

The Consequences of Preparation and Impulsivity in *The Three Little Pigs*

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*"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine
and puts them into practice is like a wise man
who built his house on the rock."*

Matthew 7:24 (NIV)

ABSTRACT

This study analyzed *The Three Little Pigs* through the theoretical framework of Maria Tatar's Moral Development Theory (2009), identifying the consequences of preparation vs. impulsivity, the value of preparation for young audiences, and the role of a narrative device in testing preparedness and impulsivity. The story focuses on the three pigs, who moved out from their parents house to build their own, then the Big Bad Wolf destroyed the first two pig's houses that were made of sticks and straws, but when it comes to the third pig's house, the wolf could not destroy it because it was made of stones. The finding reveals: **1)** Preparation leads the third pig to safety and success, meanwhile the first two pigs have to experience the consequences of impulsivity which is the wolf's attack. This outcome demonstrates the moral lesson of the tale: the importance of foresight, diligence, and hard work. The story highlights how careful preparation and effort lead to security and success, while impulsivity and shortcuts result in vulnerability and failure. **2)** The narrative's outcome shows the importance of preparation and how impulsivity can lead to negative consequences. The first two pigs were rushing to construct their homes which resulted in their houses getting destroyed. Meanwhile, the third pig was patient and didn't rush things which led to the house being safe from the wolf. **3)** The big bad wolf serves as a narrative device to test the resilience of the three little pigs' houses, figuring out who is the best at planning to build.

Keyword: *Children's literature, Moral Criticism, Fairytale, Impulsivity, Moral Development*

INTRODUCTION

Why is children's literature so important? It is because they convey powerful moral messages such as honesty, bravery and hard work. Children's literature mirrors the human condition in real life. It reflects on what is happening in the world. Sometimes we do not realize that the majority of children's literature has very serious issues like bullying, inequality, and racism. Without parental

control, it can affect children's behavior since they tend to imitate what they see and hear. They do not know what is good or bad. This is not only for building children's awareness but also for encouraging them to have empathy, as they learn to see the world through others perspectives. A survey conducted by the National Literacy Trust in 2021 found that 68% of children who regularly read books at their own free will are better at understanding other people's feelings, compared to just 38% of those who read infrequently. Through these stories, children can be more understanding and they are able to regulate their emotions. Strengthening children's skill in understanding emotions could help them relate to other people more compassionately. In addition to that, it can also improve their cognitive development. Meaning that they can develop language skills, vocabulary and improve their reading ability. However, the themes must be age-appropriate, because children often mimic what they see and hear. Therefore, with the right guidance, these stories can help children explore complex social issues, grow creative imagination, relate to others' emotions, and build confidence to help others.

The book being analyzed is an illustrated book titled "*The Three Little Pigs*". The suitable age range is around 5-6 years old. It is categorized as a folktale which means it originates in popular culture and typically passed on by word of mouth. The book is published by Dorling Kindersley Limited in 2019. It is written by Clare Lloyd and illustrated by Giuseppe Di Lernia. The story is about three pigs that left their parents house to build their own house. Each one of the pigs chose different material for their construction. The first pig used straw, the second pig used sticks, and the third pig used bricks. When the big bad wolf came, he huffs and puffs their houses. Leaving the house of straw and sticks damaged. The first two pigs ran to the third pig's house since their house was damaged. The wolf tried to blow down the house of bricks but failed, then ultimately gave up. This story really can relate to real life issues. It shows our fortitude to build armor to protect ourselves in dangerous situations and it also explains how somebody's threats could make us feel frightened and unsafe. The story of the three little pigs shows the importance of hard work and preparation. More planning and hard work can help overcome challenges. And for example from the other two pigs, they lacked planning and chose shortcuts so that their house was easily destroyed by the big bad wolf. This analysis of *The Three Little Pigs* tells us how the story illustrates the importance of preparation and wisdom using Maria Tatar's Moral Development Theory, showing us how these factors shape the pigs' character development.

This study is guided by the Preparation vs. Impulsivity as the main binary opposition, and is based on the Moral Development Theory through Maria Tatar's insights, illustrating how *The Three Little Pigs* teaches children the value of preparedness, planning, effort, and carefulness. Tatar states,

"Preparation and effort in stories symbolize virtues that lead to success" (Tatar, 2009, p. 18), emphasizes the main role of hard work, planning, and perseverance in overcoming issues within fairy tales. These stories often teach that success does not come from pure luck, but it comes from the efforts and preparation. This idea is clearly demonstrated in *The Three Little Pigs*. The third pig's efforts and preparation ensure his safety and success, this reinforces Tatar's point that hard work, planning, and perseverance leads to positive outcomes.

