



Frieda B. and the Zillabeast:
A Tale about the Importance of Putting Others First

Dear Parents and Caregivers:

I am headlong in love with the task of encouraging the unique story out of every child.

But I firmly believe it is equally important for a child to learn to value the stories of others.

Both efforts are noble and good. Neither is whole on its own.

For to encourage the pursuit of one's dreams *with no sense of responsibility to others* is no great encouragement at all: 1. To chase and achieve a dream without the love, respect and support of others throughout the journey is a lonely accomplishment; and 2. To not learn to recognize and support the needs and dreams of others... that's quite one-sided and lonely as well.

And so, I've written *Frieda B. and the Zillabeast* to help encourage a child to consider the value of others, and how that actually works in harmony with exploring one's own dreams and story.

In this story, Frieda is tested with the natural consequences of placing her own wants ahead of the needs of others. As the story unfolds, those consequences (as so often is the case) not only affect her, but those she loves as well. Thankfully, Frieda chooses to make things right in the end – providing two good lessons for the reader:

First, putting others first creates a harmony that can be accomplished no other way. Even if you mess it up and put yourself first, which sometimes happens, you can use your imagination to find a way to make things right. When those around you know that you respect and value them, it not only makes their world better, but yours too.

Secondly, when you put others first, you'll find you still have time to do the things you love. Not only that, you'll find you have a whole team of people who want to love and support you and your dreams, too. And that feels really, really good.

Frieda and Zilla and I hope this story tugs on the heartstrings of the children you love.

Renata Bowers

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“Dream your dreams big and believe they can be.”™

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Notes from the Author: Things to talk about with your child.

Look at the opening pages of the book. Does Zilla look like a mean dog? A scary dog? A big dog? Is he kind of cute? Lovable? Small? Then isn't the title of the book and the picture on the cover kind of confusing? He doesn't *seem* like a beast. Guess you'll have to read the story to find out more...

Frieda loves, loves, loves books. She's just been to the library and is trying to decide which book she should read first. Is it a good thing to love to read? Is it a good thing to have a hobby? Yes, exploring things we love to do helps us learn more about our own unique story, and what we're meant to be and do.

Frieda's mom calls her to come downstairs for breakfast. What's more important for Frieda to do: put her books first or her mom first? Why? Does Frieda make a good choice?

Zilla is scratching at the door; he smells bacon downstairs. What's more important for Frieda to do: put her books first or put Zilla first by opening the door for him? Why? Does Frieda make a good choice?

Frieda calls Zilla over to join her in reading the book she's chosen. Zilla has to choose to either continue scratching at the door (in hopes of being let downstairs for breakfast), or put his friend ahead of his hunger. What do you think is the right decision? Why? [Guide a child through considering that both choices would be good. It's important that we eat and take care of our bodies. It's also important to put our friends first.] How do you feel about Zilla choosing to go sit with Frieda?

Frieda gets so caught-up in the story they're reading that they both end up in the cottage with Snow White and the Seven Dwarves. Does Frieda look happy? The dwarves make Zilla a dwarf with the name Growly. Does Zilla look happy? Zilla chooses to simply leave. Why is this a good choice? And Frieda chooses to follow him. Why is this a good choice?

Frieda catches up with Zilla in a new story. What story is it? Who is the girl in the red cape? What does she have in her basket? Why do you think sweet little Zilla has become twelve times his size and is following the girl?

The basket tumbles. The girl shrieks in fear. Frieda comes running. The basket of food is right in front of Zilla. What do you think he's going to do?

Does Zilla eat the food? Why not? He had a choice to make, didn't he? Either to eat the food, or not. Did he make a good choice? Who did Zilla put first when he decided not to eat the food? Little Red Riding Hood is seen feeding Zilla with food out of her basket. Why? She was very scared of him just a few pages back. What has changed her mind? [This is a good way to point out that our decisions directly affect the way others treat us.]

Frieda finally realizes why Zilla turned into a Zillabeast. He was *hungry*. She apologizes to him (which is always a very important thing to do), then hugs him back down to his regular size and suggests they go home to start over again. [When we make bad decisions, it's good to remember that we can use our imagination to make them right again. This is what Frieda does on the remaining pages of the book.]

What's the first thing Frieda does once she and Zilla come downstairs to the kitchen? [She puts Zilla first by feeding him, before she herself eats breakfast.] Does Zilla look happy again?

Zilla isn't the only one that Frieda didn't put first. Who else? What two things does Frieda do to make things right with her mom? [1. She apologized; and 2. She said she'd make up for what she'd done by washing and drying all the dishes.] By doing this, did she put her mom first? How did her mom respond? [By giving her a kiss on the head. Discuss how making good choices and putting others first causes others to love us in return.]

On the last page of the story, what is Frieda doing? Does she look content? Why do you think she looks content? Does Zilla look content? Why? [This last illustration is a good way to point out how when we put others first, we still have time to do the things we love. And best of all, we can do those things while surrounded by the love of others.]