

26 Fairmount Avenue

by Tomie dePaola

Tomie dePaola is excited about the new house his parents are building at 26 Fairmount Avenue, but everything seems to go wrong—from the Hurricane of 1938, to the town scraping the road so deep the house is high on a hill, to his father firing the builder, to a nor'easter turning the yard to mud. It begins to look like they'll never leave their apartment on Columbus Avenue.

THEMES

growing up, family, problem-solving, changes

I. PRE-TEACHING

A. Have the class define and discuss these terms:

hurricane, foundation, overflowing, weird, murky, scary, lightning, electricity, freight, pestered, hemlock, concrete, gushing, studs, relatives, Irish, Italian, laxatives, glittery, newsreel, featured presentation, beret, fashion plates, plasterboard, smoothly, plowed, Kindergarten, roaring, burlap, contraption, nor'easter, guardian, probably, furnace, manger, authentic, gravy, excited, tuxedo, noisemakers, midnight, oilcloth, makeshift, squirrel, silhouette

B. Before beginning the story, discuss with the class the following questions:

1. Has your family moved since you were born? What do you remember about where you used to live? Do you like where you live now? Why or why not?
2. Do you have grandparents? Do you get to spend time with them? What are some of the things you do together?
3. Have you ever seen the movie of a story you've read or listened to? Did you like the movie as much as you liked the book? Why or why not?

II. PRESENTATION

A. Understanding the Story:

1. Begin with Chapters 1-3: What happens during the hurricane? What private game does Tomie play with Nana Upstairs? Who are Tomie's favorite real-life movie stars? What does he like about them? What causes Buddy to freak out at the movie? How does Tomie react to it? In what ways does Tomie feel Walt Disney got the story of *Snow White* all mixed up?
2. Advance to Chapters 4-6: Why does Tomie's father fire the builder? How do they celebrate Easter? What happens next to the house? What special treat does Tomie get before the plasterers come? What is the "backyard project"? Why is Tomie excited about going to school? What does he do when he finds out he won't learn to read? How does his mom get him to go back? What happens when they try to get rid of the weeds in the backyard?

3. Complete the story with Chapters 7-9: What trouble does the rain cause? What has Aunt Nell told Tomie about guardian angels? How are his prayers answered? What do Tomie and Buddy get to do on New Year's Eve? What do they get to do while their parents move into the new house? What does Tomie notice on the front of the new house? What does he find in his brand new bedroom?

B. For Discussion:

1. Why does Tomie decide to be an artist? In what ways do his parents and others encourage his interest in art?
2. Why does Tomie get so mad at the movie? Do you think Walt Disney should have stayed closer to the original story? Why or why not?
3. The main reason Tomie wants to go to school is to learn to read. What might the teacher have done about this?
4. Find examples where Tomie, his father, his mother, and other relatives solve a problem. In what ways are they good problem-solvers?

III. EXTENDING THE LESSON

Give wide leeway in working with partners, groups, the whole class, or alone.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:

A. Language Arts:

1. Have students write a poem about a thunderstorm, a heavy rain, a snowstorm, or a windy day. Be sure they include exact details and appeal to the five senses.
2. Have students go through a drawer at home or in the classroom and make a list of what they find there. Then have them write a poem or a story about what they find. What do these items say about the person who kept them?
3. Have students write about sharing a room with a brother or sister. What's hard about doing this?
4. Have students talk about how they learned to read. What is the best way to learn to read?

