

A Study Guide for the
School-Time Performance



Based on the book *Me...Jane* by Patrick McDonnell
Adapted and written by Andy Mitton, Patrick McDonnell, and Aaron Posner
Music and lyrics by Andy Mitton Choreographed by Christopher d'Amboise
Directed by Aaron Posner

FRIDAY, MAY 3, 2019 AT 10AM • 60 MINUTES
MERRILL AUDITORIUM, PORTLAND, MAINE

Portland Ovation has brought a dynamic season of exceptional performing artists to Portland, Maine, including classical music, jazz, opera, dance, theater, and Broadway since 1931. Portland Ovation believes that cultural enrichment should be accessible to all and provides quality live performances and education experiences. Ovation collaborates with other arts organizations, nonprofits, education systems and the business sector to promote cultural enrichment and lifelong learning and celebrates the power and virtuosity of the performing arts.

In addition to live performances, we bring the exhilaration of the performing arts out into our community with season-long educational and outreach programs called Ovation Offstage.

Ovation Offstage creates resonating moments when artists and audiences connect. Whether it's an unexpected "art happening," a workshop or masterclass with a visiting artist, a lively community discussion, or a pre-performance lecture, Portland Ovation invites you to join us as we explore together the relevance and connection of the performing arts to our lives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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"Me... Jane" STUDY GUIDE

This guide includes information about "AIR PLAY" and its broader cultural and literary connections; suggested activities designed to engage and sustain your students' learning before, during, and after the show; as well as a number of local resources to help you extend your learning. Please note connections to Common Core State Standards.

Use this guide to help your students anticipate, investigate, and reflect upon your live performance experience.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:

- Reading Literature
- Reading Informational Texts
- Reading History/ Social Studies Subjects
- Writing
- Speaking & Listening
- Visual & Performing Arts
- Science



THEATER ETIQUETTE

Audience members play a special and important role in the performance. The performers are very aware of the audience while they perform and each performance calls for different audience responses. Lively bands, musicians and dancers may desire audience members to clap and move to the beat. Other performers require silent focus on the stage and will want an audience to applaud only when they have completed a portion of their performance. As you enjoy the show, think about being a part of the performance.

- What are the differences between attending a live performance and going to a movie or watching television?
- What are some different types of live performances? Name a few as a class.
- What kind of responses might an audience give in each circumstance?
- What are the different cues that a performer will give you so that you know how to respond? For example, might they bow or pause for applause?

Also, remember that a theater is designed to magnify sound and even the smallest whispers or paper rustling can be heard throughout the auditorium. You are part of a community of audience members and you all work together to create your theater experience.

LOCAL CONNECTION

Maine Wildlife Park

- <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/wildlife-park/index.html>

Hardy Girls Healthy Women

- <http://hghw.org/>

Maine Science Festival

- <https://www.mainsciencefestival.org/>

Maine Animal Coalition

- <https://www.maineanimalcoalition.org/>

What Makes a Dream Come True



A Show About Big Dreams

Get ready to go on a big adventure thanks to the even BIGGER dreams of a little girl in the new musical *Me...Jane*. This story has it all—actors, sets, lights, music, lots of singing and dancing, and the sweetest and funniest plush toy chimpanzee you'll ever meet. And one more thing makes the story extra special—it's about a real person named Jane Goodall. There'll be more on Jane later, but for now, let's learn about the story.

What Happens in the Show

It's the 1940s and you're in a small town in England. There, you'll bump into eight-year-old Jane—but to find her you might have to look up in a tree or in the woods. That's because this budding young scientist is always outside taking notes and making drawings in her notebook. She also loves solving animal mysteries and dreaming about going all the way across the world to Africa to learn more about animals. The problem? Except for her Mum and animal friends, people around her think her idea is impossible. But Jane keeps trying to make her dreams come true, and finally learns something amazing from a very special friend.

Same Language, Sounds Different

If you listen carefully like Jane does, you'll notice that the actors speak a little differently than most people in the United States. That's the way people speak in Jane's home country of England (in the United

Kingdom), and that's called an accent. You might also hear a few scientific names for animals. Actually, every kind of animal has its own scientific name, which often comes from an old language called Latin. These important names tell scientists all over the world what group the animal belongs to and what type it is. You might already know a few Latin names without even realizing it, like *Tyrannosaurus rex* (one of the largest dinosaurs).

