Lali’s Feather

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Illustrated by Stephanie Fizer Coleman

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Ages 4–8
F&P • GRL L; Gr 2

ABOUT THE BOOK
Set in an Indian village, this amusing story of identification and value shows the rewards in looking closely and thinking imaginatively.

Lali finds a feather in the field. Is little feather lost? Lali sets out to find feather a home. But one bird after another rejects the little feather—it is too small for Rooster, too pokey for Crow, and too plain for Peacock. Once Lali decides to keep the little feather and play with it, the other birds begin to recognize its value. But—whoosh!—the wind blows, and off the feather goes! Now, what will Lali do without her feather?

THEMES
• Friendship
• Nature
• Birds
• Feathers
• Play
• Cultures
• Imagination
• Creativity

SKILLS
• Listening
• Main idea
• Vocabulary development
• Relationships

BEFORE YOU READ
Show the cover of the book and read the title. Ask the students what they think the book is about. List their comments for everyone to see. Ask what feathers are for and discuss how that might relate to the book title.

AS YOU READ
Ask the students to look for reasons why Lali loves her feather. Notice the birds in the story and try to remember what each feather does for the different birds. Watch for words that are repeated. RL.1.4, RL.2.4, RL.3.4

AFTER YOU READ
• Have the students share what each bird’s feathers do for that bird. RL.K.1, RL.1.1, RL.2.1, RL.3.1
• Discuss what the book is about or summarize it and ask who the main character is. Give a reason why they think that. RL.K.2, 3; RL.1.2, 3; RL.2.2, RL.3.2, 3
• Have the students describe Lali and her personality. Support their reasons with evidence from the book. RL.K.3, RL.1.3, RL.2.3, RL.3.3

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

LANGUAGE ARTS
• Identify the parts of the book: front and back cover, title page.
• Show a picture and short biography of the author and illustrator http://www.fziastories.com; http://stephaniefizercoleman.com/artist-info. Review the part each one does to make the book. RL.K.6

• Have the students identify the kind of book it is. RL.K.5, RL.1.5

• Ask the students how the art and the words work together to tell the story or show something about the story? RL.K.7, RL.1.7, RL.2.7, RL.3.7

• Why do you think Lali is so happy to have her feather? RL.K.3, RL.1.3, RL.2.3, RL.3.3

• Describe the characters other than Lali in the book. What are they like? RL.K.1, RL.1.1, RL.2.1, RL.3.1

• Where does the story take place? Could it have taken place in another country as well? RL.K.3, RL.1.3, RL.2.1, RL.3.1

• Tell how crow, duck, hen, and blue jay were good friends. Give an example. RL.K.1, RL.1.1, RL.2.1, RL.3.1

• What do good friends do for others? RL.K.1, RL.1.1, RL.2.1, RL.3.1

• Describe Lali’s feather. RL.K.1, RL.1.1, RL.2.1, RL.3.1

• What words or phrases are repeated? How does that make the story more fun? RL.1.4, RL.2.4, RL.3.4

• Read another book that takes place in India, such as Feast of Peas by Kashmira Sheth. Compare and contrast the two stories. Alternatively, read aloud a nonfiction book about India. Describe similarities and differences between them. Ask a librarian about a good nonfiction book for your grade level. RL.K.9, RL.1.9, RL.2.1, RL.3.1

VOCABULARY

• Make a list of the exclamatory words so the students can see them (Oo ma!; Na, Lali, na!; Wah!; Oi feather, stop!; Oh, oh!; Jai Ho!; Hip, hip hurray!”) Review where they were used in the book by reading that section and discuss what they mean based on the context. Jai Ho = I et there be victory, meaning halleluiah. RL.K.4, RL.1.4, RL.2.4, RL.3.4

• Post a list of the vocabulary words students might not know. List may include: set out, lordly, perky, speedy, pokey, fancy, handsome, plain, cheeky, giggled, mango, breeze, clever, smelly bins, wept, tamarind tree, Bapu, and wailed. Read each word in context and ask the students what they think it means. Support their answers by filling in details for each meaning. Have the students choose three to five words and write them on a large sheet of drawing paper. Draw a picture that shows the meaning. RL.K.4, RL.1.4, RL.2.4, RL.3.4

• Discuss the meaning of the phrases describing when crow brought back Lali’s feather. Back in a jiffy! Back in a snap! Back in a blink of an eye! RL.K.4, RL.1.4, RL.2.4, RL.3.4

WRITING

• Write a description of Lali. Tell what she looks like, what she likes to do, and what kind of person she is. W.K.2, W.1.2, W.2.2, W.3.2

• Choose one of the birds in the story. Look up and find three to four facts about the bird. Write a descriptive paragraph about what it looks like and information about it. W.K.2, W.1.2, W.2.2, W.3.2

SCIENCE (NGSS)


• Define monsoon for the students. List the seasons in India and describe each one. Discuss what types of weather each season shows.

