

A Hungry Lion, or A Dwindling Assortment of Animals

By Lucy Ruth Cummins

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“So smart and so cute and so dark all at the same time. Sheesh.” —Caldecott medal and honor winner, Jon Klassen.


Once upon a time there was a hungry lion and a bunch of adorable animals...what do you think happened next?

There once was a hungry lion, a penguin (Well he was just here...), a little calico kitten (I could have sworn I just saw him...), a brown mouse (Now wait a second...), a bunny with floppy ears and a bunny with un-floppy ears (Okay this is just getting ridiculous), a frog, a bat, a pig, a slightly bigger pig, a wooly sheep, a koala, a hen, and also a turtle. Hey! What's going on here...

The very hungry lion is all set to enjoy an exciting day with his other animal pals. But all of a sudden his friends start disappearing at an alarming rate! Is someone stealing the hungry lion's friends, or is the culprit a little...closer to home?

With sharp wit, adorable illustrations, and hysterical twists galore, this debut picture book asks—what do you think happened to the hungry lion's friends?

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

K-Gr 3-With its macabre humor and delightfully scribbly illustrations, this tale is sure to delight a wide audience of children. Using a metafiction style, the author starts the book with "Once upon a time, there was a hungry lion, a penguin, a turtle, a brown mouse, those two rabbits, etc.," but must stop and repeatedly revise the list as the bevy of animals slowly dwindle to one smugly grinning lion and "that turtle." With several surprises, and some truly extraordinary full-page illustrations, this story winds itself to a laugh-out-loud ending that will tickle the unconventional funny bone. VERDICT Highly recommended for any library, sure to be a favorite read-aloud.-Jasmine L. Precopio, Fox Chapel Area School District, Pittsburgh, PA(c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Review

"So smart and so cute and so dark all at the same time. Sheesh." (Caldecott medal and honor winner, Jon Klassen)

Ahungry lion finds something to eat, with the help of several smaller animals. Ared-maned lion poses regally with a bat, penguin, turtle, mouse, hen, frog,koala, sheep, kitten, two pigs, and two rabbits. All smile, a bit blankly. Asfor the lion himself, he looks calm and possibly hungry, or maybe that is justa look of sly anticipation. On the page turn, something is different. The storybegins again, with the same words as at first ("Once upon a time there wasa hungry lion..."), though with fewer animals. Turn the page, and "Waita second." Here is the hungry lion again but only four animals. Wherecould the others have gone? Cummins' perfect conversation starter gets evenbetter with multiple readings. Rich language and a playful use of typefacecomplement the simply outlined, goofily appealing (but not sentimental), softlycolored creatures. A young listener may have an answer for the disappearance ofthose animals. Wonderfully, and darkly hilariously, that answer will be correctin just a few pages—but not right away. Multiple surprises, including a danceparty, cake ("four-tiered...with buttercream frosting"), and a new"really ravenous" guest combine to leave only the turtle withsomething to eat. Silly and witty: serve to slightly older children who areready for a good dose of subversively hearty laughter. (Picture book. 4-7) (Kirkus Reviews *STARRED* December 15, 2015)

*"Gets even better with multiple readings...a good dose of subversively hearty laughter" (Kirkus Reviews - Starred Review December 15, 2015)

It's all verypeaceable kingdom at the beginning of this ostensibly placid story. Theingenuous narrator introduces a self-possessed lion (marvelously drawn in roughpencil, charcoal, and a vigorous application of markers) and 13 cute animals,including "a pig, a slightly bigger pig, a woolly sheep, a koala, and also ahen." Though described as "hungry," the lion does not seem particularlythreatening, but as the animals start euphemistically "dwindling," questionsarise. Still, the narrator soldiers on, struggling to keep up as Cummins, anS&S art director making her debut as author-artist, keeps readersguessing—it's fitting that a book with as many "Once upon a time" beginnings asthis one has more than one potential ending, some happier than others.Cummins's dizzy meta-tale has just enough wink and cheek to assure readers thatit's all in good fun, and her visual style—sketchbook playful, slyly spikingsweet-seeming scenes with moments of menace and fear—should leave them hungering(in a nice way) for her next book. Ages 4–8. (Publishers Weekly *STARRED REVIEW* December 14, 2015)

*"Cummins's dizzy meta-tale has just enough wink and cheek to assure readers that it's all in good fun, and her visual style—sketchbook playful, slyly spiking sweet-seeming scenes with moments of menace and fear—should leave them hungering (in a nice way) for her next book." (Publisher's Weekly - Starred Review December 14, 2015)

"Hilariously dark...When this devilish book ends, there will, indeed, be only one animal left standing." (Booklist February 2016)

