

Clementine
By Sara Pennypacker

Summary: Third grader, Clementine, finds her fastidious friend Margaret crying in the bathroom and a big chunk of Margaret's halfway-down-her-waist straight brown hair missing because she got glue in it while in the art room. Clementine offers to help Margaret even out the other side, but it is soon clear that the only thing to do is cut off all of it, which, as Clementine confides, "is not exactly easy with those plastic art scissors, let me tell you."

Of course Clementine gets the blame and is sent, as usual, to the principal's office, even though she thinks Margaret looks beautiful, like a dandelion. Spectacular ideas are always spraining up in Clementine's brain. She wants to be an artist, is excellent at noticing things, is saving up to buy a gorilla, and, to make Margaret feel better, chops off all her own curly red hair. She calls her three year old brother by any number of vegetable names, like Cabbage, Brocoli, and Radish, and she is acutely aware that, in her family, she would not be considered "the easy one."

Pre-reading activities:

- Discuss friendship, who is your friend, how did you meet, and how did you help one another out.
- What was your worst week in recent memory? What did you do to deal with the situation?
- Describe kindness. Brainstorm some simple acts of kindness?
- What have you done for a friend to make them feel better?

Chapter 1:

- Vocabulary
 - Lucky
 - Journal
 - Attention
 - Pelican
 - Shiver
 - Dandelion
 - Ceiling

Pre-Reading Questions:

- What do principals do? How do they help your school?
- What are some rules in your classroom? Why do you think teachers make these rules?
- If you need help, who could you go to? What are some good ways to ask for help?

Discussion Questions:

- Clementine is having a bad week, the rest of the book is proof of that.
Retell/summarize the sequence of events that landed Clementine in the principal's office.
- Whose fault is it that Margaret's hair is gone?
- Read page one, what do we already know about Clementine from just one page?
- If you were Margaret, would you still want to be friends with Clementine after the hair incident?
- Discuss the relationship between Margaret and Clementine.
- If there could be a gifted class for one of your talents or interest, what would it be?

After Reading Activities:

- What was your worst week in recent memory? Describe one of the awful things that happened to you and how you dealt with it.
- Create a chart describing Clementine's moods and feelings.
- Create a simile book, ex. "like a dandelion" pg. 10. Take similes from the book and have them create their own.

Chapter 2:

- Vocabulary
 - Lobby
 - Apartment
 - Spinach
 - Basement
 - Aspirin
 - Bureau
 - Exquisite
 - Jewelry
 - Jealous

Pre-Reading Questions:

- Were you ever afraid to face a friend after you did something wrong?
- What have you done to apologize to a friend?
- Has anyone ever given you a nickname? Is there a meaning behind the nickname?
- Do you have any brothers and sisters? How do you get along?
- Describe your room? What's in there? Is it nice and organized or slightly messy?

Discussion questions:

- Clementine tries to make Margaret feel better by giving her a gift. What did Clementine do for her?
- Why does Clementine call her brother Spinach or Broccoli?
- Why is Clementine's brother called "the easy one?"
- Why does seeing Margaret's cat make Clementine feel sad?
- Describe Margaret's room. What does that say about her personality?

After Reading Activities:

- Draw a picture for a friend.
- Practice a simple act of kindness
- Describe something that you would not have normally noticed
- Write about your nickname, ex. How you got your nickname.

Chapter 3:

- Vocabulary
 - Stilts
 - Polite
 - Criminal
 - Common
 - Gorilla
 - Consequences
 - Action
 - Comfortable
 - Underground
 - Artist

Pre-Reading Questions:

- Compare and contrast Margaret and Clementine.
- Do opposites attract? Are you friends with someone who is very different from you?
- How would you apologize to an adult?
- What are some characteristics about you that could help you with your special talents?

Discussion Questions:

- Clementine's mother lets her put jelly into her milk to make her feel better. What do your parents do to help you feel better?

- Clementine went to Margaret's apartment to face her mother. Why do you think Clementine did not say anything and just ran down the hall?
- Clementine wants to be an artist. What character traits would help her achieve this goal?

After Reading Activities:

- Describe what you want to be when you grow up? Draw a picture.
- Write a letter to Margaret's mother, persuading her to let Margaret come out and play.
- Complete a Venn Diagram comparing Margaret and Clementine.
- If you're going to be an artist or a writer, you need to pay attention to what you see. What interesting things have you noticed lately? Make an illustrated poster with a list.

Chapter 4:

- Vocabulary
 - Irises
 - Arthritis
 - Hairball
 - Orthodontist
 - Pigeon
 - Ambulance
 - Allergic
 - Tattoo

Pre-Reading Questions:

- Did you ever pretend to be sick to stay home from school? What did you say? Why?
- Have you ever had to do something that you really did not want to do?
- Have you ever had difficulty sitting still?

