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# AN "UPBEAT" FANTASY STORY

Dr. Leslie Anne Perry

For generations, children have enjoyed reading fantasy stories. Even though they knew that such things could not **really** happen, they still enjoyed reading the stories.

Some of the children in the 1980's, however, may find traditional fantasy stories a little dull. Many of them prefer watching television to reading any kind of story.

To capitalize on my students' obsession with television, I write make-believe stories that feature some of their favorite television characters. To assure that they can easily read these stories, I use words that were introduced in our basal reader and I try to keep the number of "extra" words to a minimum.

The following story, *Murdock and the Dancing Bear*, contains words that were introduced at the preprimer level of the Scott Foresman reading series. Teachers can reproduce the story for their own students to read. The questions that accompany the story can be used to extend the students' comprehension skills.



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## MURDOCK AND THE DANCING BEAR

It was a good day. The sun was out and birds were flying and singing. The A-Team wanted something fun to do. Hannibal said, "We can go to the zoo to see the animals. That would be fun."

So the A-Team got in B.A.'s van and went to the zoo. The zoo was far away.

When they got to the zoo, Murdock was hungry. "I want something to eat," said Murdock. "Not now," said Hannibal. "We want to see the animals."

Murdock, B.A., Face, and Hannibal went all over the zoo yard looking at all the animals. They could see two giant yellow lions behind a tree. They could see a big blue bird too. People could not go down to where the lions were.

Then they went to the monkey house to see the monkeys. The monkeys did things to make people laugh. One monkey was eating a banana. He wanted to give it to Murdock. Murdock said, "I am hungry, but I do not like bananas."

The A-Team went where the elephants were. Three elephants played and washed in the water. They put water on Murdock! Murdock did not like to get washed!

Murdock was still hungry so he went to find something good to eat. On the way to the food shop, he could see some bears. One of the bears was dancing!

Murdock looked and looked at the dancing bear. He liked to see the bear dance this way and that.

Just then the bear went over the fence and got behind Murdock. He wanted Murdock to dance with him! So Murdock did dance with the bear. They danced and danced.



Then Murdock said to the bear, *"I am so hungry. I want something good to eat."* *"So do I,"* said the bear.

So Murdock and the bear danced to the food shop and got something to eat. They got a good table where they could see all the things at the zoo. The girls who worked at the shop laughed at them.

Then Murdock told the bear that he would have to take him back to the bear house. *"I know that we have had fun,"* said Murdock. *"But I have to find my friends now."* So Murdock helped the bear go back to his house.

Then Murdock went to find B.A., Hannibal, and Face. When he did see them, they said, *"Did you find something to eat, Murdock?"* Murdock said, *"Yes, I had something good to eat."* (He did not tell them about the dancing bear. That was his secret!)

### Comprehension Questions

1. Where did the A-Team decide to go? (to the zoo)
2. How did they get there? (in B.A.'s van)
3. What did Murdock say when he first got to the zoo? (He said he wanted something to eat.)
4. What were some of the animals that the A-Team saw at the zoo? (two giant yellow lions, a big blue bird, monkeys, three elephants)
5. How did Murdock get wet? (The elephants put water on him.)
6. What animals did Murdock stop to see on the way to the food shop? (the bears)
7. Was one of the bears doing something unusual? (Yes, he was dancing.)
8. What did the bear want Murdock to do? (dance with him)
9. Where did Murdock and the bear go while they were dancing? (to the food shop)
10. After Murdock took the bear back to the bear house, where did Murdock go? (to find his friends)
11. Did Murdock tell the rest of the A-Team about the bear? (no)
12. Why do you think Murdock did not tell his friends about the bear? (possible answers: He thought they would not believe him; He did not want them to think he was crazy.)

**"Moon Soul"**  
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