Meet one hungry lion and its menagerie of animal friends. Or are they friends? One by one, these animals disappear, while the lion remains hungry. Perhaps the lion is to blame, but could there be another explanation for these rapidly disappearing critters? Cummins' enjoyably repetitive text and droll illustrations give each animal a personality, despite their pending departure, from the stand-out sauciness of the lion to the affable nature of the ever-present turtle. The stark backgrounds play this up and allow each character to stand out. Of course, it's the brazen lion that drives the story: he gets in the reader's face, taking up the whole page with his loud red mane and cunning eyes, and seems curiously reserved throughout the ordeal. What's revealed is that the other animals have been preparing a birthday cake for the lion—pretty great, right? Well, Cummins has a hilariously dark twist (two, actually) still to come. When this devilish book ends, there will, indeed, be only one animal left standing. — Amy Dittmeier (Booklist February 1, 2015)

With its macabre humor and delightfully scribbly illustrations, this tale is sure to delight a wide audience of children. Using a metafiction style, the author starts the book with "Once upon a time, there was a hungry lion, a penguin, a turtle, a brown mouse, those two rabbits, etc.," but must stop and repeatedly revise the list as the bevy of animals slowly dwindle to one smugly grinning lion and "that turtle." With several surprises, and some truly extraordinary full-page illustrations, this story winds itself to a laugh-out-loud ending that will tickle the unconventional funny bone. VERDICT Highly recommended for any library, sure to be a favorite read-aloud. (School Library Journal March 2016)

"With several surprises, and some truly extraordinary full-page illustrations, this story winds itself to a laugh-out-loud ending that will tickle the unconventional funny bone. ...Highly recommended for any library, sure to be a favorite read-aloud." (School Library Journal March 2016)

? With his hit books "I Want My Hat Back" and "This Is Not My Hat," Jon Klassen threw open the door for kid lit that is both sweet and surprisingly sinister. Lucy Ruth Cummins's understated, sly delight is the latest book to sneak through that open door. The salty and sweet mixture of "A Hungry Lion, or a Dwindling Assortment of Animals" is similar to Klassen's books, but has a daffy and dry style all its own.

It all starts innocently enough: "Once upon a time there was a hungry lion, a penguin, a turtle, a little calico kitten, a brown mouse, a bunny with floppy ears and a bunny with un-floppy ears, a frog, a bat, a pig, a slightly bigger pig, a woolly sheep, a koala, and also a hen."

The deceptively simple-looking, sketchy style Cummins uses to depict the cast of creatures assists in the book's first sleight-of-hand trick. The animals are so adorably drawn — all with matching black dots for eyes and gently curving smiles — that it's easy to breeze past the hungry lion. Which is exactly what Cummins would like you to do. On the first spread the lion's eyes are closed. He seems to be imitating a baby's idea of hide-and-seek. If he can't see the animals they can't see him, right?

The trouble begins when the animals start disappearing. The larger pig, the sheep, and the kitten are the first to go. ("Hold on," says the narrator, trying to keep track of the animals.) Then the mouse, the bunnies, the koala, and the hen go missing. ("Wait a second.") A few pages later only the clueless, amiable turtle remains,

alone on the page with the toothy lion. The spare pages leave enough space for fear to creep in. The next spread, wordless, shows the lion in an extreme, fearsome close-up. Then the pages go black: “Why’s it so dark in here?? Shhhh. . .”

Surprise, silly readers! The animals have snuck off to plan a birthday party for the lion. But — twist No. 2 — the lion is not in the mood for cake. He prefers warm-blooded treats. Unfortunately for the king of the jungle there’s still one gigantic, pre-historic twist left. After all, hungry predators — even anthropomorphized ones — need to eat. (Boston Globe March 19, 2016)

"understated, sly delight... similar to Klassen’s books, but has a daffy and dry style all its own." (The Boston Globe March 19, 2016)

About the Author

Lucy Ruth Cummins is a writer and an illustrator and also a full time art director of children's books. She loves watching television, reading really long books about US Presidents, and Pomeranian dogs. She was born in Canada, raised in upstate New York, and currently resides in Brooklyn, New York. Her favorite food is the french fry.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lou Marshall:

The reason why? Because this A Hungry Lion, or A Dwindling Assortment of Animals is an unordinary book that the inside of the publication waiting for you to snap the item but latter it will distress you with the secret that inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who also write the book in such remarkable way makes the content within easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This book will give you a lot of gains than the other book possess such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking technique. So , still want to postpone having that book? If I were you I will go to the guide store hurriedly.

Simona Vela:

The book untitled A Hungry Lion, or A Dwindling Assortment of Animals contain a lot of information on that. The writer explains her idea with easy means. The language is very clear and understandable all the people, so do not really worry, you can easy to read the idea. The book was compiled by famous author. The author provides you in the new period of literary works. It is possible to read this book because you can read more your smart phone, or program, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can open up their official web-site as well as order it. Have a nice read.

Robbie Lewis:

In this period of time globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make you to definitely understand the condition of the world. The condition of the world makes the information

quicker to share. You can find a lot of referrals to get information example: internet, paper, book, and soon. You can view that now, a lot of publisher which print many kinds of book. Typically the book that recommended for your requirements is A Hungry Lion, or A Dwindling Assortment of Animals this publication consist a lot of the information on the condition of this world now. This particular book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The words styles that writer value to explain it is easy to understand. The particular writer made some investigation when he makes this book. This is why this book acceptable all of you.

Kristy Moore:

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