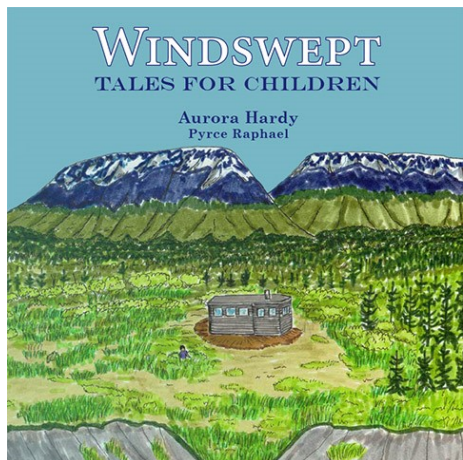


Windswept - Tales for Children

by Aurora Hardy

Teacher's Guide



Summary: *Windswept - Tales for Children* by Aurora Hardy is the children's companion picture book to Aurora's memoir *Windswept - Chitina Alaska Childhood*. In this beautifully illustrated children's book she relates three stories of memorable animal encounters from her childhood, but she tells them from the animals' perspective. Little Bear, Brown Mouse and Moose have their own stories to tell about when they met the Curious Girl.

Objectives: This book is a fun read-aloud for preschool and early elementary age. It introduces three animals found in Alaska and provides opportunities to learn more about Alaskan wildlife, as well as discussion about using our imaginations and creative thinking.

Teaching Activities: Supplement reading the book with these fun classroom or at-home activities designed to be adapted for use for PreK through 3rd grade.

- FREE printable **worksheets** are available at <https://fathompublishing.com/activities/windswept>
 - crossword puzzles
 - word searches
 - fact fill-in-the-blank worksheets
 - maze
 - mouse math
 - match the animal tracks

About the Author



Aurora Hardy is an Alaska Native author who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s in a small cabin her family built on the bluffs above the Copper River near Chitina, Alaska. They named their cabin Windswept. She lived with her mother and her sister and two brothers. She was the youngest.

They did not have running water or electricity. There were no supermarkets nearby, so they had to grow their own vegetables and hunt and fish for meat. She and her siblings were homeschooled, and they read a lot. Every month the State Library in Juneau would send them a box of books to read. They had no television, but they listened to music on a battery powered radio and phonograph.

She thought the beautiful wilderness of Alaska was an exciting place to grow up and she got to see lots of wild animals... including the curious black bear, the dancing mouse and the hungry moose she writes about in this book.

- Show students the picture of Aurora as a little girl on page 33.



Before You Read

Fact or Fiction

- Discuss the difference between **fact** and **fiction**.
- Tell the class you will be reading a book that is fiction based on fact. The events in the stories actually happened to the author when she was a curious little girl many years ago and had encounters with a bear, a mouse and a moose. But she used her imagination to think what the animals might have been thinking and feeling. So, that part is fiction, because we don't really know what animals think.

Where These Stories Took Place

- Show the students a map and point out where Alaska is, then where Chitina is along the Copper River. There is a simple map provided in the back of the book on page 28.
- Find some pictures on line to show students what the area around Chitina looks like. Here is a good option: <https://www.alaska.org/destination/chitina>

Art Activities

Draw a Bear, Mouse or Moose

Let students choose one of the animals to draw and color.

- They can copy from the book or use their imaginations.
- You can find how-to-draw videos online.



Draw a Picture of Yourself and an Animal

Have students draw a picture of themselves encountering an animal. It could be something that really happened or something they imagine.

Physical Activity

Animal Track Race - played like red light/green light

Set up: Mark a starting line on one end of the play area and another line at the other end of the play area.

Signals: Use the animal track pages at the end of the teacher's guide.

- Moose tracks – kids have to **freeze** and put their thumbs on the side of their heads with fingers spread out like moose antlers
- Bear tracks – kids have to **walk** on all fours
- Jumping mouse tracks – kids have to **jump**

Play: Teacher will hold up track signs one at a time and the kids follow the directions until they reach the other side

Wildlife Discussions & Activities

Black Bear

- **Facts:** Read and discuss the facts about black bears on page 29.
- **What should you do if you meet a black bear?**

It's important to teach children that animals in the wild are a privilege to watch, but they should never approach them. Here are some rules for what to do if you see a black bear in the wild.

