



Baby Donk

Family Conversation Guide

Queen Michelle and the Tiny Seeing Lens

by Matt Clement · Seven Little Donks, Book 2

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Ages 3–8

Big idea: Generosity

Home & classroom

Hello, grown-ups!

This little guide helps you talk with your child about *Queen Michelle and the Tiny Seeing Lens* and the big idea at its heart: **generosity**. Michelle works hard for everything she has, and then she chooses, all on her own, to share it with her new friends. There are no right or wrong answers. The best conversations start with a question and a little patience.

How to use it

- ♥ **Read the book first, just for fun.** Enjoy the rhymes, the sounds and the pictures.
- ♥ **Pick two or three questions**, not all of them. Little ones may only want one!
- ♥ **Pause and wonder together** with the “during reading” prompts on a second read.
- ♥ **Try an activity** this week to keep the story going.
- ♥ Every part works at a kitchen table, in a classroom or at the library.

About the book

In her den in Drearyland, just past Stinknose Bend, lives a hard-working little Donk named Michelle. She gathers threads from the bristle brush, weaves them into ribbons, and trades her ribbons for oats, a few small coins, a cup, a spoon and a blanket. Her den is cozy, but she is the only one in it.

One stormy night, a coin rolls across the floor and something rolls right back: a tiny disc of glass. Through it, Michelle sees warm hearts glowing on the soggy neighbors out in the rain. A chilly little voice tells her to keep to herself, but Michelle has a choice to make. What she chooses fills her den with friends, and sends her off to look for other lonely Donks.

Meet Michelle and her den friends



Queen
Michelle



Crumb



Corbin



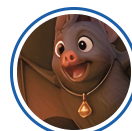
Lonnie



Rabble



Pokey



Achoo



Prickles

Tip: the book has a surprise or two. We've kept them out of this page, so it's safe to read before the story.



Before you read

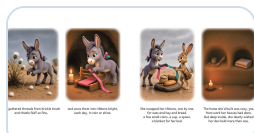
1. Look at the cover. What is Michelle wearing on her eye? What do you think it does?
2. What does it mean to work hard for something?
3. What makes a home feel cozy?
4. Have you ever felt lonely? What helped?

Read-aloud tips

- ♥ Read a little slower than feels natural and let the rhymes land.
- ♥ Go big on the Click-clack!, the CLANK!, the WHEEE! and the ACHOO!
- ♥ Let your child answer “Bless you!” every time.
- ♥ Pause when the chilly little voice speaks and ask, “What would you do?”

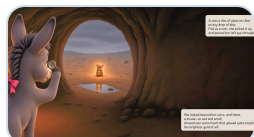
While you read: pause and wonder

Use these on a second read, when your child knows the story a little.



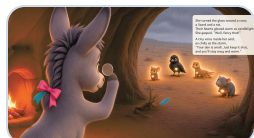
Hard work

Michelle gathered threads, wove ribbons and traded them, “each day, in rain or shine.” How did she get her cup, her spoon and her coins? What is something you worked hard for?



A disc of glass

Click-clack! Something rolled right back. What did Michelle see when she peered through the glass? What do you think a good heart looks like?



A chilly little voice

“Your den is small. Just keep it shut.” Have you ever heard a little voice like that inside you? What do you think Michelle will do?



Come in!

“A den is made to share!” How do you think the soggy friends felt when Michelle called them in? Count them as they come in, and say ACHOO! with the bat.



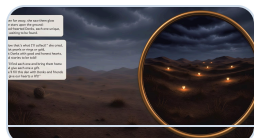
CLANK! WHEEE!

A cup lands on Pokey's head, and Rabble slides across the floor on a coin. Then, ding! Michelle has a thought. She asks each friend, “What do you need?” Why is it kind to ask first?



Prickles at the arch

The others backed away from the quills. What did Michelle see through her glass? Has someone ever seemed prickly at first, and turned out to be a good friend?



Far away

Michelle sees hearts glowing like stars, far out across Drearyland. Who do you think is out there? What would you pack for a trip to find them?



After you read

These questions talk about the whole story, including its surprises. Save them for after the last page.

FEELINGS

Lonely, then found

1. How do you think Michelle felt in her den all alone? How did she feel at the end?
2. Her shelf held fewer things, “but oh, her heart was full.” What does a full heart feel like?
3. Which part of the story was your favorite? Why?

WORK

Earned with her own hooves

1. Michelle gathered, wove and traded for everything she had. What did she make with her own hooves?
2. What is something you made or earned yourself? How did it feel?
3. Michelle took good care of her things. How do you take care of yours?

