What makes a good COUPLE?

You know who they are. Couples who just seem so right together that they radiate happiness when they walk down the street. Their compatibility might come from having similar personalities or interests, or even from respecting each other’s differences. In this selection, a character who is larger than life meets her match.

WEB IT In a small group, create an idea web. Fill it with examples of compatible couples in books and movies, as well as those you know from your own life. Then expand the web by including your ideas about what makes the good couples good.
Meet the Author

Mary Pope Osborne
born 1949

Female Heroes
As a child, Mary Pope Osborne says, she was “terrified of little things, like insects and worms and big dogs” and that “it was always a struggle to get over those fears.” Now she creates stories with the kind of fearless female heroes that she thinks would have made her “less of a frightened child.”

Background to the Tall Tale
An American Tradition
In trying to claim new lands for building and farming, American settlers faced great challenges. Workers tested their endurance through chopping lumber and building railroads. Pioneers faced wild animals and brutal weather, as well as other difficulties. One way of coping with the difficulties life threw their way was to tell tall tales.

Bigger and Better
The heroes and heroines of these tall tales were people like the settlers, but they were larger than life and able to handle any hardship that came along. Paul Bunyan and Pecos Bill are two fictional heroes that came out of this tradition. Others, like Davy Crockett, were real people whose adventures were told so many times that they became legendary.

Literary Analysis: Characteristics of Tall Tales
A tall tale is a humorously exaggerated story about impossible events. Like other folk tales, tall tales were originally passed along by being told out loud. Tall tales share these characteristics:

• They use exaggeration to make difficult situations seem incredible or funny.
• The hero or heroine is often bigger, stronger, and even louder than an ordinary person.
• The setting is usually the American frontier.

As you read, notice how these characteristics apply to “Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind.”

Reading Strategy: Visualize
Tall tales are often so exaggerated, funny, and action packed that you might be able to visualize, or picture, them as cartoons. To try this, look for descriptive details that appeal to your senses of touch, sound, and especially sight. Then picture the characters and action in your mind. Use a chart like the one shown to record descriptive words and phrases in “Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind.”

Vocabulary in Context
The words listed help add humor to the tall tale. In your Reader/Writer Notebook, write a sentence for each of the vocabulary words. Use a dictionary or the definitions in the following selection pages to help you.

Word List
forage
gigantic
oblige
varmint

Complete the activities in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

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One early spring day, when the leaves of the white oaks were about as big as a mouse’s ear, Davy Crockett set out alone through the forest to do some bear hunting. Suddenly it started raining real hard, and he felt obliged to stop for shelter under a tree. As he shook the rain out of his coonskin cap, he got sleepy, so he laid back into the crotch of the tree, and pretty soon he was snoring.

Davy slept so hard, he didn’t wake up until nearly sundown. And when he did, he discovered that somehow or another in all that sleeping his head had gotten stuck in the crotch of the tree, and he couldn’t get it out.

Well, Davy roared loud enough to make the tree lose all its little mouse-ear leaves. He twisted and turned and carried on for over an hour, but still that tree wouldn’t let go. Just as he was about to give himself up for a goner, he heard a girl say, “What’s the matter, stranger?”
Even from his awkward position, he could see that she was extraordinary—tall as a hickory sapling, with arms as big as a keelboat tiller’s.

“My head’s stuck, sweetie,” he said. “And if you help me get it free, I’ll give you a pretty little comb.”

“Don’t call me sweetie,” she said. “And don’t worry about giving me no pretty little comb, neither. I’ll free your old coconut, but just because I want to.”

Then this extraordinary girl did something that made Davy’s hair stand on end. She reached in a bag and took out a bunch of rattlesnakes. She tied all the wriggly critters together to make a long rope, and as she tied, she kept talking. “I’m not a shy little colt,” she said. “And I’m not a little singing nightingale, neither. I can tote a steamboat on my back, outscreeam a panther, and jump over my own shadow. I can double up crocodiles any day, and I like to wear a hornets’ nest for my Sunday bonnet.”