The Characters

Mum, Jane's mother

Young Jane

Jubilee, Jane's beloved plush toy chimpanzee, whose name is another word for "celebration" in English

Mr. and Mrs. Crouch, Jane's neighbors

Chickens

Hen, a stressed-out chicken

Mr. Bixby, Jane's neighbor

Squirrels

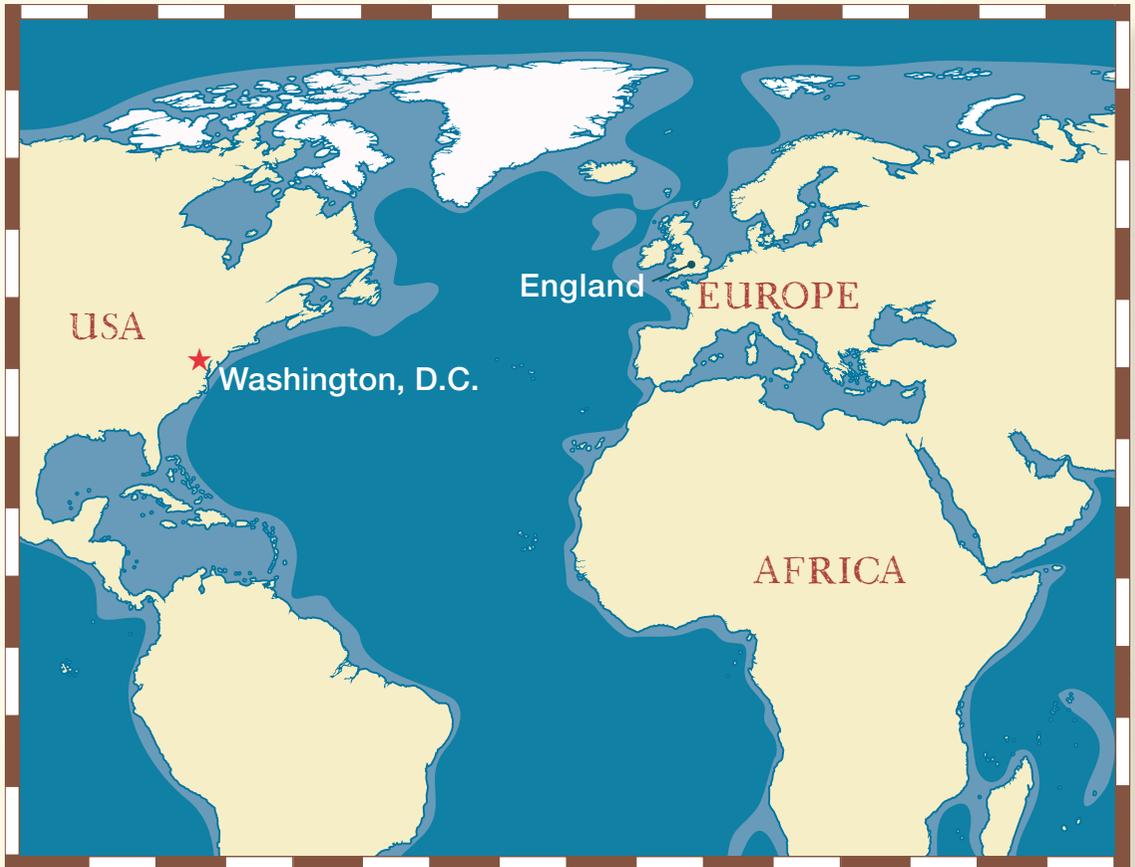
Rusty, the charming family dog

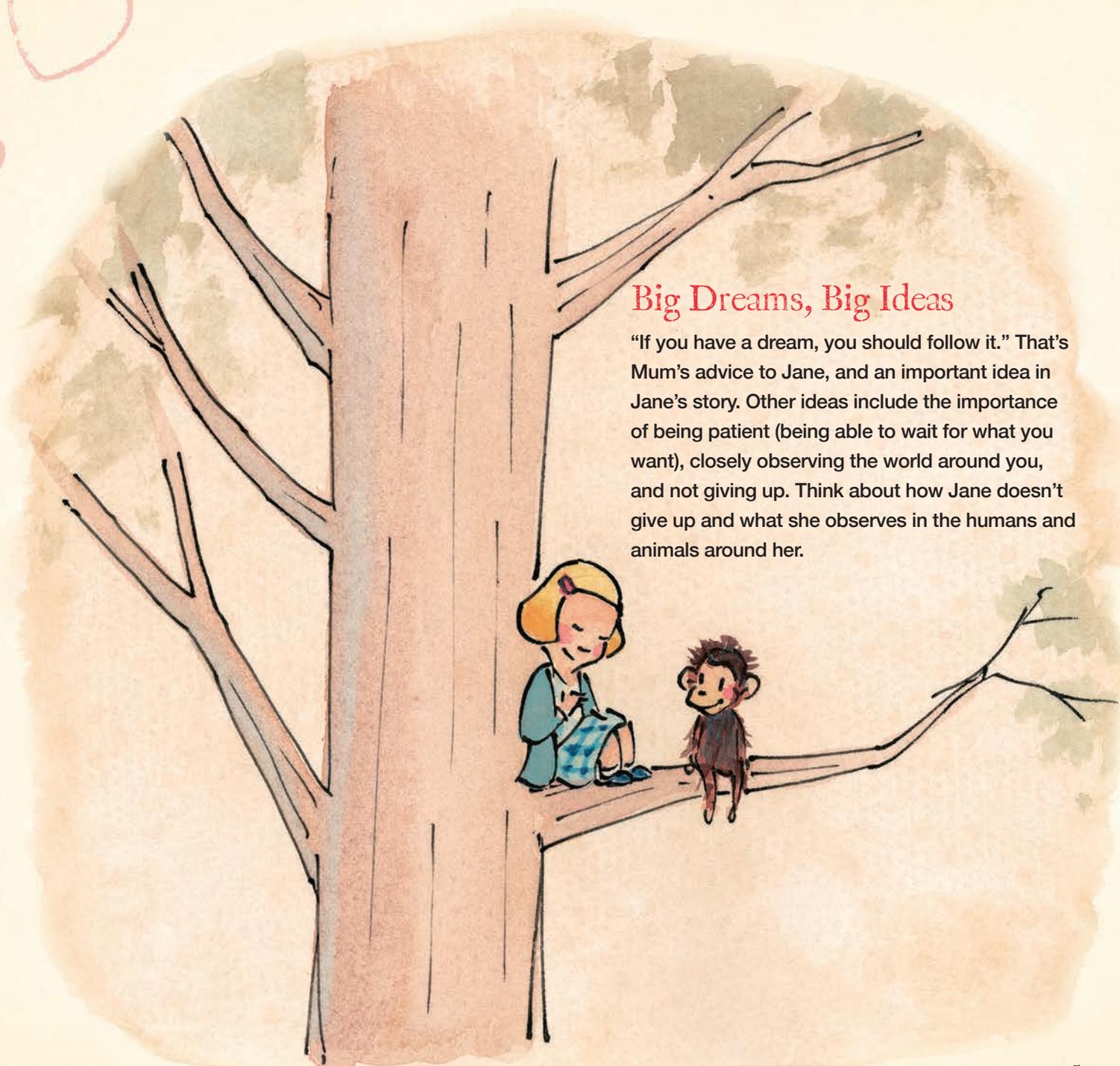
Mr. Abercrombie, Jane's teacher

Naysayers, people who try to discourage Jane

Dreaming of Africa

Inspired by books and her love of animals, Jane wants to go to Africa to learn all about animals. It's a big place (just see the map!) full of some of the most interesting types of animals in the world; think gorillas, crocodiles, birds, chimpanzees, lions, cheetahs, elephants, giraffes, rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses, and more. And if she were in Africa, Jane could see how these animals live and behave in their natural environment.





Big Dreams, Big Ideas

“If you have a dream, you should follow it.” That’s Mum’s advice to Jane, and an important idea in Jane’s story. Other ideas include the importance of being patient (being able to wait for what you want), closely observing the world around you, and not giving up. Think about how Jane doesn’t give up and what she observes in the humans and animals around her.

Meet the Real (and Grownup) Jane

She did it! When she was just 26 years old, Jane Goodall went to East Africa to study chimpanzees in the wild. That experience changed her life—and also changed the world of primatology (pronounced prahy-muh-TOL-uh-jee), the study of apes, monkeys, and humans.



Using patience and excellent observation skills, Jane made groundbreaking discoveries, including that chimpanzees use tools and form families. And by continuing her work at a time when women were discouraged from studying science, she inspired women (and men) to follow in her scientific footsteps. Today, she still travels the globe 300 days a year teaching people about ways to protect the world's environment.



Jane Goodall meeting an infant chimpanzee on her first trip to what is now Tanzania, Africa. Photo by Hugo Van Lawick/National Geographic Creative



Jane's Inspirations

What inspired young Jane?

