

Title: Swamp Angel

Author: Anne Isaacs

Illustrator: Paul O. Zelinsky

Age Range: 7-9

Topics/Themes: American Tale, Pioneers

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

Items Included: Swamp picture, root cellar picture, short plains picture, Great Smoky Mountains map (Attached)

I. INTRODUCTION (PREP QUESTIONS)

Introduce Swamp Angel as an example of a **folktale**, specifically the genre of a **tall tale**:

Tall tales were first told in America by the settlers who made their home in the American wilderness. In those days people did not have televisions, computers, or even electricity so they told stories for entertainment. Characteristics of a tall tale:

- Main character is bigger than life and has superhuman abilities
- The story is full of ridiculous exaggeration
- Main character usually has a problem to solve
- Lots of action
- Plot is funny and impossible
- The main character solves the problem at the end, defeating bad
- Tall tales often tried to explain things in nature

Have students decide which tall tale characteristics are already evident by looking at the cover (pioneer clothing, gigantic character). Show them the swamp photo and discuss the meaning of swamp.

II. INTEGRATIVE STRATEGIES

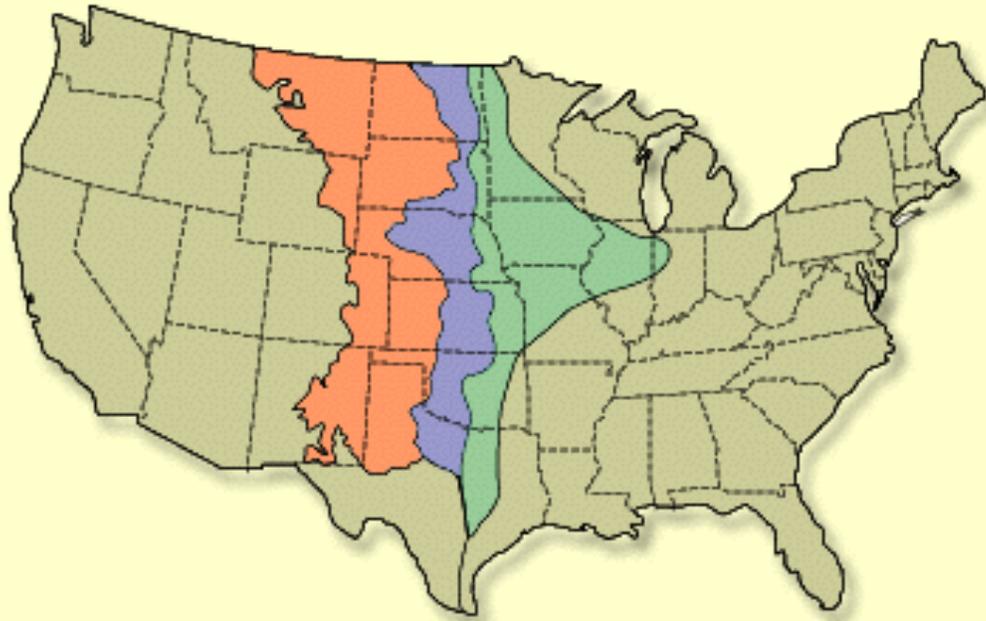
a. Post Reading:

- What qualities would you describe Swamp Angel as? (brave, strong, clever, determined, independent) Why? If you had been Swamp Angel, what would you have done with the bear? Why? How do you think Swamp Angel's qualities contribute to the story? Do you think Swamp Angel would have been able to defeat the Tarnation if she weren't brave, strong or clever? Why or Why not?
- Reread p. 8-9 and analyze the pictures with the students. What does Swamp Angel's face say about how she feels when the others start making fun of her? (that she doesn't care about what they say) Why do you think so?
- Refer to p. 8-9 and analyze the pictures with the students. Explain that in the 1800's women were expected to be home and take care of the family. Why do you think the author decided to make Swamp Angel a girl rather than a boy? How do you think the story would have been different if Swamp Angel was a boy? Why do you think so?

- P. 18: Reread the first paragraph. Show students the map location of the Great Smoky Mountains and discuss how the tall tale supposedly explains them (dust made them “smoky”).
- P. 20: Discuss exaggeration (Swamp Angel was pinned underwater so drank the entire lake to keep from drowning).
- Ask students to share their opinions of Swamp Angel as a tall tale. What did they enjoy, and why?



Historical Range of Prairies in the United States



Shortgrass Prairie

Mixed Grass Prairie

Tallgrass Prairie



