

## Teacher's Guide

### Across the Curriculum

#### *When Gorilla Goes Walking*

written by Nikki Grimes

illustrated by Shane Evans

Orchard Books / Scholastic, 2007

#### About the book

When Gorilla goes walking, the neighbors laugh and stare at her tailless rump and her very proud air. Gorilla is an affectionate, jealous, lovable cat who constantly wants to play with Cecelia. Experience their unique relationship through the award-winning Nikki Grimes's lyrical poetry and Shane Evans's vibrant, bold illustrations.



#### About the author

Nikki Grimes's acclaimed body of work for children includes *Welcome Precious*; *Talkin' About Bessie*, a 2003 Coretta Scott King Author Award honor book; *Stepping Out with Grandma Mac*; and *Shoe Magic*. She's also written *Come Sunday*, an ALA Notable Book; the YA novel *Jazmin's Notebook*, a Coretta Scott King Award Honor Book; and the YA novel *Bronx Masquerade*, winner of the 2003 Coretta Scott King Author Award. She is the recipient of 2006 NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children. Ms. Grimes lives in Corona, California.

#### About the illustrator

Shane Evans is the illustrator of many terrific children's books including *Nobody Gonna Turn Me 'Round* by Doreen Rappaport, and *The Shark Series* by Jean Marzollo. *When Gorilla Goes Walking* is his first picture book with Orchard. Mr. Evans lives in Kansas City, Missouri.

#### Pre-reading

What is the strangest pet names you've ever heard of? How did you name your own pet? Who do you think this book is about? Why?

#### Discussion Guide

1. What do you learn by reading the very first poem? Have you ever had a friend of the same name? Was it ever confusing?
2. Describe Gorilla. Would you like her for a pet or not? Why?
3. Who is the boss between Gorilla and Cecelia? Is your pet bossy or bossed? What makes you say this?
4. What does Gorilla do when Cecelia is sick one day? What do your pets do for you?

5. Explain what happens when the phone rings. Who would call your pet?
6. How do Gorilla and Cecelia make a mess? What is the biggest mess you ever made?
7. Would you say that Gorilla and Cecelia ever have a fight? How do they resolve it? Does your pet ever make you angry? How?
8. How do Gorilla and Cecelia help each other? What is the best part of having a pet? What is the most difficult?
9. What does Cecelia mean when she says she's "Gorilla's human?" Whose human are you?
10. Which illustration is your favorite? Why? Why do you think the illustrator used the colors that he did?

## **ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

### **Language arts**

Write a series of poems inspired by Gorilla about your own pet (or dream pet). You can use rhyme like the author or experiment with free forms.

### **Art**

Create portraits of your pet (or dream pet) inspired by the artwork of Shane Evans. Be bold with color and shapes!

### **Math**

Take a survey of your neighbors and then create a graph (bar, pie, or line) depicting the results.

### **Science**

Research the domestication and history of your favorite pet. Create a list of questions you'd like answered about the history of physiology of your animal. For example, how did cats first become domesticated?

### **Service**

Hold a fundraiser (spare change, bake sale, etc.) and donate all profits to a local animal shelter.