B. Art and Music:

1. Have students select background music that might be appropriate to some of the scenes. They might find the score for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, or selections from *Fantasia* for the movie scene, songs about school like “School Days” for when Tomie goes to school, and songs about wind and rain for the storms, such as the segment from Vivaldi’s *Summer*. The music of Aaron Copeland for the movie *Our Town* might capture the flavor of the small town.
2. Have students make a bulletin board about the story. They could draw “#26 Fairmount Avenue” with the squirrel design, surround it with pictures of a hurricane, scenes from Disney’s *Snow White*, the portraits of the family Tomie drew on the walls.
3. Have students draw pictures of their own family the way Tomie does.
4. Have students design a logo for their addresses like the squirrel for “#26 Fairmount Avenue.”
5. Show students scenes from the movies mentioned in the story, such as Dorothy traveling to Oz, Mary Poppins arriving with her umbrella, or Shirley Temple dancing and singing. Why did Tomie like these movies so much when he was growing up? Ask students if they like movies. What are some of their favorites?
6. Have students read or listen to the real story of *Snow White* and then show them the movie. Which do they like better? Why do they think Walt Disney changed things when he made the movie?

C. Social Studies:

1. Tomie and his friends were told to stay away from Harbor Brook because the water was polluted. Talk with students about water pollution and why so many rivers, brooks, and lakes became polluted. What has been done about this since Tomie was young?
2. Have students learn about the career of Walt Disney. How did he begin his cartooning career? Who was his first cartoon character? Why did he begin making full-length features? What were the earliest ones? How did he build his movie empire? When did he create Disneyland? When was Disneyworld built?

D. Science and Math:

1. Have students learn how houses are built. What is put up first? What comes next? What is the next step? Ask them if they think they’d like to design or build houses. What are the people who do this called?
2. Have students learn about hurricanes. What causes them? What damage do they do? Ask students if they have ever had a hurricane in their area. How do people get ready for a hurricane? What is the difference between a hurricane and a nor’easter? Why is it called “a nor’easter”?
3. Mrs. Crane is afraid of being struck by lightning. Have students learn more about lightning. What causes it? How is it related to thunder? What should we do if we’re caught outside during a lightning storm?
4. The concrete for the new house gushing down reminds Tomie of lava from a volcano. Have students learn more about volcanoes and lava. What causes volcanoes to erupt? What is lava made of? What is it like when it cools?

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Here We All Are

by Tomie dePaola

The year Tomie and his family settle into their new house on Fairmount Avenue, he enrolls in tap dance class at Miss Leah's Dancing School, upstages Peter Rabbit in the school play, and gets a new baby sister.

THEMES

family, humor, drama, problem-solving, holidays

Young Listener Unabridged Audio

I. PRE-TEACHING

A. These terms should be defined and discussed:

attic, ottoman, weighed, temperature, monitor, vanity, bureau, chute, decals, nautical, easel, motioned, scarf, glittery, recital, military, mumble, nervous, stretchy, crepe, principal, auditorium, performance, congratulations, lavatories, smirk, apologized, talkative, creative, fainted, honor, construction, sturdy, delicious, messages, cinnamon, sprinkles, tongues, admired, doilies, fortieth, examiner, spaghetti, tomatoes, sewer, appetite, interrupted, baptized, ceremony, relieved

B. Consider the following questions:

1. Do you have a younger brother or sister? Do you remember when he or she was born? What do you like about your younger sibling?
2. Have you ever been in a play? What part did you play? Did you have fun?
3. Do you have grandparents? What are they like? What things do you do with them?
4. Do you enjoy painting? What do you like about art classes? What do you think art teachers ought to do differently?

II. PRESENTATION

A. Understanding the Story:

1. Begin with Chapters 1-3: How does Tomie feel about the new house? Why does he hope to have sisters? What surprise does his mother have for him? What does he pray for? What does he tell people he wants to be? What's wrong with Miss Immick's paint? What problem does Tomie have with his name? Why is his name spelled the way it is? Why does Tomie hate naps? What does Miss Immick say he must try to do? Why does he feel it won't be easy?
2. Advance to Chapters 4-6: What does Tomie learn in dance class? What special part does Miss Leah give him in the recital? How does it make him feel? Why does he think Jeannie should play the mouse in *Peter Rabbit*? How is he punished for talking to Jeannie? What does he do to spoil the play? What does his

mother say he has to do? What does Buddy tell him about the meeting between Tomie's teacher and their mother? Why has Mom come to school? How does Tomie feel about Miss Immick now?

