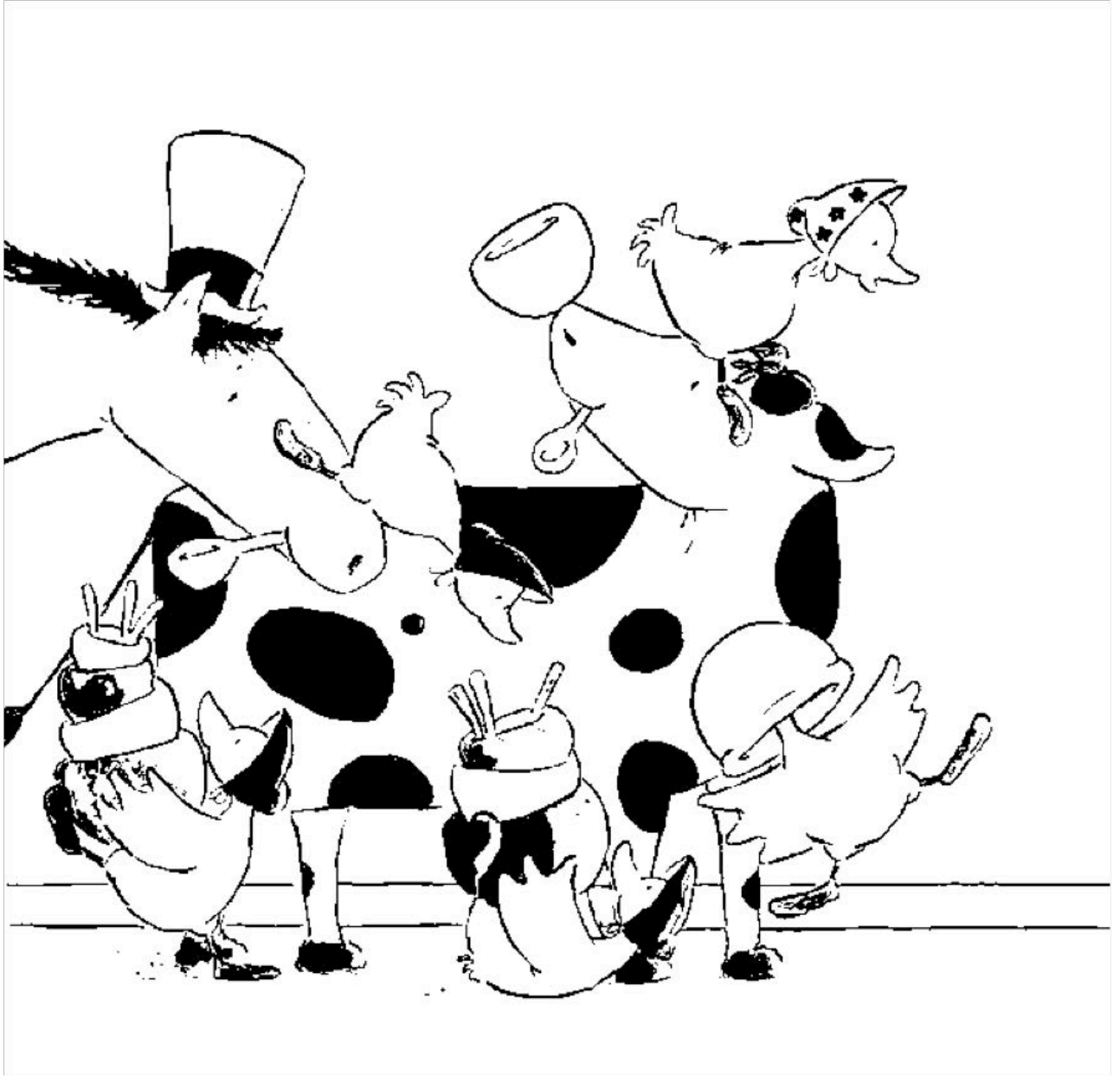
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Colour in Mr Darcy's friends!



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