

Drama

# Behind the Secret Trapdoor

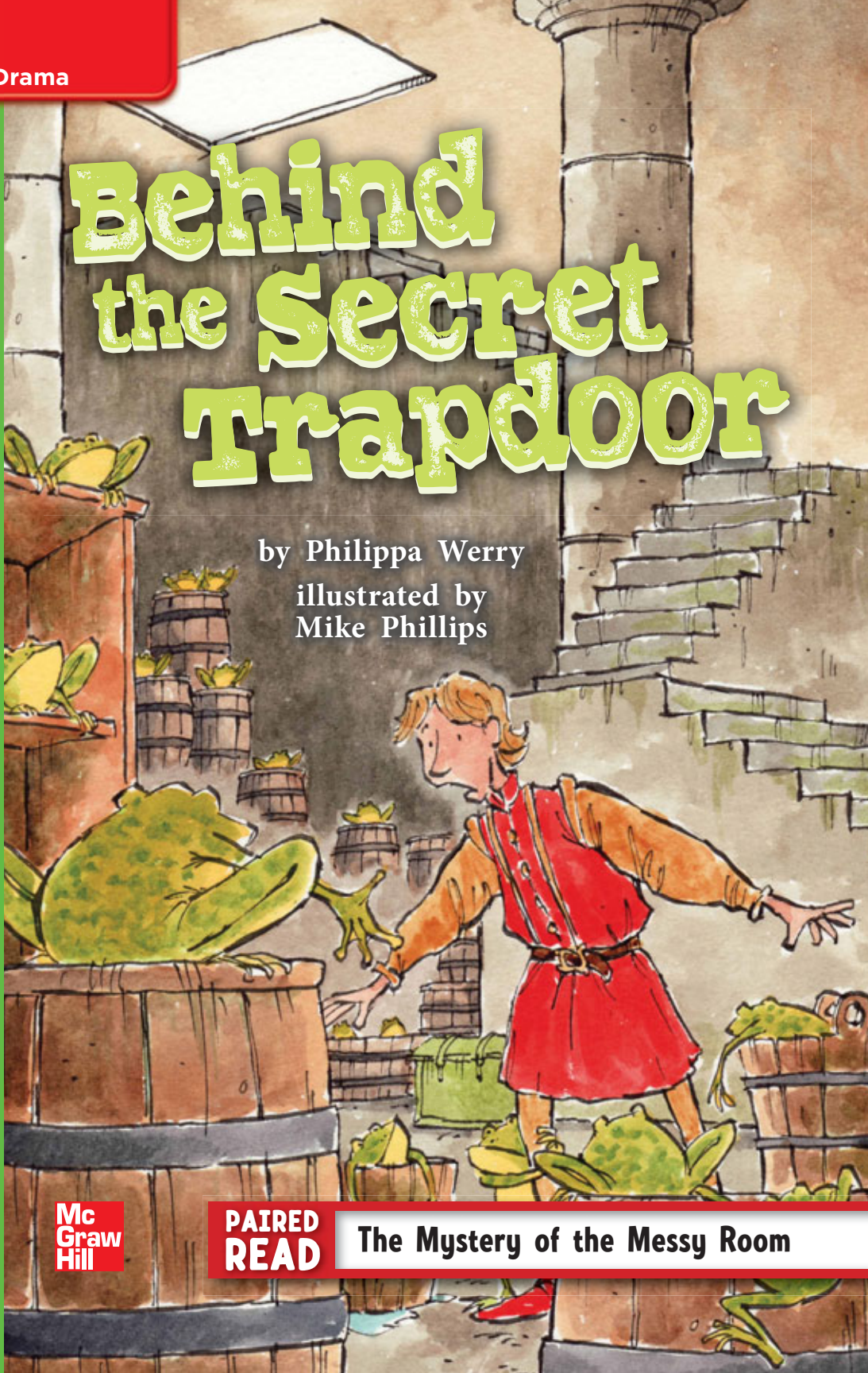
by Philippa Werry

illustrated by  
Mike Phillips

Mc  
Graw  
Hill

PAIRED  
READ

The Mystery of the Messy Room



## STRATEGIES & SKILLS

### Comprehension

**Strategy:** Ask and Answer Questions

**Skill:** Theme

### Vocabulary

annoyed, attitude, commotion, cranky, familiar, frustrated, selfish, specialty

### Vocabulary Strategy

Synonyms and Antonyms

Word Count: 2,231



**Education**

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## Essential Question

How do animal characters change familiar stories?