3. Complete the story with Chapters 7-9: How does Tomie's family get ready for the new baby? What has Nana Fall-River come to do? What do they have for dinner? Why isn't that morning happy? How does Tomie spend the day? Why isn't he supposed to talk about his sister to Nana Fall-River? Why doesn't he like Nana Fall-River? How does Mom get him to behave? What had he done at the baptism when he was two?

B. For Discussion:

1. In what ways is Miss Immick not fair to Tomie? What might she have done differently? Why do you think she treats him this way?
2. When Tomie goes to dancing school, he feels the music tells him what to do. What does this feel like? Why do you think it happens to him and not to others? How is he able to learn faster than the other kids?
3. What is wrong with the way Tomie acts on stage? Why do you think he does it? How does it make the other actors feel? Is he really sorry when he apologizes? Support your answer with examples from the story.

III. EXTENDING THE LESSON

Give wide leeway in working with partners, groups, the whole class, or alone.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:

A. Language Arts:

1. Have students write a memoir or a story about moving into a new house.
2. Have students talk about their names. How would they spell them if they could? Is the way you spell your name important? Is there a "right" and a "wrong" way to spell a name? Why or why not?
3. When Tomie's mother comes to school, he worries about all the things he might have done wrong. Have students make a list as many things as they can remember that he thinks he might have done wrong.

4. Have students write a play about *Peter Rabbit* or another favorite book to perform for another class.
5. Tomie is always being asked why he can't be a "good boy" like his brother. Have students talk or write about a similar experience. What's wrong with comparing siblings?

B. Art and Music:

1. Have students select background music that might be appropriate to some of the scenes. They might find tap dance music such as in Fred Astaire films, the soundtrack to the movie *Chicago* or songs like "Shuffle Off to Buffalo."
2. Have students make a bulletin board about the story. They could cover the board with black paper and add glitter and cut out stars, costumes for the Mother Goose play, tap shoes, pictures of famous people, drawings from *Peter Rabbit* and other scenes mentioned in the story.
3. Have students learn about radio dramas, like "Jack Armstrong," "The Lone Ranger," and "Let's Pretend." They might talk to their grandparents about radio programs. Why did people enjoy listening to radio? How could they follow the story without seeing the characters?
4. Tomie hates the paint and paper in art class. Have students learn what kinds of paints artists use and what they paint on. Should schools let students use better paint? Why or why not? Should an interested student like Tomie be allowed to bring his own paints? Why or why not?

C. Social Studies:

1. Have students learn about John Alden and other historical people from colonial times.
2. Tomie knows from an early age that he wants to be an artist. Have students learn more about Tomie dePaola and what he became when he grew up. Ask them if they think he's happy with what he's doing. They might write him a letter and ask him.
3. Tomie's father's barber shop has to be inspected so he can keep his license. Have students find out why shops like this need licenses and why they need to be inspected.

4. Have students locate Fall River, Massachusetts and Meriden, Connecticut on a map. How far did Nana Fall-River have to travel to visit Tomie and his family?

D. Science and Math:

1. Tomie notices that his and his brother's baby hair is blond. Have students find out why babies often have blond hair and why it turns darker when they get older.
2. Tomie hopes the gas stove will light without a match. Have students find out more about natural gas. Where does it come from? How does it get to the stove?
3. When Tomie is told his bedroom furniture is "maple," he licks the bedpost because he thinks it will taste like maple syrup. Have students learn about the maple tree. How do maple trees make sugar?
4. In Tomie's school, the kids have to be sure to use their own mats to avoid "cooties." Have students find out what cooties, or lice, are. What happens when they get in someone's hair? How are they gotten rid of?
5. Whenever Tomie says the baby will be a sister, his mother says, "We'll see." Today parents can learn if their babies are boys or girls. Have students find out how. Ask students if they think it's a good idea. Why or why not?

USING AUDIOBOOKS IN THE CLASSROOM

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On My Way

by Tomie dePaola

The year 1939 starts off on a sad notes for Tomie and his family when his baby sister Maureen nearly dies, but she recovers and they go to the 1939 World's Fair. Then Tomie enters first grade where he's in such a hurry to learn to read, he steals his reading book so he can teach himself.

