

"Idongetit" Tales

Zohra Needs to Make a Pox Poster

"Ugh," moans Zohra, dropping her books on the table and her backpack on the ground.

"What's going on?"

"I have to write a report on some dude named Edward Jenner.... Actually, I have to make a poster about him for bio."

"Edward Jenner, is he related to the Kardashians?" asks Valerie.

"Huh?" says Zohra, "I don't know, but I'm pretty sure he's dead."

"I mean, like Kylie Jenner? Is he related to her?"

"OMG, Kyle Jenner's dad was an Olympic athlete in the '70s or something. I'm pretty sure she doesn't have to make a poster about an athlete for biology... right?" questions Bella, suddenly wondering.

"No, no, this guy wasn't an athlete, he was a scientist... like a really long time ago, like before they had electricity. Yeah like the '70s, yeah, that's probably about right."

"Ha!" laughs Mimi, "The '70s were a long time ago, but not THAT long. My parents were alive in the '70s and I'm pretty sure they had electricity. They didn't have real phones," she says, waving her iPhone around, "But they had electricity... I think." Mimi sighs, starting to doubt herself too.

"Ok, ok!" cries Zohra, "Look!" and she points to her notebook. There's an assignment sheet titled, "Make a poster advertising a famous scientist and what he or she discovered/invented. You will be assigned one of the following:

Jonas Salk

Louis Pasteur

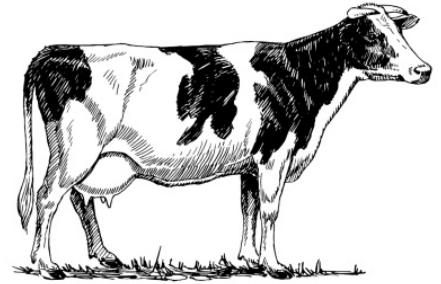
Maurice Hilleman

Edward Jenner...

The list goes on, but Zohra just points at the name Edward Jenner. "Apparently, HE invented something interesting..." and she put her head on the desk, covering up the entire assignment sheet.

Frank pipes in, "You can make a poster with a huge picture of cow udders on it!" He cackles and walks into another room to do his work.

"Your brother is so weird," Bella shakes her head, looking with sympathy at Mimi.



"Cow whats?" Zohra asks, looking bewildered.

"Utters," says Rayan, "I know what a cow utters. It utters, 'Mooooo!'" and Rayan *mooooos* so suddenly and so loudly that Valerie nearly jumps out of her seat.

"Dude!"

"Sorry! But utter was one of my vocab words last week, so I'm sure of it."

"UDDERS! He said UDDERS! Not utters. Udders with Ds," Mimi nearly screams at him.

"Yeah," says Valerie, "Cuz that makes it all make sense."

"Udders, like, where the milk comes from?" Bella asks, squishing up her face, clearly not meant to be a farmer.

"Look it up people," Frank calls from the other room, and they are pretty sure that he's cackling again.

"You know what... I think all of these people made some kind of vaccine..." Mimi muttered, shoving Zohra aside so that she can see her list. "Louis Pasteur had something to do with Rabies I think, and didn't Jonas Salk cure Polio?" Mimi

bites her lip trying to remember some book she read.

Meanwhile, Bella pulls a Chromebook open, "They did! Well, Jonas Salk didn't CURE polio, he found a vaccine for it."

"That's what our teacher kept talking about," moans Zohra, "Vaccine this, vaccine that, but Idongetit."

"Zohra! STOP!" they all cry together. But it's too late. The room swirls in a wild roil of colors and textures, and the next thing they know, they're standing ankle deep in straw.

"Ugh!" Zohra moans even louder, "It STINKS!"

"Cow. What you smell is definitely cow." Says Mimi, wrinkling her nose and looking under her feet for the more immediate source of the smell.

Bella looks around, "Um.... where do you think we are?"

Their faces are criss-crossed with narrow slices of light, coming through the old wooden walls of what seem to be a barn. A little way off, they see a man in a jacket and short pants and knee socks talking animatedly to another man in a similar outfit. He's pointing at a young woman, in a long flowered cotton dress, sitting on a small stool, and milking – yes, that's the source of the smell – a large black and white cow.

Zing, zing, zing, they can hear streams of milk zooming into a metal pail in a mesmerizing rhythm.

"You! You there, you strangers in strange clothes, don't you see it?"

The kids point to themselves, "Us?"

"Yes! Yes, come, here, now haven't you noticed that whenever everyone is taken with the pox, the young milkmaids are spared? Don't you see?" he gestures to the girl's smooth clear skin, "She's never had the pox!"

"Well, sir, says the other man, ignoring the kids, look at your skin, also free of the mark of the pox."

"But, my good sir," the man says, "I was variolated as a child –I have never had the smallpox either." He pauses for a moment, "I daresay, you have."

The man, self-consciously, touches his badly scarred face, "Well, yes, as a child, but this proves nothing. Look at the faces of these youngsters," and he points at Zohra, Mimi, Bella, and Valerie, their skin, bright and shiny, not a pox scar among them, "Are you saying these things young women are ALL milkmaids?"

"They must be!" exclaims Jenner. The girls, thinking that that's as reasonable as the possibility that they have been flown in from a future in which smallpox has been eradicated, just nod.

"See? See!" Jenner cries, and then he points to the cow's udders, which are marked with a few red spots. "These milkmaids, they invariably get coxpox. Look!" and he points at the milkmaid's hands, which, sure enough show a handful of red, pussy looking spots.

"Tomorrow," Jenner says proudly, "Sarah will make history."

Sarah stops milking and looks up at the short-pants man with some alarm.

Review Questions:

1. What do all of the people on Zohra's assignment sheet have in common?

2. Based on what you have read, what is Edward Jenner's job or profession?
 - a. Philosopher
 - b. Teacher
 - c. Scientist
 - d. Assistant

3. What is smallpox and what does it have to do with the girls' smooth skin?

4. What is Sarah's job?
 - a. She is a research assistant for Jenner.
 - b. She gathers the milk from cows for a farm or a dairy.
 - c. She is a nurse.
 - d. She is a seamstress who makes flowered dresses.

5. How do you think Smallpox and Cowpox are related?
 - a. They are two different names for the same disease.
 - b. They are both fictional diseases that Jenner is trying to make money from.
 - c. They are related diseases, but cowpox is much less deadly than smallpox.
 - d. Cowpox is a disease that Jenner made in a lab.

What do the following words mean *in the context of the passage*? (Words are underlined in the passage.)

6. Animatedly
 - a. With a lot of energy and excitement
 - b. With drawings
 - c. In a depressed way
 - d. In a secretive and sneaky manner

7. Mesmerizing
 - a. Helping people to remember things
 - b. Erasing people's memories
 - c. Capturing attention, almost like hypnosis
 - d. Making something hilariously funny

8. Variolated
 - a. Received a procedure similar to vaccination
 - b. Opened up a range of schools
 - c. Given a cow as a gift
 - d. Born to parents who never got any diseases

9. Eradicated
 - a. Invented
 - b. Radicalized
 - c. Turned to evil
 - d. Eliminated

10. Invariably
 - a. In a diverse way
 - b. Always
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. In many different colors