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by Philippa Werry

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### Scene 1

The Contest Begins.....2

### Scene 2

A Beautiful Ring .....6

### Scene 3

True Love.....9

### Scene 4

Jumping Through Hoops.....13

Respond to Reading.....16

### PAIRED READ

The Mystery of the Messy Room....17

Focus on Genre.....20

~ SCENE 1 ~

# The Contest Begins

**Characters:**

**KING, RICK, NICK, SAM, GREAT TOAD, LITTLE TOADS, BELLA, RICK'S WIFE, NICK'S WIFE**

**Scene:** *Inside the palace. KING is sitting on his throne surrounded by his three children, RICK, NICK, and SAM.*

**KING:** It's time someone took over as ruler of the kingdom. Who will make the best king?

**RICK:** It should be me. I'm the oldest.

**NICK:** No, it should be me. I'm the smartest.

**SAM:** It won't be me. I'm the youngest.

**RICK:** It certainly won't be you! You couldn't rule a country.

**KING:** Hmm. I think there should be a contest. I want all of you to go and find a carpet. The person who brings me the most beautiful carpet will become the next king.

**RICK:** That will be me, then.

**NICK:** Or me. (*pointing at SAM*) Anyway, it certainly won't be Sam.

**KING:** See these three feathers? When I blow them, watch where the wind takes them. That will be the direction you must go to find your carpet.

**KING** *blows the first feather into the air.*

**KING:** Up to the wind, and away ... to the west.

**RICK:** That's the way I'm heading.

**RICK** *leaves.* **KING** *blows the second feather into the air.*

**KING:** Up to the wind, and away ... to the east.

**NICK:** I'm heading that way.

**NICK** *leaves in the opposite direction.* **KING** *blows the third feather into the air.*

**KING:** Up to the wind,  
and ... That feather  
dropped straight to the  
floor. You'll have to look  
right in front of your  
nose, Sam.

**KING** *leaves the throne room.*

**SAM:** Well, I don't have any  
chance of finding  
a beautiful carpet.  
*(Sits down, staring at  
the floor.)* That's strange.  
I've never seen this  
trapdoor before. I wonder  
what's under it?



*SAM opens the trapdoor. GREAT TOAD and LITTLE TOADS can be seen. LITTLE TOADS are hopping around.*

**GREAT TOAD:** Little green friends, hopping around. Hop out and bring that man to me.

**LITTLE TOADS** *bring SAM to GREAT TOAD.*

**SAM:** Who are you?

**GREAT TOAD:** I am Great Toad and these are my Little Toads. Who are you?

**SAM:** My name is Sam. My father, the king, wants me to find a beautiful carpet, but I don't know where to look.

**GREAT TOAD:** Little green friends, hopping around. Hop over there and bring me my great green box.

**LITTLE TOADS** *bring back a large green box.*

**GREAT TOAD** *opens it and pulls out a carpet.*

**GREAT TOAD:** This is the finest carpet in the world.

**SAM:** Gosh, what a beautiful carpet!

**GREAT TOAD:** Take it to your father.

**SAM:** Thanks so much, Great Toad! Thanks, Little Toads! Good-bye!

*SAM takes the carpet and leaves through the trapdoor, closing it behind him. The toads disappear.*