THEMES

humor, family, drama, travel, problem-solving

I. PRE-TEACHING

A. Have the class define and discuss these terms:

tongue, carriage, vitamins, hollered, spooky, pneumonia, obviously, brim, gabardine, water-repellent, newsreels, knickers, diamond, tuxedos, shrink, concentrate, visors, epaulets, seamstress, petticoats, kerchief, ruffled, rehearsal, disaster, braid, adhesive, acrobatics, initials, superintendents, forfeit, skyrocket, finale, surrounding, boardwalk, billowing, masquerade, crepe, glum, recited, polished, mirror, ledger, bulletin, decorated, easel, criminal, confess, Communion, apologized, entire

B. Before beginning the story, discuss with the class the following questions:

1. Have you ever known someone who became so sick you were afraid they would die? What did it feel like to wait and wonder?
2. Have you ever been to a special amusement park like Disneyland? What did you see there?
3. How does your family celebrate the Fourth of July? What do you like about this holiday?
4. Do you remember how you learned to read? What were the first books you read? How did you feel when you got your own library card?
5. Do you have a library card? What do you like about going to the library? Are there any rules about what you can take out at your library? Why do you think they have rules about this?

II. PRESENTATION

A. Understanding the Story:

1. Begin with Chapters 1-3: What does Mom do for Maureen's cold? What happens that night? What does Maureen's blanket become after she gets better? Why does Tomie get a new outfit? What do they see at the World's Fair? What happens to everybody's clothes except Tomie's? What does Tomie think about when the mind-reader asks them to think about something? What do they see in Futurama?
2. Advance to Chapters 4-7: Describe the costume for the play. How does Tomie feel on stage? What special

treat does he get when the new sidewalk is laid? How does he help his dad roll the driveway smooth? What game does his mother invent for the children to play? How do they spend the Fourth of July?

3. Complete the story with Chapters 8-10: What does Tomie think is great about Nana Fall-River? What doesn't he like about Uncle Frank's cabin? Why doesn't Buddy want a "dress-up" party for his tenth birthday? What is Tomie's first day of school like? What's exciting about his new classroom? Why is Tomie disappointed when reading day comes? How does he solve his problem? How does he prove to the teacher he can read?

B. For Discussion:

1. How does Tomie handle his worries when Maureen goes to the hospital?
2. How does Buddy feel about dressing up and acting? How is this different from the way Tomie feels about doing this?
3. Why does Tomie steal his reading book? How does his teacher react when he returns it?
4. In what ways is Tomie "on his way" at the end of the book?

III. EXTENDING THE LESSON

Give wide leeway in working with partners, groups, the whole class, or alone.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:

A. Language Arts:

1. Have students write about a tradition family celebration of a holiday, like the Fourth of July. What's fun about having family traditions?
2. Have students think back to when they first learned to read. Was it hard to learn? How did they learn? Do they remember when they could suddenly read? How old were they? What books did they like best? What else can they remember about learning to read?
3. Have students work with younger children and help them learn to read. Maybe they could read their favorite books to them and point out some of the words.

4. Tomie's mom always says, "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb." Have students talk about what this saying means. Is it true? Have them volunteer sayings they've heard their parents or others say and make posters of sayings about the months of the year or the weather to display in class.

B. Art and Music:

1. Have students select background music that might be appropriate to some of the scenes. They might use the voice of an Irish tenor such as John McCormack (or Morton Downy himself) for when Tomie is listening to his cousin sing on the radio, circus music for the World's Fair, music by John Williams for when they visit Futurama.
2. Have students make a bulletin board about the story. They could show a tiny baby wrapped in a blanket, pictures of the 1939 World's Fair cut from old magazines or books, showing the rides and exhibitions, dress up dolls as bride and groom for the Tiny Tot Wedding, include reading books and pictures of Tomie's favorite radio and movie actors.
3. Hold a party where students come dressed as an old-time radio character like the Lone Ranger, Little Orphan Annie, or Buck Rogers. Decorate the room with pictures of old radios and play tapes of some of the popular programs. Students might make up games based on this theme.
4. Have students produce a school musical about nursery rhymes. They could make up tunes for some of their favorites, sing and act, design costumes, and put the show together.
5. Have students learn about colors and make a color wheel. What are the primary colors? Why are they called "primary"? Have students mix primary colors to make the other colors.