Discuss them with your students and then do some role play to practice these skills.

- Stay calm and don't panic. Never start screaming or running.
- Do NOT approach the bear. Give it plenty of space.
- Let the bear know you are there by speaking in a calm, low voice.
- Slowly wave your arms above your head and tell the bear to back off.
- Stand up straight and look as big as possible.
- Back away slowly and calmly, keeping your eyes on the bear.



Meadow Jumping Mouse

- **Facts:** Read and discuss the facts about jumping mice on page 30.
- **Dancing or Jumping?**

Discuss with the students whether they think the mouse in the story was actually dancing or was it just jumping? What makes the most sense for a meadow jumping mouse?

- **Putting it into perspective**
 - Help the students understand just how long a jumping mouse's tail is compared to their body using a ruler or similar measuring device. Their tail takes up about 60% of their total length.
 - An average meadow jumping mouse is about 7 inches long from nose to tail.
 - About 60% of that is their tail, about 4 ¼ inches long.
 - Their body is only about 2 ¾ inches long.
 - Next show students how long their tail would be if they had one like a jumping mouse. Use a rope or a tape measure. Bonus: Show them how long YOUR tail would be.
 - Example: a 3 foot tall student would have a tail almost 5 feet long!
 - Example: a 5 ½ foot tall teacher would have a tail around 8 ½ feet long!
 - Now help students visualize how far such a small animal can jump. Distances vary by source, but an average of a 2 foot jump is a good place to start. Use a measuring stick or long tape measure to show distances.
 - Show what it would look like if a 2 ¾ inch mouse jumped 2 feet.
 - Show that a 3 foot tall student would be able to jump roughly 26 feet!

Wildlife Discussions & Activities cont.

Moose

➤ **Facts:** Read and discuss the facts about moose on page 31.

➤ **How to stay safe around a moose**

If you live in Alaska, seeing a moose in your yard or on the way to the bus stop can be a pretty common occurrence. Moose are not naturally aggressive and they might look slow and peaceful, but they can get agitated very quickly and can be very dangerous. They are fast and can stomp or kick in any direction with their powerful front hooves. Here are some important rules to discuss and role play with your students.

- If you see a moose... don't try to feed it!
- Stay calm and don't run away or scream.
- Give a moose lots of space and watch it carefully for any signs of agitation.
 - Ears laid back
 - Hackles raised on its hump (hair standing up)
 - Licking lips or snorting
 - Stomping the ground
 - Tossing the head
 - Moving toward you... this doesn't mean it's friendly or curious. It is telling you to back off.
- If a moose comes after you, get behind a tree or car or get inside quick.

Student Engagement Activities

➤ **Turn and Talk to a Friend**

- Which story was your favorite? What did you like best about it?
- Tell about an animal you have seen.

➤ **What did you Learn? —**

- Who do you think the Curious Girl is?
- At the end of the bear story, the Curious Girl learned to be more careful when she was curious about animals in the woods. What should she have done differently instead of going to see what scared her dog?
- The Curious Girl enjoyed watching the mouse through the window. Should she have tried to catch it?

Social-Emotional Activities

Emotional Expressions/Discussion

Help the children practice emotional expression and empathy with this activity. Call out a situation from the book and encourage students to make an emotional face to demonstrate how they think the character would feel.

Option: you can also discuss the situations and imagine what they might think, say or feel.

➤ **Suggested situations:**

- Black bear is happily exploring the woods.
- Black bear saw people building a cabin.
- Black bear came face to face with a dog.
- Mouse is busy storing food.
- Mouse hears beautiful music.
- The Curious Girl sees mouse in the window.
- Mouse dances and dances.
- All the other animals tell moose to go away.
- Moose was puzzled by the Curious Girl.

Kindness Conversation

In the Moose's story, all the other animals told him to go away when he was trying to find a place to eat. Use this story as a platform for a discussion about kindness.

- We don't know how animals feel, but how would YOU feel if all the other children told you to go somewhere else at lunchtime?
- How were those other animals treating Moose?
- What would have been a kind response from the other animals?
- What are some ways YOU can show kindness to others?
 - At school
 - At home
 - At the park

Teacher's Guide written by Wendy Kenny

Moose Tracks



Bear Tracks



Jumping Mouse Tracks

