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# When Characters Come to Life

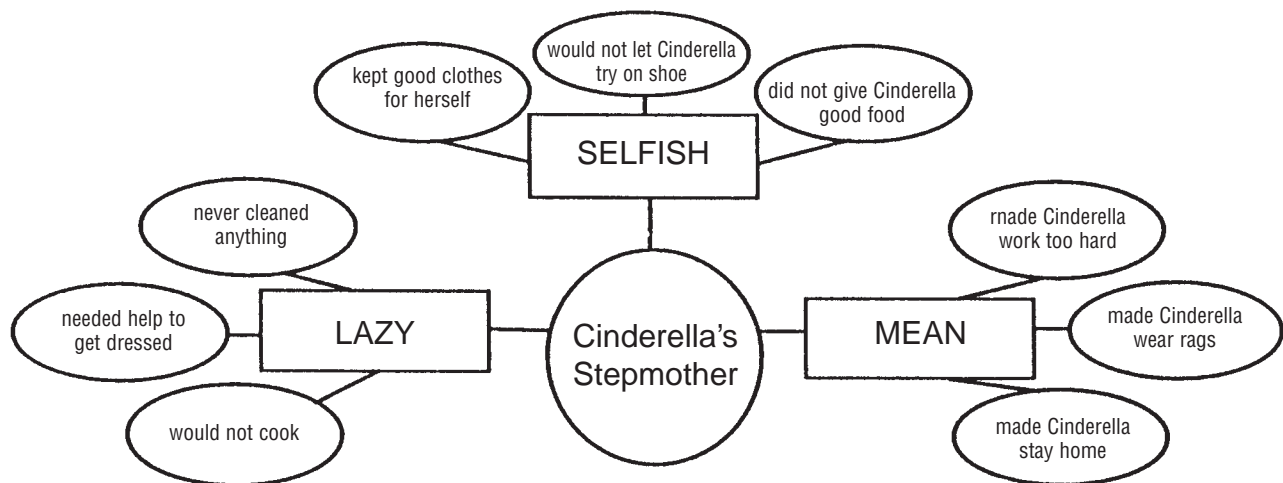
In this section Omri introduces more of his plastic toys to the magic of his cupboard. He can make any plastic toy come to life. A World War I medic, Tommy Atkins tends to Little Bear's injured leg. An old chief comes to life for a brief moment and Little Bear is able to borrow his cloak, headdress, and the chief's bow and arrows. The cupboard is a time machine which transports the figures molded in plastic out of a real time period and specific place, into the present.

Imagine that other characters have come to life in the cupboard and are now together in Omri's room. What do you think would happen? What might the characters say to each other? Who might become friends?

Working in a group of four, consider the personality traits and physical appearances of the following characters: Little Bear; the old Indian chief; Tommy; the knight. Have each member of your group choose one of the characters and develop it in such a way that the character becomes as real as possible. Use information given in the book as well as your own imagination.

First, develop the traits of a character you have chosen by making a character web. Use the following directions and the sample web below to help you better understand your character. Then make a web on a separate paper and fill in each section with the appropriate information about your chosen character.

- Write the name of the character (or draw a picture) in the center circle.
- Write specific character traits (proud, mean, lazy, selfish, considerate, etc.) for your character in the boxes.
- In the ovals radiating from the boxes, give examples of events from the story to support the trait.



Now that the characters have been developed by each group member, they will interact in a group play. Some possibilities for your play might be:

Tommy is injured during the war and Little Bear administers aid to him.

Little Bear saves the knight's life. The knight rewards him.

The old Indian chief does not die, but is too ill to remain as chief.

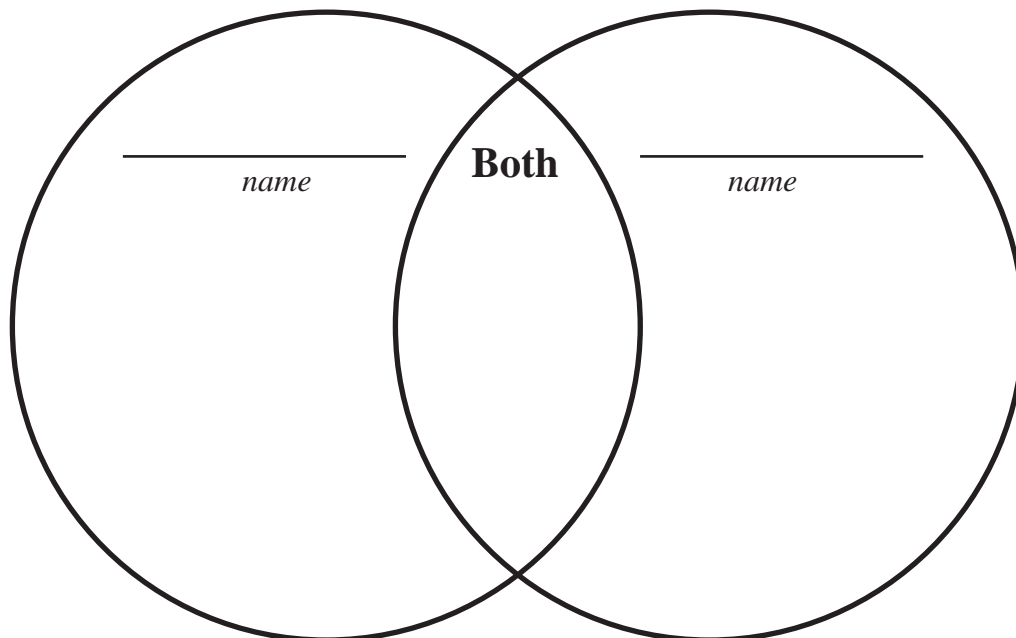
# Comparing Literature

Often stories have similar plots or themes. The characters may have common personalities or physical appearances. The events may follow a similar path. There is a story that is similar to *The Indian in the Cupboard*. In *The Castle in the Attic*, by Elizabeth Winthrop, Mrs. Phillips gives ten year old Lawrence a castle as a going away present. With the castle comes a tiny silver knight that comes to life by William's touch. William discovers that this knight is not a toy, but a true knight who had been transformed by an evil wizard's magic. The knight that William brings to life has a rich and full past, just as Omri's Little Bear does.

Read *The Castle in the Attic* independently, or as a class and make comparisons between the main characters and the story plot in the two novels. Think about the following questions as you make the comparisons:

- How do the living conditions and the personalities of Omri and William compare?
- Both boys have best friends. How does the involvement of the best friends compare in the two novels?
- Do Little Bear and Sir Simon come to life in similar ways?
- How are Little Bear and Sir Simon alike and different?
- How do the boys compare when it comes to keeping their magical worlds secret?
- How active a role does each boy play in the adventures of his miniature character?
- How does each story introduce the miniature characters?

The diagram below is called a Venn diagram. Use the ideas generated from the questions above to compare either Omri and William, or Little Bear and Sir Simon. In the outside section of the circles, write some of the ways in which the two characters are different. The inner section, where the circles overlap, is to be used for writing similarities between the characters.



When you have finished reading *The Indian in the Cupboard*, compare the adventures and problems in each novel and make a Venn diagram to show how they are alike and different.