~ SCENE 2 ~

# A Beautiful Ring

**Scene:** *The throne room. KING is sitting on the throne.*

**RICK and NICK enter, carrying old rugs.**

**RICK:** This is a joke. It's obvious that one of us will become king.

**NICK:** Sam hasn't got a chance of succeeding.

**RICK:** We're so smart, and Sam is so silly.

**NICK:** *(laughing)* I didn't really try to find a carpet.

**RICK:** Well, I bought this rug at a thrift store.

**NICK:** I just took this one from the palace hallway.

**SAM joins them, carrying a rolled carpet, and they all line up in front of the KING on his throne.**

**KING:** Hello, boys. What do you have to show me?

**RICK unrolls the first rug.**

**KING:** That ragged thing? Is that the best you can do?

**NICK unrolls the second rug.**

**KING:** That looks familiar. I'm sure I've seen it before.

**SAM unrolls the Great Toad's carpet.**

**KING:** What a gorgeous carpet! This is the most beautiful one. I declare that my successor will be ...

**RICK:** That's not fair! I didn't really try.



**NICK:** Neither did I. You have to give us another chance.

**KING:** (*sighs*) Oh, all right. This time, the person who brings me the finest ring will have my crown.

**RICK:** Oh, good. That will be me for sure.

**NICK:** Or me. (*pointing at SAM*) Anyway, it won't be Sam.

**KING:** Watch where the wind blows these feathers. To find your ring, go in the direction the wind blows them.

**KING** *blows the first feather into the air.*

**KING:** Up to the wind, and away ... to the north.

**RICK:** I'm going to head that way.

**RICK** *leaves in the direction the feather blew. KING*  
*blows the second feather into the air*

**KING:** Up to the wind, and away ... to the south.

**NICK:** That's me!

**NICK** *leaves in the opposite direction. KING* *blows the*  
*third feather into the air.*

**KING:** Up to the wind, and ... There's no wind now. The feather just dropped to the floor. You'll have to look under your feet, Sam.

**KING** *leaves.*



**SAM:** My feather landed on the trapdoor again.

*SAM opens the trapdoor and the toads appear.*

**GREAT TOAD:** Little green friends, jumping around. Jump out and bring our guest to me.

**SAM:** Hello, Great Toad. Hello, Little Toads.

**GREAT TOAD:** What's the matter this time, my friend?

**SAM:** My father admired your carpet, but now he wants me to bring him a beautiful ring.

**GREAT TOAD:** Little green friends, jumping around. Jump over there and bring me my great green box.

*LITTLE TOADS bring him the box. GREAT TOAD opens it, takes out a ring, and gives it to SAM.*

**SAM:** What a beautiful ring, sparkling with gold and jewels! But surely I can't take something so precious?

**GREAT TOAD:** Certainly you can. Take it to your father.

**SAM:** Thanks, Great Toad and Little Toads! Good-bye!

*SAM leaves through the trapdoor, closing it behind him, and the toads disappear.*



~ SCENE 3 ~

## True Love

**Scene:** *The throne room. KING is sitting on the throne. RICK and NICK enter.*

**RICK:** I'm really annoyed we had to look for a ring because Sam found that fancy carpet.

**NICK:** I didn't try very hard. I just twisted an old nail into the shape of a ring.

**RICK:** I got my ring from a pig's nose.

*SAM joins them and they line up in front of the KING.*

**KING:** Welcome, boys. What do you have to show me?

*RICK and NICK hold out their rings.*

**KING:** Those old things? Is that the best you can do?

*SAM holds out GREAT TOAD's ring.*

**KING:** What a beautiful ring! Look at all those jewels! My successor will be ...

**RICK:** That's not fair! You can't give Sam the crown!

**KING:** Why not? Sam's attitude is much better than yours. You didn't even make a real attempt at the challenges.

**NICK:** Please give us just one more chance, and we promise to try harder.

**KING:** *(sighs)* Well, okay. This time, you must each find a wife.

**RICK:** A wife? But I don't want to get married!

**NICK:** Neither do I!

**KING:** In that case, I declare ...

**RICK:** No, wait. We'll do it.

**KING:** Now, you must find someone who you love and who loves you too. Bring them back here, and the couple who love each other the most will be the next king and queen.

**NICK:** How hard can that be?

**KING:** Now, watch which way the feathers blow. Up to the wind, and away ... to the mountains.

**RICK:** Off I go again.

*RICK leaves. KING blows the second feather into the air.*

**KING:** Up to the wind, and away ... to the valleys.

**NICK:** This is getting boring.

*NICK leaves in the opposite direction. KING blows the third feather into the air.*

**KING:** Up to the wind and ... It's strange that the wind always drops when I blow that third feather. Oh, well, maybe you'll find a wife on your doorstep.