C. Social Studies:

1. Have students learn about the 1939 World's Fair. What was shown at Futurama? What turned out to be true? What didn't? Why or why not? Why was it a while before there was another World's Fair?
2. So people could get to the Fair, a new highway was built through Connecticut to New York. Have students find out more about this highway. What was it called?

Is it still being used? Why wasn't there a highway there before?

3. One of the attractions at the Fair were the "little people." Many of these were in *The Wizard of Oz* as the "Munchkins." Have students find out why some people grow up but don't get big. What are their lives like?

D. Science and Math:

1. Have students learn what their school nurse does. How does she decide if a child is sick enough to be sent home? Why does she put a tongue depressor in their mouths? How does she take their pulses? How does she take their temperatures? What else does she do?
2. Tomie's little sister nearly dies because she contracts pneumonia. Have students learn about pneumonia. Why is it so dangerous, especially for a tiny baby?
3. Because they're caught in the rain, members of Tomie's family find their wool clothes have shrunk. Have students find out why wool shrinks. They might wet a swatch of wool and a swatch of another piece of material made of something that doesn't shrink and see what happens.
4. At the Fair, Tomie sees robots. Have students find out about robotics today. What are robots used for? How are they different from the robots we see in science fiction movies?

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26 Fairmount Avenue, #4: What a Year!

by Tomie DePaola

What a year 1940 is for Tomie!— two birthday parties, dressing up as Snow White for Halloween, Thanksgiving dinner, trying to catch a glimpse of Santa, suffering from chicken pox, and getting his first real diary to write down everything that happened in that remarkable year.

THEMES

holidays, family, celebrations, appreciation

Young Listener Unabridged Audio

I. PRE-TEACHING

A. Have the class define and discuss these terms:

gurgled, biscuits, shallow, kazoo, custom, munch, recess, jealous, streamers, iron, sizzled, sausages, ribbon, doughnuts, sundae, meanwhile, autumn, underneath, papier-maché, customers, gestures, success, squashes, cornucopia, simmering, cranberry, carving, marionette, sleigh, handkerchief, cologne, mantel, wreaths, tinsel, manger, disaster, temperature, witch hazel, examined, uproar, contagious, medicine, ovations, mysterious, guests, xylophone, whispered, poinsettias, machine, phonograph

B. Before beginning the story, discuss the following questions with the class:

1. What are some special birthday parties you've had?
2. What did you wear for Halloween this year? What would you like to wear next year?
3. How does your family celebrate Thanksgiving? How do they celebrate other holidays? Which is your favorite holiday? Why?
4. Have you ever been in a play? What do you like about acting?
5. What are some special things that happened to you this year?

II. PRESENTATION

A. Understanding the Story:

1. Begin with Chapters 1 - 3: What's special about Tomie's birthday this year? Why is his birthday party at school? What treat does he get on Sunday? Why is Tomie worried that Miss Kiniry might have forgotten about his party? What happens at lunch time? What does Tomie want to make for a birthday treat? Describe how he makes a "pop-eye." Who does he share his cake with?
2. Advance to Chapters 4 - 7: How do Tomie's relatives celebrate his birthday? What is the perfect idea he comes up with for his Halloween costume? What is the "guessing" rule for trick-or-treating? Why do Tomie and Buddy get extra candy? Why does Buddy go to a cowboy movie instead of *Pinocchio*? What does the family do on Thanksgiving? What's on each of Tomie's three Christmas lists? What does he ask Santa for?

