

Brave Irene

by William Steig

About the book

Weather Journal

Irene braves the elements on a stormy winter night. Have students create a list of the different types of weather that occur during each season. Then design a class weather journal and have students take turns recording the daily weather and its impact on the students' activities (e.g., "Today it is sleeting. It is too wet, cold, and slippery for us to play outside at recess").

Sew what?

Irene's mother is a talented dressmaker. Give students their own opportunity to "sew" clothing by providing them with two pieces of felt, a large plastic needle, yarn, and a hole-puncher. With a felt-tip pen, students should outline the design of the garment on a single piece of felt. Then they should align the two pieces of felt, cut out the garment, punch holes around the perimeter, and use yarn to sew the garment together. They can then decorate it by gluing on ribbon, buttons, small fabric scraps, or sequins. (Note: A glue gun is most effective, but its use requires adult supervision.) A variation of this activity is to create stuffed animals from two pieces of felt, filling the middle with cotton.

I Did It!

Ask students to recall an experience during which they were confronted with overwhelming circumstances but, like Irene, managed to persevere. What motivated them? How did they feel during the incident? How did they feel after it had ended? Discuss the traits that helped Irene succeed, including bravery, persistence, resourcefulness, and commitment. Students can then create badges or "medals of courage" for their classmates.

Pet Names

Irene's mother has endearing pet names for her -- "dumpling," "cupcake," and "pudding." Have students write about what pet names are used in their family, and by whom. Provide an opportunity for sharing, as students will enjoy learning about their classmates' family terms of endearment.

For more information visit www.williamsteig.com

Guide created by Sue Ornstein, June 2000