Discussion Questions:

- Why was Clementine's mother upset with her?
- Why did Clementine cut off all her hair?
- Why did Clementine say she had "arthritis?"
- Clementine has a hard time staying still. If you were a friend or teacher, what would you suggest Clementine do?
- Why does Clementine say she is "allergic" to staying still?

After Reading Activities:

- Brainstorm a list of ways you can make yourself feel better.
- Clementine's favorite place to be is in the middle of her parents bed. Write about your favorite place to be and why.
- Clementine says she is "allergic" to sitting still. Is there something you are "allergic" to? Why?

Chapter 5:

- Vocabulary
 - Memorization
 - Bracelet
 - Unbelievable
 - Appointment
 - Detective
 - Wok

Pre-Reading Questions:

- What is the most beautiful sight you have ever seen?
- Have you ever lied to a friend?
- What kind of games have you invented? Have you made toys out of everyday objects? Explain.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Margaret lied about her braces hurting to Clementine?
- How does Clementine describe Margaret's new braces?
- Clementine's brother asks to go on a "wok." What does she do with him?

After Reading Activities:

- Create a game using everyday objects.
- Describe a time when you lied to a friend.
- Describe your favorite place in the world. Draw a picture of it.

Chapter 6:

- Vocabulary
 - Spectacular
 - Idea

- Nitrogen
- Protect
- Ridiculous
- Coincidence
- Beard
- Confusing
- Balconies
- Windowsills
- Enemy
- Captain
- Sergeant

Pre-Reading Questions:

- What do you do when you have a great idea?
- What ideas do you have when you are with your friends?
- Is two heads better than one? Do you work better alone or with a friend?
- What are some ways you can distract other people?
- Have you ever been jealous of friend?

Discussion Questions:

- What was Clementine's spectacularful idea?
- Why does Clementine ask the principal to spell NITROGEN?
- How does Clementine feel about Margaret?
- Why is Margaret allowed to play with Clementine now?
- Clementine and Margaret had an argument, what was it about?
- What is the Great Pigeon War?
- Is Clementine's dad really mad at the pigeons?
- What are some of the ideas Clementine has to solve the Great Pigeon War?

After Reading Activities:

- Come up with your own “spectacularful” idea to help Margaret?
- Write about a time you were upset with a friend. How did you solve it?
- Create a solution for the Great Pigeon War. Make a plan and draw a picture.

Chapter 7:

- Vocabulary
 - Decorate

- Black hole
- Disappear
- Mysterious
- Comedians
- Weak
- Courage
- Resourcefulness
- Cleverness
- Warfare
- Crafty
- Astounding
- Clerk

Pre-Reading Questions:

- Have you ever felt left out by your friend?
- Where can you find lost items?
- How does it feel to loose your homework?
- If something does not work for you on the first time, do you try again or do you give up?
- Do you have a pet?

Discussion Questions:

- Margaret became friends with a new girl. They did not invite Clementine to play. How do you think Clementine is feeling?
- What is the Black Hole? Why does she go there to look for her homework?
- What would you tell your teacher if you lost your homework?
- Have you ever lost a pet? What do you miss most about them? What do you do so that you can remember them?
- Clementine was saving money to buy a gorilla. She ended up spending her money on a printed picture of her cat. Make a prediction on how this picture will help in the Great Pigeon War.

After Reading Activities:

- Describe your “black hole.” Where do you loose things? How do you find them again?
- Write a letter persuading your teacher to excuse you from loosing your homework.
- Describe your pet. Bring in pictures and give a presentation to the class.

Chapter 8:

- Vocabulary
 - Cigars
 - Fierce
 - Trouble
 - Yoga
 - Plumbing
 - Mothballs
 - Pretended
 - Certainly
 - Angle
 - Brainwashed

Pre-Reading Questions:

- Have you experienced a time when your parents did something for a brother/sister but not for you? Was there a good reason for this?
- Name a time where you tried something and did not give up until you did it.
- Describe a time you came up with a solution to a big problem.

Discussion Questions:

- Clementine was annoyed with her parents because they gave her younger brother gummy worms. They felt Clementine got into too much trouble this week to win a special treat. Do you agree with their decision, why or why not?
- What did Clementine try 29 times? What does that tell you about her personality?
- What was causing the pigeons to stay in front of the building? How did Clementine solve the Great Pigeon War?

After Reading Activities:

- Describe a time that you felt your parents were not being fair to you.
- What activity would you try over and over again? Describe it.
- Clementine had to go think about her actions. Write about a time when you had to “think about your actions.” What did you learn from it?

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