- Her mother encouraged her curiosity about animals.
- Rusty, the community dog, taught her that animals had personalities, emotions, and high intelligence.
- Story books about characters named Dr. Dolittle (a veterinarian who could speak with animals and went to Africa) and Tarzan (an English boy orphaned in Africa and raised by apes) made Jane want to go to Africa to study animals. By the way, "Me...Jane" comes from the Tarzan story, when American "Jane" Porter tries to teach Tarzan her name.



The real Jubilee with very young Jane.

The real-life Rusty and Jane when she was about 17 years old.



Behind the Words and Music



Author and playwright Patrick McDonnell with his dog Earl.

The Idea for Telling Jane's Story

Like Jane Goodall, illustrator and writer Patrick McDonnell loves animals. Years ago, he became friends with Jane, and sometimes even mentioned her in his comic strip, MUTTS (like the one below). Her story inspired him, and he decided to tell it through words and drawings in the children's book *Me...Jane*.



From Story to Stage

Patrick McDonnell, along with composer Andy Mitton and writer/director Aaron Posner, thought the book *Me...Jane* could be told as a musical. But they needed to change it to be told on stage with live performers and music. They also wanted to add more about Jane's real-life story for audiences to enjoy.



MUTTS © 2017 Patrick McDonnell



Saying It in Song

The songs in *Me...Jane* tell you a lot about the characters and what's happening in the story. They can also help you understand what characters are feeling, such as love, determination, worry, discouragement, and wonder. Some of the songs include:

“Animals, Animals, Animals!”

Jane shows just how much she knows about animals in this song. After the performance, try to remember some of the interesting and surprising facts Jane shares.

“Be Still”

When Jane and Jubilee meet the Hen, Jane remembers Mum's advice and figures out a way to help.

“Trust Your Instincts”

Jane's best animal friend has some important lessons for her—what are they?



The Musical's Playlist

After the performance, think about the ways all the songs help tell the story.

“Jane and Jubilee”

“Animals Intro

“Animals, Animals, Animals!”

“Far Distant Shore”

“What Are You Going to Do Today?”

“The Hen House”

“Be a Chicken”

“Be Still”

“The First Naysayer”

“Spring Feast”

“The Nut Caper”

“Spring Feast Outro”

“The Second Naysayer”

“Rusty”

“Just a Dog”

“Trust Your Instincts”

“Just Like You”

“The Way to Africa”

“A Reason for Hope”

Bringing Jane's World to Life

Meet the Creative Team

It takes a whole team of people to put Jane's world, imagination, and adventures together on stage:

The **playwrights** adapted (changed) a short picture book so it could be performed on stage with actors speaking and singing, and with lights, sets, objects, costumes, and music.

The **composer** wrote all the music and words that the performers sing in a way that helps tell the story.

The **set designer** decided how to create the world of the book and the story using real objects on stage.

The **choreographer** planned all the dance movements for the songs as well as how the characters move throughout the performance. One fun part of choreographing the show was creating movements for the actors playing Rusty, chickens, and squirrels so you can easily imagine them as animals.

The **costume designer** chose what all the performers wear, including clothes to help you imagine that they lived in 1940s England.

Animals on Stage

It would be pretty funny to have real animals on stage. But you know what? It's way more fun to have people—actors—pretend to be Rusty the dog, the squirrels, and the chickens. Unlike animals, actors can talk, dance, and sing. Watch the way they become animals by changing their voices and movements and wearing simple costume parts, like noses and hats.





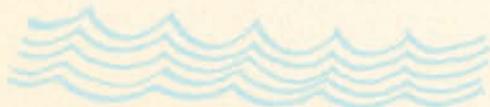
Enter Jane's Magical World

Setting the Stage

Before set designers build anything that appears on stage, they draw their ideas on paper or on a computer, or they create miniature models. Here's a sneak peek at one of the first models for *Me...Jane*. This set shows the neighborhood and the hen house, where Jane conducts an animal research project. Make sure to look for the trees on stage. Also, notice the tan, brown, and green colors like you would find in nature and the woods. During the performance, compare the actual set to this model to see whether it changed, and if so, how.



Set design by Paige Hathaway



Dress Up

If you were the show's costume designer and had to use ordinary clothes for Rusty the dog and the Hen, what items would you choose? Make a list or draw your ideas and share them with your friends and family. During the performance, watch to see how the costume designer dressed Rusty and Hen.

