

GATOR GUMBO: A SPICY – HOT TALE

Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2007 Grades 3-5

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Gator Gumbo: A Spicy-Hot Tale by Candace Fleming. Illustrated by Sally Anne Lambert. Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2004. 32 p.

Summary

Mr. Gator is getting old and catching dinner is not as easy as it once was, but he has an idea—he'll make gumbo just like Maman used to make and with the "help" of those critters that torment him. It's going to be one GooD gumbo. Monsieur Otter, Madame Skunk, and Mademoiselle Possum are not willing to help Monsieur Gator cook, so Monsieur Gator pushes them into the steaming pot of gumbo. Lively humorous illustrations of the swamp-dwelling creatures enhance this Cajun version of "The Little Red Hen."

Awards

The Reading Teacher Children's Choices for 2005

Author's Biography

Candace Fleming received her B.A. in History from Eastern Illinois University. Fleming combined her love of children's books with her love of history to produce such books as *A Big Cheese for the White House*, *A Hatmaker's Sign*, *Westward Ho*, *Carlotta!* and many more, both historical and fiction. Candace lives in Illinois with her husband, Scott and her sons, Scott and Michael.

<http://www.candacefleming.com/>

Other Titles by Candace Fleming

Benjamin Franklin's Almanac

A Big Cheese for the White House

Boxes for Katje

Gabriella's Song

Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!

Smile, Lilly!

Sunny Boy! The Life and Times of a Tortoise

This is the Baby

When Agnes Caws

Who Invited You?

Illustrator's Biography

Sally Anne Lambert lives in London and she obtained her B.A. honours degree from Lanchester University, Coventry in Graphic Design. While in her final year at university, Lambert illustrated her first book, *The Gingerbread Man* by David Wood. She is currently preparing books for Ladybird, Frances Lincoln, Templar, Macdonald and Bantam Presses. Sally Anne Lambert lives and works in a farmhouse in Cumbria.

http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~jol/sal_cv.html

Related Titles

Louisiana Tales

Alligator Sue by Sharon Arms Doucet.
Grandma's Gumbo by Deborah Kadair.
Petite Rouge by Mike Artell.
Why Alligator Hates Dog by J.J. Reneaux.

Louisiana Alligators Non-Fiction

The Alligator by C.C. Lockwood.

Folktales

Armadilly Chili by Helen Ketteman.
Little Red Hen retold by Barry Downard.
Manana, Iguana by Ann Whitford Paul.
Guji Guji by Chih-Yuan Chen.

Alligator and Crocodile Stories

Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile by Bernard Waber.
The Enormous Crocodile by Roald Dahl.
Stone Soup retold by Heather Forest.

Classroom Connections

Science: Alligators and other Swamp Animals

- Students can research alligators and crocodiles to determine their characteristics. Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast their characteristics.
- Have the students find the native habitat of alligators on a map. Each student can do a report on the different areas of alligator habitation.
- Students can research the diets and eating habits of the American alligator and the Nile crocodile.
- Students can research possums, otters, and skunks. Students can draw pictures of animals and name some characteristics.
- After drawing pictures students may list a few facts of animals and write a poem using the facts.

Language Arts

- Discuss the meaning of trickster tales with the class and give additional examples. Have students research other trickster tales and additional information to have them write a list.
- Compare this tale with story of "The Little Red Hen." What are the similarities? What are the differences?
- Let the students discuss alternate endings.

French Language

- This is a great book for an introduction to the French language. Read the book and explain the meanings of the words to the children. Help the children pronounce the words. Students can use the computer to pronounce the alphabet and beginner words. See the web site **About.com: French Language**

http://french.about.com/library/begin/bl_alphabet.htm
<http://french.about.com/library/teachers/kids/bl-kids-alph.htm>

- Students may research how to say other words from the book in French (ex. otter, alligator, possum, skunk). Each student takes a different word to present to the class.

Louisiana: Cajun Culture

- This book could be an icebreaker to introduce Louisiana's Cajun Culture. Students may research on Cajun Culture and write significant facts.
- Students can give presentations on facts, heritage, food, people, and culture (may dress the part).
- Make gumbo and/or other Cajun dishes.
- Let the students research the origin of gumbo. How did it come to America? What are the most common ingredients?
- Have the students write out the recipe for their favorite gumbo or soup

Drama/Art/Music

- Create puppets of each of the characters and have the children act out the roles. Incorporate the alternate ending constructed by the students.
- Listen to Zydeco music while reading the story.

Web Links

Author, Illustrator, Book

Children's Literature: Meet the Authors and Illustrators

http://www.childrenslit.com/f_flemingcandace.html

Site gives details about Candace Fleming and reviews about her books.

Nancy Keane's Booktalks

http://www.nancykeane.com/booktalks/fleming_gator.htm

A "quick and simple" booktalk of *Gator Gumbo* is included on this excellent children's literature site. Nancy Keane's site is a real gold mine of helpful information.

Netcomuk: Sally Anne Lambert

http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~jol/sal_cv.html

Biographical information about Lambert.

RIF Reading Planet: Meet the Authors and Illustrators

<http://www.rif.org/readingplanet/bookzone/content/fleming.msp>

The Reading is Fundamental site contains an interview with Fleming about *Benjamin Franklin's Almanac* and has links to activities for children.

Louisiana

C. C. Lockwood

www.cclockwood.com/index.htm

This site includes photographs of Louisiana and the swamps. It also lists Lockwood's books for children, *The Alligator* and *C. C. Lockwood's Louisiana Nature Guide*.

Center for Cultural and Eco-Tourism at ULL

http://ccet.louisiana.edu/Cajun_and_Creole_Hour/Cajun_and_Creole_Links.html

University of Louisiana at Lafayette site that gives links to sites about Cajun and Creole culture. Topics include definitions, history and music.

Encyclopedia of Cajun Culture

www.cajunculture.com

This site has facts about the Cajun culture, including a section on the Atchafalaya Swamp and the origin of its name.

Louisiana Fine Foods: Great Tastes of the World

<http://www.louisianafoods.com/recipes/index.html>

This website provides Cajun recipes, including one for "Spicy Gumbo."

Louisiana Secretary of State

<http://www.sec.state.la.us/around/all.htm>

This site includes fact about Louisiana and includes a students' page with links to information about Louisiana and a coloring book.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuge

www.fws.gov/atchafalaya

This site describes the Atchafalaya Swamp.

Alligators and Crocodiles

Everglades National Park: Alligators

<http://www.nps.gov/ever/eco/gator.htm>

This site gives information on alligators. Topics include habitat, size, age, lifecycle, diet, and the differences between alligators and crocodiles.

National Geographic: Lesson Plans (Alligators and Crocodiles)

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/08/gk2/crocsalligator.html>

Lesson plans introduce students to habitats, geographic distribution, and characteristic of three crocodylian species.

French Language

About.com: French Alphabet

http://french.about.com/library/begin/bl_alphabet.htm

Contains links to beginner French sounds for the alphabet to give students the correct pronunciations. This page also contains games and lessons that are fun for learning French.