

My Brother, Ant

ABOUT THE STORY

Ant and his big brother are full of surprises. When Ant is afraid of a monster under his bed, his brother gets rid of it an unusual way. When Ant is accused of drawing a spider on his brother's homework, he denies it – and he is right. When Ant's brother reads to him, a familiar story takes an unexpected turn. And when Ant asks his brother to write a letter for him, the letter turns out to be to Santa – in July!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Betsy Byars has written more than fifty books for young readers. She won the Newbery Medal in 1971 for her book *The Summer of the Swans*, and the American Book Award in 1981 for *The Night Swimmers*. She and her husband live in South Carolina.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Marc Simont has illustrated many popular books, among them *The Philharmonic Gets Dressed* and the *Nate the Great* series. He grew up in Paris and Barcelona, studied art in Paris and New York, and has created murals for a number of buildings, including the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask the children to describe their brothers and sisters and talk about how they feel about them. Discuss with only children whether they would like living with siblings. Explain that this book is about a boy and his little brother and the experiences they share.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "How does Ant's brother get rid of the monster?"
- "What did Ant draw on the homework?"
- "Why did Ant want to write to Santa?"
- "What kind of person is Ant's brother? Why do you think so?" (*Make judgment*)
- "How do his brother's actions make Ant feel?" (*Draw Conclusions*)
- "How do Ant and his brother feel about each other? How do you know?" (*Make inferences*)

Vocabulary

Write these words and their definitions on the chalkboard. Ask volunteers to draw lines matching each word with its definition.

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| a. monster | small fruit |
| b. stomped | everyday |
| c. figs | walked loudly |
| d. usual | scary creature |

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Language Arts: Letter about the Holiday

Just as Ant did, children can write a letter expressing their feelings about the previous holiday season. Ask them to describe their holiday celebration in the letter and state how they felt about it. Children can address their letters to Santa, to a family member, or to a teacher.

Science: Family Tree

Have children create family trees showing the relationships in their families as far back as they can trace them. Display the family trees in the classroom.

Art: Ant's Monster

Invite children to draw the monster under Ant's bed as the envision it. Encourage them to make the monster as big, horrible, and terrifying as possible. When they are done, children can view each other's monsters and discuss the differences.

Language Arts: A New Story

Ant's brother tells the story of the three little figs. Children can work in small groups to create a funny retelling of a favorite story, such as Goldilocks and the Three Hares or Little Red Hiding Food. Have groups read their stories aloud.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Make a Monster

Children can create their own monsters from monster parts at this site:

<http://www.rahul.net/renoir/monster/monster.html>.

Children can also find out more about making family trees at the online site for making family trees: <http://www.familytreemaker.com/>