3. Complete the story with Chapters 8 - 10: What "disaster" strikes before the Christmas pageant? What does Tomie worry about while he's sick? What is his plan for Christmas Eve? What is the family Christmas gift? What does Nana give Tomie? What's special about it? Name the things Tomie writes down in his diary.

B. For Discussion:

1. Would you like to be in Tomie's family? Why or why not?
2. Tomie's favorite books are fairy tales, especially those that are illustrated. How does this foreshadow what he later chooses for his profession?
3. Why does Tomie consider 1940 a special year? Do you think he'll feel the same way the next year? Why or why not? What might be special about 1941?
4. Tomie's cousin, Morton Downy, told him to spell his name Tomie instead of Tommy. Why does he suggest this? Why won't his teachers go along with the new spelling? How does Tomie handle this?

III. EXTENDING THE LESSON

Give students the opportunity to work with partners, groups, the whole class, or alone.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS:

A. Language Arts:

1. Have students write about what they would do if they could do anything they wanted on their birthdays.
2. Have students begin keeping a diary or journal and list special things that happen. They might share their diaries with the class if they want to.
3. Have students read or listen to the first three *26 Fairmount Avenue* books: *26 Fairmount Avenue, #1*; *Here We All Are, #2*; and *On My Way, #3* and discuss why they think Tomie became a children's writer and illustrator. What else might he have become?
4. Have students write about their names or nicknames. What do they like about their names? Who chose their nickname? What name or nickname would they choose if they could change it?
5. Have students listen to how Tomie makes a "pop-eye" for his special treat, then write a recipe for making one themselves.

B. Art and Music

1. Have students work in groups to plan a special birthday party for someone in the class. They could plan the refreshments, decorate the room, and make place cards.
2. Have students make a bulletin board about the story. They could cover the board with a happy color, like pink, yellow, or red, add birthday decorations, candles, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's decorations, a diary with a key, a page from Tomie's diary, and a calendar for 1940.
3. Have students write and perform a radio play version of a fairy tale for "Let's Pretend."
4. Have students select background music that is appropriate to some of the scenes. They could use hymns for Thanksgiving, carols and popular songs for Christmas, spooky music for Halloween.
5. Show students a silent movie. Have them discuss why movies were silent, and how the story was told without sound. Have them find out about some of the famous silent movie stars. Have students find out about the first full-length cartoons made by Walt Disney, like *Dumbo*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Pinocchio*. Why were these movies unusual? How were they made?
6. Have students make hand or finger puppets out of felt and put on a play about one of the holidays.

C. Social Studies:

1. Have students learn about superstitions, like black cats crossing your path, walking under ladders, and Friday the 13th. How did these superstitions begin? Another group might learn how trick or treating originated. In what ways has this changed in recent years?
2. Have students listen to what the shops in town display for Halloween and write down everything they can remember. What differences and similarities do they notice between these and shop displays for Halloween today?
3. Have students find out about Franklin Delano Roosevelt. What was special about him? How long was he president?
4. Tomie liked to listen to radio programs, like "Little Orphan Annie," "Tom Mix," "Jack Armstrong,"

and "Captain Midnight." Have students ask their grandparents or another older adult what they remember about listening to programs on the radio. What did they like about them? Why did radio stop having dramas like this? In what ways might we enjoy a listening experience like this today?

5. One of the important things that happens to Tomie that year is getting his library card. Talk with students about libraries. Why are they special? Does every country have free libraries like we do? Why or why not?

D. Science and Math:

1. Tomie's mother uses food coloring in the cake frosting. Have students find out about food coloring. What is it made of? They might make something for a snack at school, using different colors.
2. Have students collect leaves and save them in plastic or waxed paper. Have them find out what trees or bushes the leaves comes from. What makes leaves green? Why do they change color in the fall?
3. Have students find out how long it takes to bake a fifteen pound turkey and what temperature the oven needs to be. Why does the temperature need to be this low and why does it take so long? What would happen if the oven were hotter?
4. Have students find out about chicken pox. What causes it? Do children still get it? How is it treated today?

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