

***“Miss Nelson Has A Field Day”***  
***Study Guide***  
**April 13 – May 8, 2010**

**ABOUT THE PLAY:**

The meanest substitute teacher in the whole world, Ms. Viola Swamp, returns to Horace B. Smedley School in the sequel to *Miss Nelson is Missing*. This time, she returns to find the Smedley Tornados in the middle of a losing football season! The Tornados losing streak is all that the students can talk about, will Miss Swamp turn this from football *zeros* to football *heros*? She has her work cut out for her this time!

**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

**Harry G. Allard and James Marshall**

(<http://www.carolhurst.com/newsletters/42enewsletters.html>)

*Harry G. Allard* is the author of several hilarious books for children and currently lives in Oaxaca, Mexico.

**James Marshall** created dozens of exuberant and captivating books for children, including *The Stupids*, *Miss Nelson Is Missing!* and the ever popular *George and Martha* books. Before creating his canon of classic, hilarious children's books, James Marshall played the viola, studied French, and received a master's degree from Trinity College. He also doodled. It was the doodles, and the unforgettable characters that emerged from them, that led him to his life's work as one of the finest creators of children's books of the twentieth century.

*James Marshall* was born in San Antonio, Texas where his father worked for the railroad and had a dance band. James Marshall studied to play the viola and intended to have a musical career. Then his hand was injured during an airplane flight and his musical career was finished. He

met Harry Allard, with whom he later wrote many picture books, when he was a student at Trinity College. James Marshall taught Spanish in a Catholic school near Boston upon graduation from college.

***Interesting things to notice about Mr. Marshall's work:***

- Watch for the fat cats, which he puts in almost every book. Also notice the stacks of items, often about to fall over which are reminiscent of Dr. Seuss's books about the Cat in the Hat.
- Notice the things about Texas that he puts in the Miss Nelson series.
- James Marshall's work can be categorized as fairy tale renditions, series such as The Cut-ups, Miss Nelson, and George & Martha. Look at many books in one series and then try to decide what Marshall is trying to tell us.

***PRE-PERFORMANCE***

**THEMES TO LOOK FOR:**

Courage, Teamwork Kindness, Respect, Guilt, Good/ Bad Judgment  
Good Sportsmanship, Fairness, Trustworthiness, Integrity  
Hard Work, Honesty

**VOCABULARY WORDS**

(As listed in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <http://www.m-w> and wikipedia.com )

***Quarterback:*** an offensive back in football who usually lines up behind the center, calls the signals, and directs the offensive play of the team: one who directs and leads.

***Receiver:*** a member of the offensive team in football eligible to catch a forward pass

***Tackle:*** either of two offensive football players positioned on each side of the center and between guard and end (2): either of two football players positioned on the inside of a defensive line.

***Calypso:*** a style of music originating in the West Indies, marked by lively duple meter, and having lyrics that are often improvised and usually

satirize local personalities and events.

**Scrimmage:** the interplay between two football teams that begins with the snap of the ball and continues until the ball is dead  
**b:** practice play (as in football or basketball) between two squads.

**Fumble:** to lose hold of a football while handling or running with it.

**Touchdown:** the act of touching a football to the ground behind an opponent's goal; *specifically:* the act of scoring six points in American football by being lawfully in possession of the ball on, above, or behind an opponent's goal line when the ball is declared dead

**Interception:** to gain possession of (an opponent's pass) : to intercept a pass thrown by (an opponent)

**Cay:** a low island or reef of sand or coral.

**Fiesta:** A Spanish word for “Party”.

**Siesta:** A Spanish word for “Nap”.

**Wrath:** retributory punishment for an offense or a crime

**Johnny Unitas:** (May 7, 1933 – September 11, 2002), nicknamed The Golden Arm and often called Johnny U, was a professional American football player in the 1950s through the 1970s. He was the National Football League's most valuable player in 1959, 1964 and 1967.

