



Animal Stories



Retold from the classic originals
by Diane Namm

Illustrated by Eric Freeberg



STERLING CHILDREN'S BOOKS
New York

What Do *You* Think? Questions for Discussion



Have you ever been around a toddler who keeps asking the question “Why?” Does your teacher call on you in class with questions from your homework? Do your parents ask you questions about your day at the dinner table? We are always surrounded by questions that need a specific response. But is it possible to have a question with no right answer?

The following questions are about the book you just read. But this is not a quiz! They are

designed to help you look at the people, places, and events in the stories from different angles. These questions do not have specific answers. Instead, they might make you think of the stories in a completely new way.

Think carefully about each question and enjoy discovering more about these classic stories.

1. In the stories that you have read, the animals are the main characters. Can you think of an animal you know that could tell a story? What would that story be about?

2. Do you think each of the animals in Kipling's "Just So" Stories get what he or she deserves? What would it be like if the Elephant got the hump, the Camel got the spots, and the Leopard got the long trunk?

3. Eliza, the sister of "The Wild Swans," finds herself in a difficult situation. If you were in Eliza's shoes, would you speak up to save your

own life or choose to be silent and save your brothers?

4. How might the outcome of the story “The Leap-Frog” be different if the animals raced in a different kind of competition, like a singing contest or contest of strength? What kind of contest do you think you could easily win?

5. In the same story, the King declares to the crowd “A contest is only as good as its reward.” If you were creating a special contest, what would be the prize? Have you ever competed and won the grand prize?

6. In “A Dog’s Tale,” the main character, Aileen Mavourneen, talks lovingly about her mother and all the funny things she says. If you were to rewrite the beginning of this story, what might you write about one of your parents? What funny things do your parents say?

7. The Grays treat Aileen as part of the family. Do you have a pet that is like part of your

family? How do you make your pet feel comfortable and welcome?

8. In the story “Brown Wolf,” do you think Wolf made the right decision at the end? If you were Wolf, who would you decide to stay with?

9. The story “The Squirrels that Live in the House” ends with the question “Would you let the squirrels live in your house?” Well, would you? What might be fun about having them stay? What might be bad?

10. Do you agree with the name Dr. Bullfrog gave Mother Magpie: Old Mother Mischief? Do you know anyone in real life who is like Mother Magpie?