

The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs!

- ① If you've read any books by Jon Scieszka, you know that he is a humorous author who tells unique stories. *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs!* (by A. Wolf) is no exception. This book, with illustrations by Lane Smith, offers an alternative perspective to the classic fairy tale about the little pigs. The book is both quirky and amusing, and it inspires readers to remember that there are at least two sides to every story.
- ② In the book, Mr. Scieszka shares the version of events told to him by Alexander T. Wolf. Even though the wolf is known as the "Big Bad Wolf" in the original story, the wolf explains that he was unfairly given that label. It's not his fault that wolves eat cute creatures as part of their diet. Readers are asked to consider: what would happen if burgers were cute? Then many people would be considered "Big and Bad" for eating them. It's this type of reasoning that opens readers' minds to viewing things from more than one perspective. Often, labels like *good* or *bad* are subjective and based on one person's or group's views.
- ③ As the wolf continues the story, he explains that all he wanted to do was bake a cake for his "dear old granny." But then, he ran out of sugar. One by one, he visits three neighbors (the three pigs) to ask for a cup of sugar. In retelling these details, Mr. Scieszka makes clever choices. He changes the classic "Little pig, little pig, let me in!" to "Little Pig, Little Pig, are you in?" This shows that the wolf is actually polite, not demanding.



Hector Borjasca

Mr. Scieszka also changes the wolf’s huffing and puffing to accidental sneezes. And it’s no wonder that the straw and stick houses fall down. Who makes a house out of those materials, the wolf wonders.

④ When the wolf is at the brick house, police arrive. They falsely accuse him of trying to steal sugar and send him to jail. Then the newspapers scandalize the story by making him the villain and the pigs the victims. Again, this version of the end encourages readers to reconsider what they’ve always heard. Stories can get twisted, especially after the fact, so perhaps the wolf is just a victim of mischaracterization.

⑤ All in all, the combination of Mr. Scieszka’s clever writing and Mr. Smith’s eccentric illustrations create a laugh-out-loud read that will stay in readers’ minds long after they finish the book. Every time they read a classic fairy tale afterwards, readers will likely stop and think. What if this story were told from the “villain’s” point-of-view? How might the story be different? These are questions that readers should also consider as they go through life and encounter versions of real-life stories.

PROMPTS

Write a literary critique. Here are some ideas.

Or use your own! Write a literary critique for . . .

- a passage in the Student Resource Handbook.
- a story or book you’ve recently read.
- a book chosen from your classroom library or school’s learning resource center.
- a favorite book or story from when you were younger.

Be sure to—

- start with an introduction that names the book’s title, author, and illustrator.
- make a claim about the book.
- support the claim with reasons and text evidence.
- make a recommendation about why people should or should not read the book.

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