**Jerry Rice:** (born October 13, 1962 in Crawford, Mississippi) is a former football wide receiver in the NFL. Rice is widely regarded as one of the greatest players in NFL history, consistently showing exceptional performance and strong work ethic on and off of the field.

**Melancholy:** depression of spirits

**Résumé:** a short account of one's career and qualifications prepared typically by an applicant for a position

**Resplendent:** shining brilliantly: characterized by a glowing splendor.

## **THEATRE VOCABULARY LIST**

(As listed in the Stage One educational tools website, [www.stageone.com](http://www.stageone.com))

**Acting:** pretending to be a character.

**Beginning, Middle, End:** Three parts of a story.

**Characters:** A person portrayed in a drama, novel or artistic piece.

**Conflict:** The struggle between the opposing forces, ideas or interests in a play.

**Courage:** The spirit that enables one to face danger and fear with confidence, resolution and bravery.

**Dialogue:** A conversation that takes place between two or more characters that expresses thoughts, feelings and actions.

**Facial Expression:** The manner in which an actor uses his or her face to portray an emotion.

**Improvisation:** Using a character to express thoughts and feeling or to act out a scenario without prior rehearsals.

**Movement:** How the actor uses his or her body to create a character.

**Plot/Storyline:** The action of the story, the development of the story, has a beginning, middle and end.

**Point of View/Perspective:** Feelings, opinions, and experiences that affect the reader's outlook.

**Setting:** Time and place where a story occurs.

**Teamwork:** Working together as a team.

**Three tools of an actor:** Voice, body and the imagination.

**Vocal Expression:** The way the actor uses his or her voice to express an emotion

### ***POST PERFORMANCE*** **DISCUSSION**

1. Can you think of a story where someone changes what he or she looks like in order to become another person? What about Clark Kent and Super Man or Miley Stewart and Hannah Montana? What makes them want to be someone else? What benefits do they receive? Who would you be and why?
2. Why do you think that the Tornadoes are so lazy in the beginning of the play? Are there times when you feel lazy to do something that you normally enjoy? Why?
3. Motivation can be a very powerful thing. Describe a time where you felt motivated to pursue a dream. Did someone else help you to feel motivated?

### **WRITING PROMPTS**

1. A critique is a written piece that discusses someone's opinion on someone else's *artistic* work. When you talk about what you thought of a movie with a friend you are making a verbal critique. Write a critique of the play *Miss Nelson is Missing*. Don't forget to mention the artistic integrity of the show (costumes, set or sound).
2. What makes someone else, a teacher perhaps, a good motivator when teaching lessons during the day? What qualities would make a teacher a poor motivator
3. There are many different careers in the world of Theatre. The play that you just saw employed a: Director, Music Director, Set Designer, Costume Designer, Technical Director, and Production Manager. What job would you like to try in the theatre?

## **ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES**

### **Internet Resources**

(filamentality.com)

#### **Professional Football**

All Around Football Site - A site with a a lot of information about football in general. Visit this site to find information about anything dealing with football. (**[www.football.com](http://www.football.com)**)

NFL News - This is USA Today's site. Visit their site to find out news about theNFL. (**<http://www.usatoday.com/sports/football/default.htm>**)

Pro Football Records and History - Visit this site to find information on NFL records and historical dates. This is the NFL Hall of Fame's website.

(**<http://www.profootballhof.com/>**)

Superbowl Information - This is the official Site of the Superbowl. Come here to find out information on the next Superbowl.

(**<http://www.nfl.com/superbowl>**)

The Official Site of the NFL - It's a site that has a lot of info about the NFL and the players. Come visit the official site of the NFL.

(**<http://www.nfl.com/>**)

#### **The History of Football**

Football Research - A site where you can research professional football.

Visit this site to find facts about the NFL.

(**<http://www.footballresearch.com/>**)

Football's History - A Site to find out information about the history of football. (**<http://www.nfl-history.com/>**)