

# *Xander's Panda Party*

**AUTHOR:** Linda Sue Park

**ILLUSTRATOR:** Matt Phelan

**PUBLISHER:** Clarion Books, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

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**ART MEDIUM:** Ink and watercolor

**GENRE:** Fantasy

**LIFE SKILLS:** Friendship, Perseverance, Problem Solving, Organization, Effort

## **SYNOPSIS:**

Xander the Panda wants to have a party at the zoo. Since he is the only panda there, he plans to invite some friends. This becomes difficult as Xander begins to learn more about his animal friends at the zoo. After much effort, Xander receives a surprise present and puts on a real panda party with all of his zoo friends.

## **BOOKTALK:**

Have you ever planned a party? Did you have to make changes to your party plans? Follow Xander as he plans a panda party, only to find out that his guest list keeps getting larger and larger. Will he have the panda party that he wants so badly?

**AUTHOR:** Linda Sue Park

Ms. Park is an acclaimed writer of children's picture and chapter books. She began writing as a child, having her poetry published in magazines when she was only nine years old. The daughter of Korean parents who immigrated to Illinois, she attended Stanford University where she majored in English and took a job writing commercially.

Dissatisfied with this type of writing, she moved to Ireland where she met her husband. They then moved to London and Ms. Park taught English. Returning to the United States in 1990 for her husband's job, she continued teaching English and started writing her first book, *Seesaw Girl* in 1997. Among the many awards she received for her novel *A Single Shard* was the 2002 Newbery Award.

She currently lives in western New York with her husband. Her son lives nearby and her daughter lives in Brooklyn, New York. When her son was eight years old, he was very interested in pandas. Ms. Park and her son spent lots of time learning all about pandas.

## **Other books written by the author:**

*The Firekeeper's Son*

*Project Mulberry*

*Seesaw Girl*

*A Single Shard*

*Tap Dancing on the Roof: Sijo (Poems)*  
*When My Name Was Keoko*  
*Yum, Yuck*

**ILLUSTRATOR:** Matt Phelan

Matt Phelan has illustrated picture books, novels, and graphic novels for young readers. His first picture book, *Druthers*, was published in September 2014. This was the first book he both wrote and illustrated. He has three graphic novels that he has written and illustrated, *Bluffton*, *Around the World* and *The Storm in the Barn*. He has won several awards for his illustrations, including the 2010 Scott O’Dell Award for Historical Fiction. He’s been drawing pictures for a living since 2004.

**Other books illustrated by the illustrator:**

*Flora’s Very Windy Day*

*The Higher Power of Lucky* by Susan Patron

*Marilyn’s Monsters*

*The New Girl . . . and Me* by Jacqui Robbins

*Rosa Farm* by Liz Wu

*The Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs* by Betty Birney

**CHALLENGING WORDS :**

Xander (pronounced Zander)

dozy

affair

preparation

perspiration

vegetation

sensations

conversation

consternation

complication

creature

marsupials

fetcher

bamboo

slew

gnawed

fidged

vision

recreation

absurd

congregating

jubilant

beguiling

swithered  
Zhu Zi

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Why did the koala bear ask if he would be welcomed there?
2. What is Xander's problem in the story?
3. How does Xander solve his problem?
4. Who helped Xander with a suggestion when he thought his party plans might be failing?
5. If you could invite some animal friends to your party, what animals would you invite? Why?
6. When Xander invited all mammals to his party, why couldn't rhinoceros' bird come to the party?
7. Why do you think Xander was the only panda at the zoo?
8. What information do you know about real pandas?

### **ACTIVITIES WITH STANDARDS:**

#### **Language Arts:**

- With support, sort pictures of animals from the story into categories based on the new vocabulary words: mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians.

**K.RV.2.2:** Identify and sort pictures of objects into categories

#### **Mathematics:**

- Have students plan a party and make a numbered list of things they would need.

**MA.K.NS.2** Write whole numbers from 0 to 20 and recognize number words from 0 to 10. Represent a number of objects with a written numeral 0-20 (with 0 representing a count of no objects).

**MA.1.NS.3** Match the ordinal numbers first, second, third, etc., with an ordered set up to 10 items.

**MA.2.NS.4** Match the ordinal numbers first, second, third, etc., with an ordered set up to 30 items.

#### **Research:**

- Research an animal that is invited to the party. Based on this information, create a party menu that reflects the diet of that particular animal.

**2.W.5:** With support, conduct short research on a topic.

- Research the ways that reptiles and birds are closely related. Draw a picture of either the rhino's bird or the crocodile in order to explain this relationship to Xander.

**3.W.5:** With support, conduct short research on a topic.

**Science:**

- Identify the animals in the book according to fur/hide/feathers/etc. Fill out a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast two animals of choice.

**Standard 1: Physical Science** - Observe, manipulate, sort and generate questions about objects and their physical properties.

**Social Studies:**

- Take a virtual field trip online visiting popular U.S. zoos.

**STANDARD 3: Geography** - Students understand that maps and globes are different representations of the Earth's surface and begin to explore the physical and human geographic characteristics of their school neighborhood and community.

**RELATED INTERNET SITES:**

Video Book Trailer: <http://www.hmhbooks.com/pandaparty/>

Author Website: <http://www.lspark.com/>

Illustrator Website: <http://www.mattphelan.com/>

Panda Cam at the National Zoo in Washington, DC:  
<https://nationalzoo.si.edu/animals/webcams/giant-panda.cfm>

Panda Cam at the San Diego Zoo: <http://zoo.sandiegozoo.org/cams/panda-cam>

