

# My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother

by Patricia Polacco

Painted illustrations, wise advice from a grandmother and amusing battles between a younger sister and her rotten brother, are all charmingly portrayed in this timeless tale of "anything you can do, I can do better."



## Read

### Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *Have you ever played a trick on someone? How did it make them feel?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder what the boy ate that made him spit like that?

### During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

### Rare Words in *My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother*

- ordinary: common, everyday kind of thing
- magical: produced by magic, wonderful
- challenged: with particular impairment
- rotten: decayed, affected by rot or decay
- sneered: expression of scorn or hostility in which your upper lip may be raised
- inspired: extraordinarily good, creative and brilliant
- cooed: make sound of a pigeon
- rhubarb: plant with edible stalks, pink and cooked as fruit
- sourest: sharp-tasting, having a tart, acidic taste
- puckers: gather into wrinkles around the lips
- consoled: to provide a source of comfort to somebody who is distressed or disappointed
- weasel: small animal with long body, short legs and small eyes
- carnival: public celebration, festive occasion with costumes, music and dancing
- incredible: beyond belief, amazing
- carousel: same as a merry-go-round
- drifted: be carried along, fall asleep slowly

## After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- Why didn't this girl like her brother?
- How did he act when his grandmother was around?
- What were some things he could do better than his sister?
- What did she challenge her brother to do?
- What wish did she make when she saw a falling star?
- What happened at the carnival?
- Who carried her to the house?
- Why did the family sleep outside?
- How did she feel about her brother at the end of the story?



**Do**

## Taste Testing

You will need: bread, rhubarb jam/jelly and other fruit flavored jam/jelly

After reading the story, show the children pictures of a rhubarb plant. Talk about the characteristics of the plant and what it is used for. Hand out bread slices to each child and put some rhubarb jelly or jam on it. Have the children sample the fruit and describe what it tastes like.

Extra activity

If desired, compare the fruit with others the children might like. For example, grape, strawberry, cherry or peach jelly/jam.