



SWAMP ANGEL

AUTHOR: ANNE ISAACS

ILLUSTRATOR: PAUL O. ZELINSKY

See a video of the book read aloud here: [Swamp Angel](#)

**** REMEMBER: HAVE FUN AND THE KIDS WILL TOO! ****

OVERVIEW

ABOUT THE BOOK

Swamp Angel can lasso a tornado and drink an entire lake dry. She single-handedly defeats the fearsome bear known as Thundering Tarnation, wrestling him from the top of the Great Smoky Mountains to the bottom of a deep lake. Caldecott Medal-winning artist Paul O. Zelinsky's stunning folk-art paintings are the perfect match for the irony, exaggeration, and sheer good humor of this original tall tale set on the American frontier. ([amazon.com](#))

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Annie Isaacs was born in 1949 in Buffalo, New York. She discovered children's books when she was ten years old and made a trip to the library every week. When she's not writing, you may find her hiking, biking, or making a quilt. ([anneisaacs.com](#))

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Paul O. Zelinsky (born 1953) is an American illustrator and writer best known for illustrating children's picture books. He won the 1998 Caldecott Medal for U.S. picture book illustration of *Rapunzel*.

THE READ ALOUD

BEFORE READING

Use these before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:

- What do you see on the cover?
- This book is a tall tale. I wonder if you know what a tall tale is. (main character is bigger than life and has superhuman abilities; the story is full of ridiculous exaggeration; plot is funny; tall tales often try to explain things in nature)

DURING THE STORY

Use these while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content.

- (p.1) What examples of exaggeration do you notice?
- (p.2) Notice the use of alliteration in the second paragraph. (when 2 or more words begin with the same sound)
- (p.4) Using clues from the story, can you think of the meaning of "mired"?

SWAMP ANGEL

TOPICS & THEMES:

- Tall tales
- Folktales

Tips for every book!

POWER PHRASES:

I WONDER...

I NOTICE...

TELL ME MORE...

DIGGING DEEPER:

"Tell me more, why do you think that?"

"How do you know that?"

"Why do you think they feel like that?"

"Interesting, did you notice anything else?"

- (p.6-7) I was unfamiliar with some of the words that were used only in the backwoods like “varmint” and “grub.” I wonder what they mean. Any guesses?
- (p.7) When a settler caught a bear, he used every part of it for food, clothing, and candles.
- (p.12) What is meant by “ I’m much obliged for that pelt you are carryin”?
- (p.15) Nightfall is a compound word, two words that join together to make a new word. What does “nightfall” mean?
- (p.18) Often, my family talks about bear hugs. What is the meaning of “locked in a bear hug”?
- (p.20) What is the exaggeration?
- (p.28) How did Swamp Angel feel about her win over the bear? How do you know that?
- (p.30) What did the author say happened to Thundering Tarnation when Swamp Angel threw him up in the sky?

AFTER READING

Use these after reading the story to help students understand what they just read.

- Why did the author write this story?
- How did this tall tale make you feel?
- Did you learn something at the end of the story?

BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

- Have you ever met someone who exaggerates?
- Have you ever looked up at the night sky and seen the bear constellation?
- I wonder if you will try to spot it tonight.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- Turn to you partner and share a few examples of exaggeration you heard in the story.

SMALL-GROUP IDEAS

1. DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

- How was this story different than other fiction we have read?
- I wonder if you like tall tale genre. Why or why not?
- What was your favorite part of the story?
- Which parts of the story showed real life, which did not?

Suggested Optional Activity:

- Develop a plan for a tall tale that would be set in your neighborhood, your school or your home. Name and describe your main character and one problem he/she would solve. This can be done in note form or pictures to be used as ideas to write a tall tale.

2. WRITING ACTIVITY

- Using the notes developed in the Optional Activity above, write a short tall tale. You may draw a picture to illustrate your story.

3. EXTENSION ACTIVITY

- Hyperbole is a common literary term and figure of speech used in writing that describes exaggeration. I am going to read some sentences and you tell me thumbs up if it is hyperbole, thumbs down if it is realistic:
 - These are the worst pancakes I have ever eaten- *realistic*
 - It’s taking a million years to get ready- *hyperbole*
 - I am so hungry I could eat a horse -*hyperbole*

- These are the best cookies in the whole world- *hyperbole*
 - I like my school very much- *realistic*
 - My birthday will never come- *hyperbole*
- Give students construction paper and art materials like colored pencils and crayons if available. If not, use white paper and pencil. At the bottom of the poster, have students write a one-sentence hyperbole, and then illustrate it.

COMMON CORE LINKS

CCSS.ELA- Literacy.RL 3.1,3.2,3.3,3.4,3.5,3.7