Design a Set Piece

On a piece of paper, draw and cut out something to go with this set design for *Me...Jane*. It could be some hay for the chicken house, more trees, or something else that matches the story and the scene.

Double Fun

Some of the actors play three or even four different characters in the story. Sound tricky? With the help of a few simple costume changes and by changing the way they move and talk, actors make this look so easy you might not even notice. When actors play more than one role, it's called doubling.



Your Part in Jane's Amazing Adventure

Watch for...

- how Jane and Jubilee speak with each other.
- photographs and drawings that help you learn more about Jane and Africa.
- a very special person who appears at the end of the show.
- large screen projections and how they help tell Jane's story.

Listen for...

- the different sounds of nature and animals throughout the show.
- many different facts about animals.
- how the music sounds like music you hear today even though the story happens in the 1940s.



Think About...

What is your dream for when you grow up? What can you do today to make it happen when you're a grownup?

Be...Jane

One of Jane's skills is being a good observer—watching, making notes, and learning. Try it—watch a pet or animal in your neighborhood (but never get close to any animal you don't know). Notice how it moves and acts. Make notes and drawings and share these with a friend. What surprised you the most?

Make a Difference...

Jane Goodall says, “The most important thing I’ve learned in all my years is that everyone counts. Every person, every animal, every living creature ... Everyone can make a difference. The only question is: What kind of difference do you want to make?” How would you answer Jane?



Photo by David Holloway

Discuss your ideas with family and friends or write Dr. Goodall a letter. If you would like to learn more about Jane or contact her, visit the Jane Goodall Institute at www.janegoodall.org.

See...Jane

When Jane first went to the African jungle to study chimpanzees, all she had with her was her curiosity, determination, the support from famous scientist Louis Leakey, and grant money from the National Geographic Society to pay for her research. Can you imagine that?

Thanks to recently discovered film footage, you can actually share in her experience in the brand new National Geographic movie, *Jane*. By the way, throughout her life Jane has continued working with the National Geographic Society and became an Explorer-in-Residence (that’s a big deal). One of the many ways she’s made a difference is by founding the program Roots & Shoots to encourage young people (like YOU) and people of all ages to make the world a better place. Go to rootsandshoots.org and decide what kind of difference you want to make.

EXPLORE MORE!

Go to KC Connections on ARTSEGE

artsedge.kennedy-center.org/students/kc-connections

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ARTSEGE

Student Response Form

Please guide your students through this form. Students may write and/or draw pictures to respond to the performance.

PERFORMANCE: "Me... Jane: The Dreams & Adventures of Young Jane Goodall" • MAY 2019

SCHOOL NAME: _____

STUDENT NAME: _____ **GRADE:** _____

VISUAL RESPONSE:

Draw your favorite moment from "Me... Jane" below.

What did you really like about the performance?

What would you tell other kids about the performance?

Please print your name below to give Portland Ovarions permission to use your comments in future promotions.

Print Your Name Here

MAIL RESPONSES TO:
Ovarions Offstage
50 Monument Sq, 2nd Fl.
Portland, ME, 04101

Teacher Response Forms

Please take a few moments to fill out and return this form after the performance. Your response to our School-Time Performance Series helps us plan for the future. Include any comments from class discussion as well!

PERFORMANCE: “Me... Jane: The Dreams & Adventures of Young Jane Goodall” • MAY 2019

SCHOOL NAME: _____

YOUR NAME: _____ **GRADE(S) OF STUDENTS:** _____

What made this a valuable experience for your students? (If it wasn't, why not, what can we do better?)

How did this live performance connect to or enhance your curriculum?

If you used this guide, how did it help you prepare for and reflect upon the performance with your students? Why or why not? OR if you knew about the guide but opted not to use it, tell us why you chose not to use it. (We want to design the guides so that they are helpful tools for teachers—your feedback is key!)

Tell us about planning the trip:

How did you hear about this School-Time Performance? How was the process when arranging transportation?

Teacher Response Forms

Please take a few moments to fill out and return this form after the performance. Your response to our School-Time Performance Series helps us plan for the future. Include any comments from class discussion as well!

Tell us about the trip itself: How was the arrival and dismissal process? Were all of your specified seating needs met?

What types of performances would you like to see in the future? (topics/themes, genres, specific artists, etc.)?

A number of generous individuals and organizations make it possible for us to offer these School-Time Performances at extremely discounted rates. Is there anything you'd like them to know in terms of your experience or its impact on your class?

Please sign below if Portland Ovarions has permission to use any of your comments in future promotions.

Sign here

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