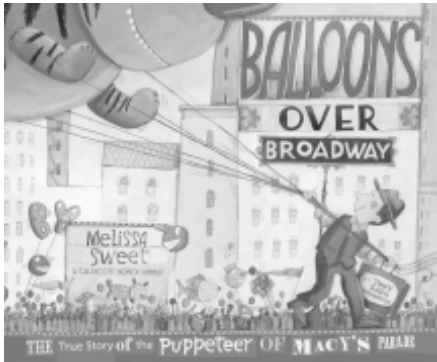


BALLOONS OVER BROADWAY

Educator's Guide

About the Book



Balloons Over Broadway: The True Story of the Puppeteer of the Macy's Day Parade

Written & Illustrated by Melissa Sweet
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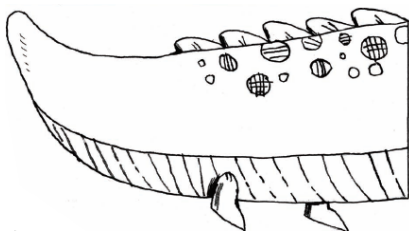
www.melissasweet.net

Every Thanksgiving morning for more than eighty years, mammoth-size balloons have risen to the skies to wobble and sway, sally and shimmy up and down the canyons of New York City. Just how did this beloved tradition come to Broadway? Who first invented these wondrous upside down marionettes? Meet Tony Sarg: the boy who loved to figure out how things moved—the boy who became the puppeteer of Macy's parade!

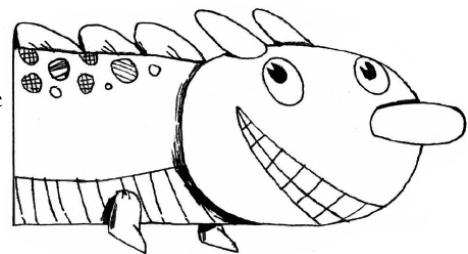
About the Creator

Like Tony Sarg, Melissa Sweet loved to figure out how to make things move as a child. (She even remembers taking apart her own marionettes to see how they worked!) Today, she still plays with simple materials to construct her brilliant mixed-media collage illustrations, for which she has won a Caldecott Honor for **A River of Words** by Jen Bryant, and two *New York Times* Best Illustrated citations. Ms. Sweet lives with her husband and dogs in the charming seaport town of Rockport, Maine. Visit her at www.melissasweet.net to find out how to make your own wondrous moving puppets.

Art Activities



The *Balloons Over Broadway* Activity Kit, available on the "Make Stuff" page of melissasweet.net, has reproducible puppet-making, hat-making, and other art activities.



Discussion Questions

1. Why did Tony Sarg call himself a marionette man when he was only six-years-old?
2. Describe how Tony impressed his dad so much that it got him out of chores? Do you think there is anything you could do to get out of chores?
3. Why were Tony's marionettes so popular? What do you think it would be like to see them perform?
4. What did Macy's first ask Tony to try? Then, what did they ask him to design next?
5. Why did Macy's want to create a new parade? What inspired Tony about this project? Why did he feel a connection?
6. What day did the first parade run? Why did they decide to continue it? Have you ever watched it?
7. What animals did Tony need to replace? Why?
8. List the challenges Tony needed to face to make his puppet idea work in the parade.
9. How did the Indonesian rod puppet inspire his design? What inspires you? What were these puppets made out of?
10. Why was this design of puppets still not working perfectly? What did he want them to be able to do?
11. How did Tony's understanding of marionettes help with the design? What do you understand like that?
12. What would help the balloons rise over the streets of New York? Why was this important to Tony (and to the kids?)
13. What questions still worried Tony about his new design?
14. Describe the parade with Tony's upside down marionettes. What do you think would've been the most exciting part? Would you like to see the parade yourself?
15. How are Melissa Sweet and Tony Sarg similar?

Vocabulary

As you read the story **Balloons Over Broadway** look for new words to sort into the chart below. Add the word into the column that best fits your understanding of it. Spectacular words from the book are listed on the next page!

NEW to Me:	HEARD this word before:	Can understand it while READING:	Could use it in my own sentence:

Vocabulary (cont.)

Fabulous words:

Marionette, rigged, pulleys, coop, impressed, chore, lifelike, department, mechanical, jostling, immigrants, carnivals, dazzling, spectacular, replace, blimps, sketches, Indonesian, wobbled, articulate, gesture, helium, deflated, tethering, magnificent, sallied, shimmied, sway, rigging

Writing

Write a journal response about the following: In the author's note Tony Sarg says, "I have never done a stroke of work in my life." What does he mean by this? How can that possibly be true? What could you do all day, every single day, and have it not feel like work?

Tony Sarg obviously inspired Melissa Sweet as an artist. Research the identities of people who have a job you admire. How could you learn more about them? What could you learn from them? Write ten interview questions you would ask this person. Create a learning log about everything you learned.

Math

Children can brainstorm a list of puppets they would most like to see in the parade. After they decide on their own favorite six figures, they survey at least twenty people which is their favorite. Students must report the data in at least three types of graphs: bar, line, and pie.

Science

Explore levers and pulleys with students. There are many excellent demonstrations at www.TeacherTube.com including one by Bill Nye.

Or, have students experiment with helium balloons, measuring exactly how much weight it takes to keep a balloon anchored to a desk. Repeat experiment for three days to see if the data changes.

NOTE: Tracie Vaughn Zimmer, a children's author and literacy specialist, created this guide. Visit her website to find hundreds of others for your classroom!