*KING leaves.*

**SAM:** Look! The trapdoor's appeared again.

*SAM opens the trapdoor and the toads appear.*

**GREAT TOAD:** Little green friends, leaping around. Leap out and bring our friend to me. (**LITTLE TOADS bring SAM to the GREAT TOAD.**) What's the matter this time, my friend?

**SAM:** My father admired your ring, but now he's sent me to find a wife.

**GREAT TOAD:** What kind of wife?

**SAM:** It must be someone who I love, and she has to love me too. I know I'll never be able to find a wife. Who would want to marry me?

I'm sure you can't help me this time.

**GREAT TOAD:** Let's see. The right person isn't here now, but if you do what I say, you'll be surprised.

**SAM:** I'll do whatever you say.



**GREAT TOAD:** Now, go and choose a little green toad.

**SAM:** Which toad shall I choose?

**GREAT TOAD:** You'll know which one is right for you.

*SAM considers all the **LITTLE TOADS**. Then he chooses one. The toad then turns into a girl who steps forward.*

**SAM:** Oh, it's you! You're the true love I've seen in my dreams! My name is Sam.

**TOAD WIFE:** I've dreamed of you too. My name is Bella.

**SAM:** Will you marry me, Bella?

**BELLA:** Yes, I will, Sam!

*SAM and BELLA gaze at each other, smiling.*

**GREAT TOAD:** Now go see what your father says.

**SAM:** Thanks, Great Toad! Good-bye!

**BELLA:** Good-bye!

*SAM and BELLA leave.*



~ SCENE 4 ~

# Jumping Through Hoops

**Scene:** *The throne room. KING is sitting on the throne. RICK and NICK enter with their wives.*

**RICK:** One thing's for sure, Sam won't have found a wife.

**NICK:** Who would want to marry Sam?

**RICK:** That's why I didn't bother trying to find someone who loved me.

**NICK:** Me neither. I just took the first one who said yes.

**RICK:** So did I. But I'm sure we'll be the next king and queen.

**NICK:** Don't be so selfish. We can take turns being king.

*RICK and NICK and their wives line up in front of the KING on his throne.*

**KING:** Please introduce me to your wives.

**RICK:** This is ... Er, what's your name?

*RICK's WIFE looks shocked.*

**NICK:** And this is ... um ...

*NICK's WIFE looks angry.*

**KING:** Where is Sam?

*SAM and BELLA enter together.*

**SAM:** Father, I've found my true love!

*SAM and BELLA smile at each other.*

**KING:** That's wonderful! It's settled, then. I declare that the next king and queen will be ...

**RICK:** Wait! Wait!

**NICK:** (*desperately*) Give us one last task. Please!

**KING:** (*sighs*) All right—but I'm not blowing any more feathers. I've run out of hot air. And this is your very last chance. I will choose the one whose wife can jump through this hoop.

**KING** *takes a large hoop out from behind the throne and holds it up high.*

**RICK:** My love will be able to jump that high.

**NICK:** Mine will, too. I hope.





**RICK:** Jump! As high as you can!

**NICK:** Hurry up! Quick!

*RICK's WIFE tries to jump through the hoop but misses.  
NICK's WIFE tries but trips over.*

**RICK:** Well, if our wives can't jump through that hoop,  
Sam's won't be able to either.

**SAM:** Please be careful, Bella.

**BELLA:** Don't worry, Sam. Jumping is my specialty!

*BELLA leaps through the hoop easily.*

**KING:** Well done! The next king and queen will be ...  
Sam and Bella! Long may they reign!

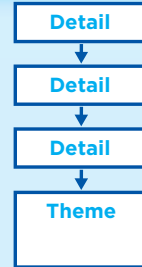
*SAM and BELLA bow to the KING. The other toads  
appear, and everyone dances around the happy couple.*



# Respond to Reading

## Summarize

Use your graphic organizer to help you summarize *Behind the Secret Trapdoor*.