CHOICES

Sharing is a choice

1. Michelle's things were hers. Nobody asked her to share them. Why do you think she chose to?
2. “What’s mine can help you, too!” What do you have that could help a friend?
3. Her friends shared back: Crumb swept, Rabble brought twigs, and they all made a crown. How do friends share with each other?

CONNECTION

Seeing good hearts

1. The others backed away from Prickles. What did Michelle know about him?
2. Is there someone who might feel lonely at school or nearby? How could you help them feel welcome?
3. Michelle set off to find other lonely Donks. Who would you go looking for?

The big idea

“Work hard, and share with all your friends, / as they may share with you. / The greatest gifts are not just things, / but times together, too.”

What do you think that means? What is your favorite time together with your family or friends?



Michelle and her seven den friends

Michelle's den friends are neighbors who live in their own little homes nearby and love to drop in. Each one brings something to the den. Here's a question for each.



Queen Michelle the Donk

She weaves ribbons and works for everything she has. Through her seeing lens she sees the good heart in everyone. **What could you see if you looked for the good in someone today?**



Crumb the mouse

The first heart Michelle sees glowing. Michelle ties a coin roof onto his dripping nest, and he sweeps the den so neat. **How can you say thank you with a helping hand?**



Corbin the crow

A young crow who hops in from the rain. He gives a bright red stone, and swoops down with a surprise. **What is something special you could make for a friend?**



Lonnie the lizard

Lonnie skitters in from the storm and is welcomed like everyone else. **Can you find Lonnie in every picture?**



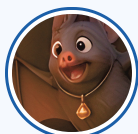
Rabble the rat

WHEEE! He slides across the floor on a coin, and it becomes his sled for seeds, grain and twigs for the fire. **Have you ever turned an accident into a good idea?**



Pokey the tortoise

"As slow as slow can get." A falling cup becomes his hat to keep the rain off his head. **What do you do when things go CLANK?**



Achoo the bat

"ACHOO!" "Bless you!" "Oh, thanks! I'm wet!" He rings a bell to cheer for Michelle. **How do you cheer for a friend?**



Prickles the porcupine

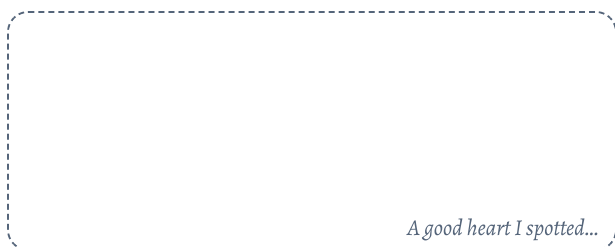
He shivered outside, and the others backed away from his quills. Michelle saw his heart was "warm as buttered toast." **Why shouldn't we judge a friend by a prickly coat?**



Things to do together

1 Make a seeing lens

Print the free “Make a Tiny Seeing Lens” page at BabyDonk.com, or draw a circle on card and cut out the middle. Hold it up to your left eye like Michelle, and go heart spotting: look for someone being kind, helpful or brave today.



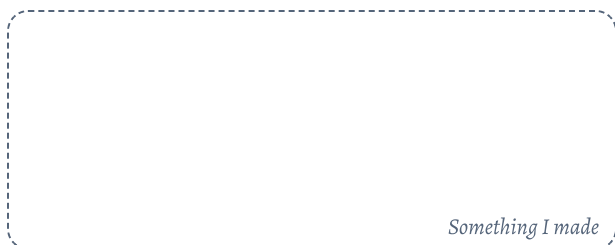
A good heart I spotted...

2 Find the 13 hidden treasures

Thirteen treasures are tucked into the pictures. Use the Second Map at the back of the book, or print the free treasure checklist at BabyDonk.com. Talk about it: 13 is called unlucky, but the Donks think it's the luckiest number. Should we judge anything (or anyone) by its reputation?

3 Made by me

Michelle wove her ribbons herself. Make something with your own hands this week: a drawing, a bracelet, cookies with a grown-up. Then you decide what to do with it: keep it, or share it with someone you choose.



Something I made

4 Room to spare

“Come in! There’s room to spare!” This week, notice someone who is on their own, at recess, at lunch or next door, and invite them to join in. At dinner, share how it felt.



Keep the adventure going at BabyDonk.com

Meet the Donks, print the Second Map, the treasure checklist and the seeing lens, and see who Michelle finds next. Real Donks need friends too: meet some of our favorite donkey rescues at BabyDonk.com/rescues. **We’re proud supporters of donkey rescues.**