• Ask the students to predict in what season the story takes place. Have them give evidence from the illustrations about why they chose that season.

Seasons in India:

Summer: April through June
Rainy: June or July through mid-September
Winter: October through January
Spring: February and March


• Show examples of the different kinds of feathers. Include as many from the following page as appropriate. See p. 2 from this website:
  https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/feathers-article/2/ Explain the feather parts, including barbs, rachis, and calamus. Then have the students draw and label one or more examples of feather types. 1: LS1.A: Structure and Function

• Bring in some mangoes and cut them up. Have each student taste a piece. Then show them a diagram of the life cycle of a mango.
Ask what mangoes need in order to live.

- Have the students draw and label the life cycle of a mango. **ESS3.A: Natural Resources**

- Project an image of a tamarind tree to show what they look like. Discuss how tamarinds might grow new plants using clues from the image. [https://www.featurepics.com/online/Tamarind-Tree-1865267.aspx](https://www.featurepics.com/online/Tamarind-Tree-1865267.aspx)

**MATH**
- Count the number of different kinds of birds identified in the book. Tally each number as it is counted. **K.CC.A.1, K.CC.A.3**
- List oval, rectangle, circle, square, and triangle where everyone can see the words. Go through the book again. Find examples of each shape.
  - oval: faces, Lali’s eyes, mouth, bird eyes, top of the cooking pot, button
  - rectangle: sidewalk, ladder
  - circle: faces, design on peacock feather, fruit on the trees
  - square: huts, hut roofs
  - triangle: beaks

**SOCIAL STUDIES**
- Point to your city on a world map or globe and then point to India to show the distance.
- As they work, describe the symbolism of the colors. The top band is saffron, meaning strength, courage, and sacrifice of India. The white band in the middle stands for peace and truth. The green band symbolizes the fertility and growth of the land, as well as peace and prosperity. The center symbol stands for the laws of goodness.

**ART**
- Identify the colors seen in the peacock illustration. Then have the students draw and color a fancy feather of their own using their imagination.
- Use the illustration from the book to color the peacock. ([https://www.coloring.ws/peacock-coloring.htm](https://www.coloring.ws/peacock-coloring.htm))
- Print out one of the free feather images. [https://colorbook4nerdlings.com/shop/doodle-feathers/](https://colorbook4nerdlings.com/shop/doodle-feathers/) Have the students color and cut out their feather. They can use it in the movement section.

**MOVEMENT**
- Read the page telling other things the feather can do. It follows the page about Lali tickling Bapu’s toes. “Little feather did more! It twirled and whirled. It shimmered and glimmered.” Have the students stand or go outside. Then ask them to twirl and then whirl their bodies.
- Ask the students to choose a bird and then pretend they are flying like their bird.
- Use the feather from the art activity to imitate or act out the different things Lali did in the story with her feather. Can include: write a note, sweep the floor, fan a fire, make a breeze, tickle toes, and flutter.
- Show the video of Jai Ho. [https://dance.lovetoknow.com/types-dance/best-bollywood-dances](https://dance.lovetoknow.com/types-dance/best-bollywood-dances) Scroll down to the Jai Ho song. Watch, then repeat it and have the students imitate the motions.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Farhana Zia is an elementary school teacher who grew up in Hyderabad, India. Her stories blend humor and tradition, memories and contemporary moments. Her first picture book, *Hot, Hot Roti for Dada-Ji*, received a starred review from *Kirkus Reviews*. She lives in Massachusetts.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR
Stephanie Fizer Coleman is an illustrator with a penchant for playful color and rich texture. Having grown up in a rural area surrounded by nature, it’s no surprise that furry and feathered creatures are her favorite subjects to draw. When she’s not drawing, Steph can be found sipping tea and reading books. She lives in West Virginia with her husband and two dogs.

[www.stephaniefizercoleman.com](http://www.stephaniefizercoleman.com)
FEATHER FUN

Name: ____________________________________________________________________________________

Draw a line to match the animal with their feathers.

rooster                                bright and blue, ooh and ahh
crow                                   dry
peacock                                handsome
hen                                     lordly
duck                                    perky
blue jay                                warm

List some of the things Lali does with her feather.

1.  ____________________________________________

2.  ____________________________________________

3.  ____________________________________________

4.  ____________________________________________

On the back of this page, draw and color your favorite animal with feathers.