



Little Sister and the Month Brothers

Beatrice Schenk de Regniers , Margot Tomes (Illustrator)

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Little Sister is very busy doing all the work around the house and the yard. But she doesn't mind: she sings and hums, and she grows prettier and prettier as she does her chores. Her wicked stepmother and stepsister can't stand the fact that Little Sister is so happy. One day, they tell Little Sister to bring home violets in the middle of winter—or not to come home at all! How Little Sister gets help from the Month Brothers in the forest offers a delightful twist on this Slavic version of Cinderella.

A retelling of the Slavic folktale in which the Month Brothers' magic helps Little Sister fulfill seemingly impossible tasks which prove the undoing of her greedy stepmother and stepsister.

Little Sister and the Month Brothers Details

Date : Published January 1st 1976 by Seabury Press

ISBN : 9780816431472

Author : Beatrice Schenk de Regniers , Margot Tomes (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 47 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Fantasy, Fairy Tales, Cinderella, Short Stories

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From Reader Review Little Sister and the Month Brothers for online ebook

JustOneMoreBook.com says

With its chatty narrative, droll dialogue and playfully illustrated play-by-play this plucky retelling of the traditional Slavic tale is bound theatre.

You can listen in on our chat about this book on our Just One More Book! Children's Book Podcast.

Other books mentioned:

Brave Irene
The Three Sillies
Cupid and Psyche

More shady step-families on JOMB:

Baba Yaga and Vasilisa the Brave
Cinderella Skeleton
Smoky Mountain Rose (An Appalachian Cinderella)
Ella's Big Chance

Kiera says

A girl gets help from the month brothers to meet the demands of her horrible step mother. Great to use when teaching kids about seasons/months of the year.

Lady Lioness says

I am not sure what to think about this. I guess the main theme here is there's always going to be a lot of work to do, but be polite and kind to others anyway or karma will have you ending up dead in a snowbank. The author's notes said that this was originally a Slavic folktale and I get the impression that this story emphasizes culturally important traits and life lessons. I think this is one of those stories that would have more meaning if I knew more about the culture it derived from.

I wouldn't use this as a story-time book. Instead, I would think this would be useful in a multicultural lesson, where similar stories from different cultures are compared. Also, on a personal level, I thought the illustrations were very cute and spot-on, but I felt they were fighting with the text for prominence, rather than enhancing it.

Roben says

This is a Slavic version of the folktale "Diamonds and Toads". While it is similar in some ways to Cinderella, it is not. No prince; only one stepsister... no fairy godmother. Little Sister is mistreated by her stepsister and stepmother but she remains kind. So stepsister decides to give her an impossible task - gather violets in the middle of winter. She is able to accomplish this feat with the help of the Month Brothers but only because she chooses to be kind. It's a lovely tale! If you enjoyed this, try "The Talking Eggs" by SanSouci. That is a Creole version of the same story!

Alisha Ptacek says

Personal reaction: This book has many of the elements that you would see in a classic fairy tale. Like Cinderella this book has a little girl with dead parents that lives with her stepmother and stepsister. Then there are 12 brothers with magic powers that controls the seasons. I think that his book contains many really good elements of fairy tales and can be used to teach the different motifs. I was also drawn to this book because of its Czech culture.

Read aloud: This book would be good for a lesson on motifs and the elements of fairytales. The book contains a stepmother and a stepsister, as well as magic, and the use of the number three.

Independent reading: Students that enjoy fairytales will really enjoy this book. If the students are familiar with other fairytales they will be able to see similarities between other fairytales.

Literary elements: The characterization of this book is really important because you can see how characters can be very similar in different stories. I think that this book might also be good to teach the difference between variants and versions.

Amanda says

It started out similar to Cinderella, but it is a folk story similar, but also delightfully different. I love the new version with its colorful, but vintage looking illustrations.

Jack says

I very much like this rendering of the of the Slavic folk tale, both in how the story is retold by Beatrice Schenk De Regniers, the split drawings of the storyline and daily activities, and the quality of illustrations by Margot Tomes.

Age Range: 6 - 8 years

Grade Level: 1st - 3rd

Lexile Measure: AD520L

As of the date of review of the 2009 reprint by Marshall Cavendish Children, this version is still in print.

Tracy says

The format of the storytelling and the illustrations are interesting. First, the depictions of Little Sister and presenting single shots of her actions--almost like a comic book, but without the filmstrip blocks--kicked me

right back to the Seventies with their spare, elegant style. The storytelling follows two types of tracks. At the bottom of the page, a traditional group of sentences moves the story forward. The rest of the page shows bits of the action spread out with bubbles of text that enhance the information at the bottom. I enjoyed the sing-song style of Little Sister's efforts as her stepmother and stepsister loll around the cottage: "work work work, "; "wash, wash, wash,'; and "dig, dig, dig." Sometimes, the bubble dialogue was too much like the down-below story; I would have preferred more exploration of vocabulary or adding to the story with some characterization. It's a book to be used actively with kids, especially the upper action. If a storyteller wants a more receptive experience for the little listener, they should just stick to the bottom text.

The story's beginning tells of Little Sister's hardship; her challenges make up the middle; and, the turning of the screw occurs as we head for the story's end. I like how her fortunate ending is more realistic than the trite "happily ever after" type. Her uptick in fortune is related to her work ethic and her even temperament. Overall, I enjoyed the story and it does provide some flexibility for storytellers.
