

# otis

by Loren Long

Children will love this monochromatic illustrated, New York Times bestselling story about two opposite personalities becoming long-lasting true friends.



## 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, *How do Otis and the calf become friends?* 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 why Otis and the calf are sitting under the apple tree?

### 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 *Otis*

- unwind: to relax, obtain relief from tension or worry
- bales: a large package of hay or cotton, held together by string or wire
- explode: to blow up or burst
- haystacks: a large pile of hay
- hay: cut and dried grass, used to feed animals
- stall: small area used for storing animals or equipment
- calf: baby cow
- drifted: to gently or slowly move
- leapfrogging: game where players take turns bending over so that another player can jump over
- surprised: when someone feels excited and suddenly amazed
- rumbling: deep rolling sound
- discovered: to find out information you didn't know
- waded: walk in or through a liquid
- Fire Chief: the head firefighter
- farmhands: people who work on a farm
- perked: to straighten up
- rhythmic: pattern of beats in music
- occasion: a special to or opportunity

## After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- What did Otis like to do?
- What is one animal Otis liked to play with?
- Where would Otis sleep at night?
- Who lived next to Otis?
- What game did Otis and calf like to play?
- Why did Otis move out of his stall?
- Why did calf not like the yellow tractor sleeping next to him?
- What did the farmer want calf to win at the County Fair?
- What did the farmer use to try and get calf out of the mud pond?
- What scared calf? What made him sink deeper in the mud?
- Who rescued calf?
- How did Otis help calf out of the mud pond?
- How did Otis help other animals on the farm?
- What did Otis and calf do at the end of the day?



Do

## Mud Exploration

You will need a bucket, cup, tub, sand table or plant holder, dirt (either from outside or potting soil), water, spoons and towels.

Talk about what makes mud and describe (using the senses smell, sight and touch) the elements. Next, pour the water into the dirt, and then mix together. Have the children describe, using their senses, what happens to the mixture. Take a few moments to explore the mud. If a child doesn't want to touch the mud, offer gloves or let them use a pencil. Then, add any object to the mud and ask questions to help aid the exploration. For example: What happens to the block when we push it in the mud? I wonder, without using our hands, what could we use to pull it out?

You can leave the container of mud as a center. Come back later in the day and describe what happens to the mixture when it starts to dry.