

Expressive Reading – Ages 8-12

The Story of Yes and No. by Daniel Errico

Before words were words, a boy named Yes lived in a small village in a small kingdom. Yes was good at everything. He was the best, smartest and most liked person in his village.

Yes had a brother, and his name was No. No was jealous of his brother, because he was not much good at anything himself. Whenever the villagers asked No for help, he

refused because he didn't like people very much. Whenever someone asked Yes for a favor, he would gladly help, and he secretly didn't mind the fact that it irritated No when he did.

One day Yes and No's father, Okay went on a long journey and he left his two sons in charge of all the animals. Yes took good care of the great guck, and the icks, and the three-toed yock. [Keep in mind, my dear friend, that the guck, ick, and three-toed yock were very old animals, so you might know them by different names today.] No didn't want to be bothered with the boring tasks involved with taking care of the animals. So instead of helping his brother, No went down to the lake and threw rocks into the water.

A few days after his father left, Yes asked his brother to watch the three-toed yock while he went to find some food to eat. Instead of doing what Yes asked, No lay down, shut his eyes, and forgot about the yock.

It just so happened that the King had a personal road nearby, and he travelled on it often. So often, that when the three-toed yock wandered onto the road, the King's carriage was passing by and had to swerve to avoid hitting it. The King was thrown from the carriage and fell to the ground and hurt himself.

The King demanded to know why a three-toed yock had been allowed on his road and asked all the villagers for an explanation. Yes was always honest, so he told the King the entire story.

The King thought for a moment, and then he came up with an idea that he was quite happy with. Yes and No were to work in the castle as his personal assistants as punishment for what was later referred to as the worst three-toed yock and carriage accident in the Kingdom's history.

The King needed help with many things around the castle because a King cannot be bothered with the daily tasks involved with running a Kingdom. However, soon after his decision about the two brothers, the King realized that only Yes would be of any use to him as a servant. Whenever the King asked No to bring him anything, it would get thrown away, broken, or eaten, without exception. The King was quite sure that No was the worst servant in the entire world.

The brothers' most important task was to help pick the food for a grand party that the King was throwing later that night. Cooks from all over the Kingdom lined up at the castle's gate to offer the King their food for the party. Of course, the King could not go and grab the food himself, so he asked Yes and No to do it for him. The first cook came up the gate and yelled to the Gatekeeper, "I bring my delicious ugberry pie for the King's banquet!" The King heard this and thought that ugberry pie would be perfect for such an event (and he would love to eat the leftovers). He didn't want anything to happen to the ugberry pie, so he yelled "Yes!" and then asked him to go fetch it.

The next cook stepped up to the gate. "I offer the King grukie soup!" he said. The King didn't like grukie soup very much and he knew just how to get rid of it. "No!" he yelled and then sent No out to retrieve the soup. No dropped the soup before the King could even smell it.

This went on for hours. If the king liked a dish, he would yell "Yes!" and it would be included in the night's feast. If he did not, everyone would hear a loud "NO!" and the dish would be destroyed moments later by a servant with a very bad attitude. Pretty soon this started catching on around the Kingdom, for if a King does something, his loyal subjects are never far behind. If they didn't want a second scoop of potatoes, they would say "No." And if they liked what someone was offering, they would say, "Yes." And ever since that day in a small village in a small kingdom, Yes has meant Yes, and No has meant No.

This small kingdom also happens to be the birthplace of Yes and No's cousins, Please and Thanks, but that is another story for another time...