As the girl looped the ends of her snake rope to the top of the branch that was trapping Davy, she kept bragging: “I’m a streak of lightning set up edgeways and buttered with quicksilver. I can outgrin, outsnort, outrun, outlift, outsneeze, outsleep, and outlie any varmint from Maine to Louisiana. Furthermore, sweetie, I can blow out the moonlight and sing a wolf to sleep.” Then she pulled on the other end of the snake rope so hard, it seemed as if she might tear the world apart.

The right-hand fork of that big tree bent just about double. Then Davy slid his head out as easy as you please. For a minute he was so dizzy, he couldn’t tell up from down. But when he got everything going straight again, he took a good look at that girl. “What’s your name, ma’am?”

“Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind,” she said. “But if you mind your manners, you can call me Sally.”

From then on Davy Crockett was crazy in love with Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind. He asked everyone he knew about her, and everything he heard caused another one of Cupid’s arrows to jab him in the gizzard.

“Oh, I know Sally!” the preacher said. “She can dance a rock to pieces and ride a panther bareback!”

“Sally’s a good ole friend of mine,” the blacksmith said. “Once I seen her crack a walnut with her front teeth.”

“Sally’s so very special,” said the schoolmarm. “She likes to whip across the Salt River, using her apron for a sail and her left leg for a rudder!”

Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind had a reputation for being funny, too. Her best friend, Lucy, told Davy, “Sally can laugh the bark off a pine tree. She likes to whistle out one side of her mouth while she eats with the other side and grins with the middle!”
According to her friends, Sally could tame about anything in the world, too. They all told Davy about the time she was churning butter and heard something scratching outside. Suddenly the door swung open, and in walked the Great King Bear of the Mud Forest. He’d come to steal one of her smoked hams. Well, before the King Bear could say boo, Sally grabbed a warm dumpling from the pot and stuffed it in his mouth.

The dumpling tasted so good, the King Bear’s eyes winked with tears. But then he started to think that Sally might taste pretty good, too. So opening and closing his big old mouth, he backed her right into a corner.

Sally was plenty scared, with her knees a-knocking and her heart a-hammering. But just as the King Bear blew his hot breath in her face, she gathered the courage to say, “Would you like to dance?”
As everybody knows, no bear can resist an invitation to a square dance, so of course the old fellow forgot all about eating Sally and said, “Love to.”

Then he bowed real pretty, and the two got to kicking and whooping and swinging each other through the air, as Sally sang:

We are on our way to Baltimore,
With two behind, and two before:
Around, around, around we go,
Where oats, peas, beans, and barley grow!

And while she was singing, Sally tied a string from the bear’s ankle to her butter churn, so that all the time the old feller was kicking up his legs and dancing around the room, he was also churning her butter!

And folks loved to tell the story about Sally’s encounter with another stinky varmint—only this one was a human varmint. It seems that Mike Fink, the riverboat man, decided to scare the toenails off Sally because he was sick and tired of hearing Davy Crockett talk about how great she was.

One evening Mike crept into an old alligator skin and met Sally just as she was taking off to forage in the woods for berries. He spread open his...
gigantic mouth and made such a howl that he nearly scared himself to
death. But Sally paid no more attention to that fool than she would
have to a barking puppy dog.

However, when Mike put out his claws to embrace her, her anger rose
higher than a Mississippi flood. She threw a flash of eye lightning at him,
turning the dark to daylight. Then she pulled out a little toothpick and
with a single swing sent the alligator head flying fifty feet! And then to
finish him off good, she rolled up her sleeves and knocked Mike Fink
clear across the woods and into a muddy swamp.

When the fool came to, Davy Crockett was standing over him.
“What in the world happened to you, Mikey?” he asked.
“Well, I—I think I must-a been hit by some kind of wild alligator!”
Mike stammered, rubbing his sore head.

Davy smiled, knowing full well it was Sally Ann Thunder Ann
Whirlwind just finished giving Mike Fink the only punishment he’d
ever known.

That incident caused Cupid’s final arrow to jab Davy’s gizzard.
“Sally’s the whole steamboat,” he said, meaning she was something great.
The next day he put on his best raccoon hat and sallied forth to see her.

