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# Salt Lick Boom Town

by Kristin Cashore



illustrated by David Sheldon

Genre	Comprehension Skills and Strategy
Animal fantasy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Realism and Fantasy</li><li>• Theme</li><li>• Prior Knowledge</li></ul>

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Shelly the turtle liked to walk. She walked up hills. She walked over plains. She walked and walked all day. Shelly was a good walker.

One day, Shelly walked right into a salt lick. The salt was yummy on her tongue.

Shelly did something she had never done before. She stopped walking!



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Illustrations by David Sheldon

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The next day, Shelly was still at the salt lick. Before too long, Fuzzy the horse rode by on his bicycle. He stopped to see what Shelly was doing there.

“Yum,” said Fuzzy. “Just wait until I tell my family about this salt lick.”



The next day, Shelly, Fuzzy, and Fuzzy’s family were still at the salt lick.

Pinky the pig rolled past on her roller skates, but then she stopped. She could tell that something big was going on.

“This salt sure is tasty!” said Pinky. “Just wait until I tell my friends.”





Soon Shelly, Fuzzy, Pinky, and all their friends and relatives were at the salt lick. But that was only the beginning.

Tales of the salt lick spread. Animals came from all corners of the globe. Zebras, moose, penguins, and bears came. All the animals wanted to be at the salt lick!



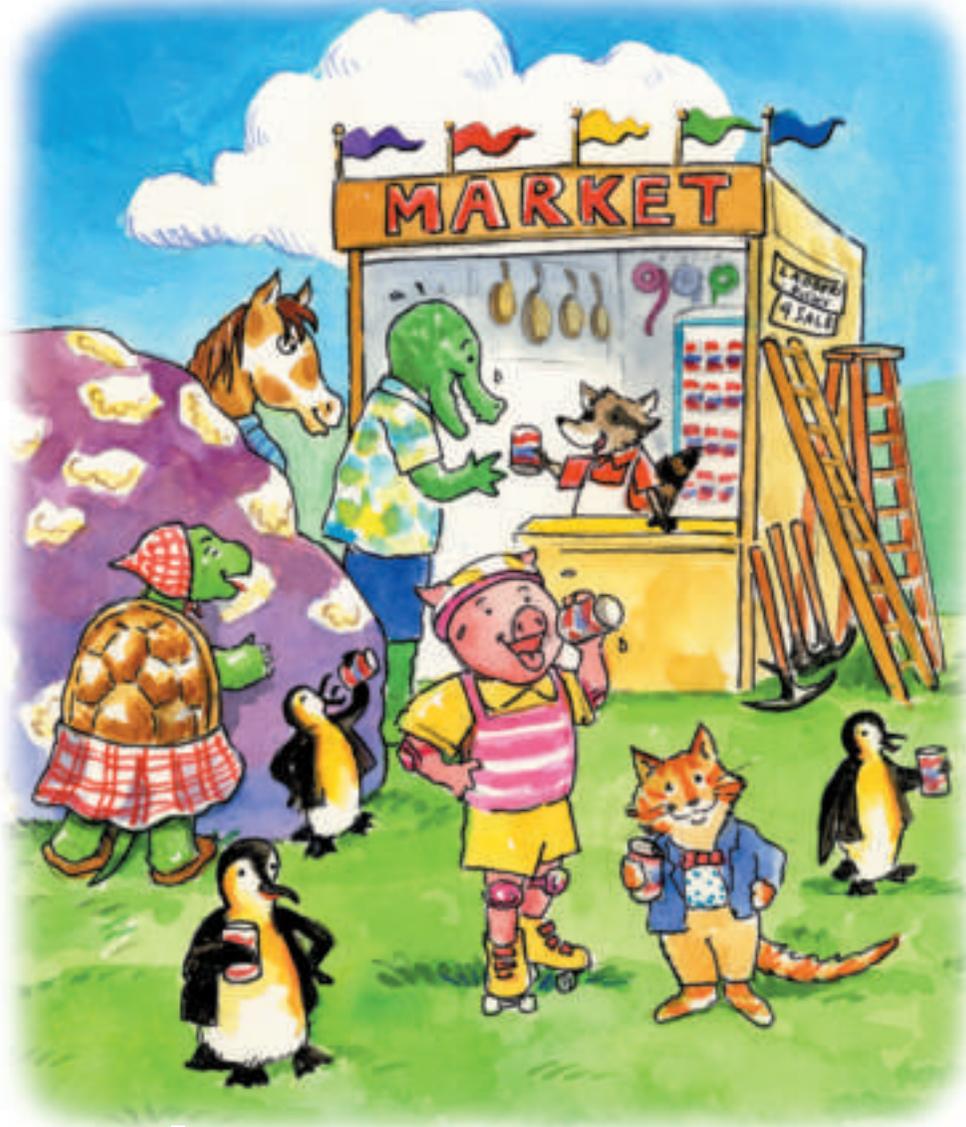
A boom town grew around the salt lick. Animals spent their days there. They brought their newspapers to the salt lick. They brought their babies. Kittens chased string and puppies fetched sticks near the salt lick. Some animals brought their knitting and their mending. The animals also brought coins.





A clever raccoon built a store beside the salt lick. She sold ribbons and skillets and ladders and picks.

She also sold cold drinks. The salt made the animals thirsty. Business was good, especially during hot spells!



Soon the salt lick had a book store, a movie house, and a hot dog stand. Animals built houses near the salt lick. They built a place to do their laundry. They built a school and a park.





Before too long, the salt lick had hotels and restaurants. It had a gas station and a swimming pool. It had a museum full of paintings. There was even a roller coaster that ran right over the salt lick!



“This is the life,” Fuzzy said.  
All the animals agreed.  
“Is the salt lick getting smaller?” Shelly asked.  
“Do you think it’s getting smaller?”  
But no one heard her. They were too busy licking the salt.





Then one day, a strange thing happened. A hippo put her nose to the rock and licked. But it didn't taste like salt. It tasted like rock!

A rabbit sniffed the rock. No salt!

A lizard licked the rock. Nothing!

The salt was gone! The animals had licked it all away!



“Well, I’ll be,” said Fuzzy. “I don’t know about you, Pinky, but I think I’ll move on. There must be another salt lick somewhere.”

“I’ll come with you,” said Pinky.

“Me too,” said the hippo.

“Me too,” said the rabbit, the lizard, the raccoon, and the other animals. But Shelly the turtle did not say, “Me too.”





One by one, the animals left. Their families and their friends left. The cat that owned the bookstore left. The crocodile that ran the hot dog stand left.

Before long, the town was empty. The salt lick had become a ghost town.



Shelly was the only animal left. “Where did everyone go?” she asked. But no one was there to answer.

“Well,” she said, “I guess I’ll start walking.” And so she did.





# What Makes a Community?

A community is a group of people living and working in the same area. Every community needs certain things. For example, a community needs doctors. It needs schools for the children. It needs stores to buy food and clothing. It needs people who will make laws for the community.

Every person in a community is important. Teachers, lawyers, shopkeepers, waiters, writers, builders, artists, doctors, police officers—everyone plays an important role! Communities work well when people work well together.



# Reader Response

1. What things in this book tell you that it is a fantasy?
2. What do you know about boom towns? What makes the town in this book a boom town?
3. On a chart like the one below, write at least five past-tense words from this book that end in *-ed*. Then write the base words. Put a check next to the words in which you drop the final e before adding *-ed*.

Past-tense Word	Base Word

4. How could the animals in this book have made their community last longer? What could they have done differently?