## Text Evidence

1. How can you tell this is a drama? What text features tell you that? **GENRE**
2. What role do animals play in *Behind the Secret Trapdoor*? **THEME**
3. On page 6, what word means the opposite of *smart*? **SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS**
4. Write about why the final test for the sons was so important. Make sure you include details from the drama in your answer. **WRITE ABOUT READING**

## Compare Texts

Read a story about an animal who solves a mystery.

# The **Mystery** of the **Messy Room**

Mrs. Marjoram's shouts were heard all over the farmyard.

"What's happening?" asked Detective Dog. He'd been dreaming about chasing seagulls along the beach.

"Mrs. Marjoram is extremely cranky today," replied Tabitha Cat.

"Her office is a total mess," explained Rusty Rooster.

Eddie Horse peered in the window. Mrs. Marjoram was red-faced and pacing around the room.

"I'm so frustrated!" she shouted. "I spent hours cleaning my office. Then I went outside—and look what happened!"

Papers were strewn everywhere, and books lay in a tumbled pile. Pens, pencils, and rulers were scattered across the floor.

"This is a case for Detective Dog," said Eddie Horse.

"Leave it to me," replied Detective Dog. "First, I'll interview Mrs. Marjoram."

“Mrs. Marjoram says she went outside half an hour ago, after she’d finished cleaning,” reported Detective Dog. “What has everyone been doing in the last half hour?”

“We were swimming,” said the ducks.

“Can you prove it?” asked Detective Dog.

“It’s true,” said Rusty Rooster. “They splashed me.”

“I was having a gallop,” said Eddie.

“Yes, you nearly galloped into me,” said Julie Lamb.

Detective Dog frowned. “So everyone has an alibi?”

“Excuse me, Detective Dog,” Lucy Rabbit murmured, “but I noticed Rodney Frog hop inside the house.”

“Excellent,” said Detective Dog. “An eyewitness report.” He noticed some muddy tracks. “These look suspiciously like frog prints. Where is Rodney?”

Rodney appeared. “What’s all the commotion?”



“Somebody has made a mess in Mrs. Marjoram’s office,” replied Lucy.

“Really?” said Rodney.

“Yes, and there is evidence that you went inside the house earlier,” said Detective Dog.

“Sure, I did,” Rodney admitted. “I hopped into the kitchen for a drink. Can I go now?”

“Not so fast,” growled Detective Dog. “Mrs. Marjoram, I know who made a mess of your room.”

Ten minutes later, Rodney was grumpily cleaning up the office.

“Detective Dog,” said Mrs. Marjoram, “how did you know who did it?”

“Elementary,” said Detective Dog. “Rodney said he hopped into the kitchen to get a drink, but frogs don’t drink! They absorb water through their skin. That’s how I knew he was guilty.”



## Make Connections

How does Detective Dog help Mrs. Marjoram?

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do the Great Toad in *Behind the Secret Trapdoor* and Detective Dog in *The Mystery of the Messy Room* help people? **TEXT TO TEXT**

# Focus on Genre

**Dramas** Dramas are stories that are written so that they can be acted out for an audience. The text is mostly dialogue, with stage directions that describe the setting and the characters' actions. Dramas usually have scenes instead of chapters.

**Read and Find** In *Behind the Secret Trapdoor*, the stage directions are in italics. They tell the actors where the scene is set and what the characters should be doing. The name of the speaker comes first, and a colon separates the name of the character from the words the character speaks.

## Your Turn

Turn to page 6. Find the stage directions that tell each character what to do and say.

Turn to page 15. Write a short scene that shows what happens next for Sam and his wife. Remember to use the text features of a drama to show who is speaking and what the characters do.

## Literature Circles

### Fiction

# Thinkmark

### Setting

Where did *Behind the Secret Trapdoor* take place?  
When did it take place?

### Characters

Who are the main characters?  
How did the youngest son change during the drama?

### Plot

What was the youngest son's first problem?  
How was it solved?  
What was his last problem? How was it solved?  
What happened in the end?

### Conclusions

What can you conclude about the way each of the brothers responded to the King's challenges?

### Make Connections

What other stories have you read with both animal and human characters?

# Animals in Fiction

GR T • Benchmark 50 • Lexile TK

Grade 4 • Unit 2 Week 2

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