

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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A Hungry Lion, or A Dwindling Assortment of Animals By Lucy Ruth Cummins Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #620018 in eBooks
- Published on: 2016-03-15
- Released on: 2016-03-15
- Format: Kindle eBook

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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. Theingenious 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:

Anthony Collins:

The book A Hungry Lion, or A Dwindling Assortment of Animals make you feel enjoy for your spare time. You can utilize to make your capable a lot more increase. Book can for being your best friend when you getting pressure or having big problem with the subject. If you can make studying a book A Hungry Lion, or A Dwindling Assortment of Animals for being your habit, you can get much more advantages, like add your own personal capable, increase your knowledge about a number of or all subjects. You could know everything if you like start and read a book A Hungry Lion, or A Dwindling Assortment of Animals. Kinds of book are a lot of. It means that, science e-book or encyclopedia or some others. So , how do you think about this reserve?

John Lockett:

Playing with family in the park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with friends is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try matter that really opposite from that. Just one activity that make you not sensation tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you are ride on and with addition associated with. Even you love A Hungry Lion, or A Dwindling Assortment of Animals, you can enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still wish to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh can happen its mind hangout folks. What? Still don't get it, oh come on its referred to as reading friends.

Maria Gray:

Do you have something that you prefer such as book? The guide lovers usually prefer to pick book like

comic, small story and the biggest one is novel. Now, why not hoping A Hungry Lion, or A Dwindling Assortment of Animals that give your fun preference will be satisfied by reading this book. Reading practice all over the world can be said as the opportunity for people to know world a great deal better than how they react towards the world. It can't be stated constantly that reading routine only for the geeky particular person but for all of you who wants to become success person. So , for all of you who want to start looking at as your good habit, it is possible to pick A Hungry Lion, or A Dwindling Assortment of Animals become your own starter.

Martha Bryant:

A lot of guide has printed but it is unique. You can get it by net on social media. You can choose the most effective book for you, science, comedian, novel, or whatever by simply searching from it. It is named of book A Hungry Lion, or A Dwindling Assortment of Animals. You'll be able to your knowledge by it. Without departing the printed book, it may add your knowledge and make you actually happier to read. It is most essential that, you must aware about guide. It can bring you from one destination for a other place.

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