When he got within three miles of her cabin, he began to holler
her name. His voice was so loud, it whirled through the woods like
a hurricane.

Sally looked out and saw the wind a-blowing and the trees a-bending.
She heard her name a-thundering through the woods, and her heart
began to thump. By now she’d begun to feel that Davy Crockett was
the whole steamboat, too. So she put on her best hat—an eagle’s nest
with a wildcat’s tail for a feather—and ran outside.

Just as she stepped out the door, Davy Crockett burst from the woods
and jumped onto her porch as fast as a frog. “Sally, darlin’!” he cried.
“I think my heart is bustin’! Want to be my wife?”
“Oh, my stars and possum dogs, why not?” she said.

From that day on, Davy Crockett had a hard time acting tough around
Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind. His fightin’ and hollerin’ had no
more effect on her than dropping feathers on a barn floor. At least that’s
what she’d tell you. He might say something else.

1. sallied forth: set out.
Comprehension
1. **Recall** How does Davy Crockett meet Sally?
2. **Clarify** Why does Sally tie a string to the bear’s ankle?
3. **Summarize** What happens when Mike Fink tries to scare Sally?

Literary Analysis
4. **Identify Characteristics of Tall Tales** In what ways is Sally a typical tall-tale character? Cite examples from the story.
5. **Visualize** Look at the visualizing chart you made as you read. Choose the character and event you can picture most clearly and sketch him, her, or it. Explain how the sketch reflects the notes in your chart.
6. **Evaluate Characters** Use a diagram to track the events that help Davy discover how compatible he and Sally are. For each event, note what Davy discovers about Sally. Are the characters a good couple? Why?

7. **Draw Conclusions** What would make Sally such an appealing character to early American settlers? Explain your answer.

Extension and Challenge
8. **Creative Project: Drama** In groups of two or three, select one of Sally’s adventures and write it as a play. Act it out in front of the class. Pay close attention to the vivid and exaggerated details in each incident and find ways to include these details in your performance.

9. **SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION** Davy Crockett and Mike Fink are examples of real people whose adventures were turned into tall tales. Research one or two of their real-life accomplishments. Do their real roles in the American West resemble the roles they play in “Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind”?

**What makes a good COUPLE?**
Think about couples you know or couples who are famous. Who do you think is the ideal couple?
Vocabulary in Context

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
Choose the word from the list that best fits the context of each sentence.

1. We saw an ugly-looking _____ digging around in our yard.
2. It seemed to be trying to _____ for acorns.
3. Its tail was extremely long, and its snout was _____ too.
4. Please _____ him and laugh at his jokes.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING

Write a paragraph in which you describe three things that Sally Ann can do because of her physical strength. Use at least one Academic Vocabulary word in your response.

VOCABULARY STRATEGY: DICTIONARY ENTRIES

Dictionaries often list several definitions for a word, including the part of speech that goes with each definition. The part of speech helps you use the word correctly by showing how it functions in a sentence. Part-of-speech labels are abbreviated and italicized in a dictionary entry. Here are the part-of-speech abbreviations that are commonly used in a dictionary, and a sample entry showing their placement in a dictionary entry.

\[
\text{n. = noun} \quad \text{adj. = adjective} \quad \text{prep. = preposition} \\
\text{pron. = pronoun} \quad \text{adv. = adverb} \quad \text{interj. = interjection} \\
\text{v. = verb} \quad \text{conj. = conjunction}
\]

\[\text{forage} \quad \text{(fôr’ ij, for’-)} \quad \text{n.} \quad \text{1. Food for domestic animals; fodder. \ 2. The act of searching for food or provisions. \ v. -aged, -aging, -ages. \ 1. To wander in search of food or provisions. \ 2. To make a raid, as for food: soldiers foraging near an abandoned farm.}\]

PRACTICE Each word listed is followed by a part of speech in parentheses. Look up each word in a dictionary and write a sentence that shows how it would be used as that part of speech.

1. offer (noun)
2. official (noun)
3. shelter (verb)
4. streak (verb)
5. muddy (adjective)
6. daily (adverb)