The previous research by Bettelheim, B. (*The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, 1976) and Zipes, J. (*Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales*, 2002) analyzed fairy tales to understand the psychological and socio-cultural functions. Bettelheim's analysis emphasizes the values of fairy tales in teaching resilience and responsibility, the discussion represents the pig's choices as stages of maturity. Meanwhile, Zipes approaches the stories to mirror class struggle and societal expectation but does not dig deeply into the moral lessons about preparation and impulsivity. In contrast, Tatar M. (2009) addresses the educational role of fairy tales in teaching children carefulness and effort. Meanwhile, this study addresses this gap by using Tatar's framework to analyze *The Three Little Pigs* as a case study, analyzing how preparation and impulsivity serve as parallel yet contend moral constructs. Unlike the previous research, it demonstrates the consequences of each pig's decisions and the role of narrative structure in strengthening moral lessons.

The classic tale of the Three Little Pigs illustrates an essential lesson about intentionality. The story shows that careful planning, decision making and effort causes more success and safety. By thinking things through and taking time to do things well, we can handle challenges better and get lasting results. Unlike the other two pigs who chose quicker, easier methods, the third pig understood that real success and safety often require patience and hard work. This lesson reminds us that hard work and smart choices are worth it in the end. This tale teaches a very significant lesson about the nature of power and its uses, responsibility, and perseverance. The Big Bad Wolf is so strong and fierce that he tries to scare the three little pigs as well as overrun them. His strategy is only aggressive and all about enforcing himself by use of threats without regard to possible side effects. In the end however this strategy fails him, as he pays for his foolishness now, when he discovers that a house made of bricks and brains cannot be brought down by him.

Narratively, we have seen that even the little pigs, that is especially the third one, knew the benefits of knowing and preparing alongside with it. And whereas the first two pigs would be hasty and do something without giving a thought to their actions, the third pig builds a house that has walls made of bricks and takes his time to put it up. This decision embodies the victory over the

temptation for haste in the face of trouble. After constructing a durable structure, the pigs protect themselves from the wolf's assaults. By extension therefore, this fable goes ahead to profess that muscle alone cannot define true strength; there is need for intelligence, calmness and looking ahead. Power subscribed to ignorance can be dangerous and destructive, executive skills without the knowledge to apply them are of no use. Coupled though, these two components build a wall of resistance that can encounter any hurricane, like the one built by the third pig. The lesson in this narrative is that there is a feminine and masculine aspect to power and they work together to proffer solutions in difficult situations.

Binary Opposition

Impulsivity	Preparation
<p>A poor construction and lack of preparation and safety of the first two pigs. The first two pigs picked sticks and straws as their construction for their house. This made them get in danger easily. "<i>By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.</i>" Franklin, B (1868) reflects the first two pigs' lack of preparedness that leads them into a great failure.</p>	<p>A good construction and the preparation of the third pig. The third pig picked bricks as their construction for their house. The third pig has planned everything which made him safe from the danger. "<i>Before anything else, preparation is the key to success.</i>" Bell, A. G. (1914) reflects the preparedness of the third pig that leads him to success.</p>

METHOD

To conduct the analysis, this study used a qualitative approach to explain the issues found in the story, *The Three Little Pigs*. This analysis uses Maria Tatar's Moral Development theory (2009) as the theoretical framework to examine how the act of preparedness influences success and how impulsivity leads to vulnerability. The method involved in this study is by doing close reading of *The Three Little Pigs*, analyzing the story's elements, such as characters, themes, symbols, and the moral lessons. The analysis was focused on the consequences and the value of preparation, as demonstrated by the third pig, and impulsivity, that were exemplified by the first two pigs. And the Big Bad Wolf's role as a narrative device within the story *The Three Little Pigs*. The analysis was anticipated to demonstrate the values of preparation and consequences of impulsivity, the role of narrative devices in testing preparedness and impulse control.

In order to obtain the data, this study went through several steps. Firstly, the main issue in the story was identified. Next, the issues were analyzed through the lens of Tatar's theoretical framework, which emphasizes the importance of long-term decision-making. Finally, the findings were combined with the theory to obtain the understanding of the broader significance within the

story. In result, the study shows how the story's dynamics reflects broader societal expectations of resilience and preparedness. By interpreting *The Three Little Pigs* through Tatar's theory of Moral Development, this study reveals how the act of preparedness leads the third pig to safety and success.

DISCUSSION

1. The Consequences of Preparation vs. Impulsivity in *The Three Little Pigs*

'*The Three Little Pigs*' story illustrates the consequences of preparation versus impulsivity through the decisions made by the three pigs in constructing their houses. The story starts with mommy pig and daddy pig waving goodbye to their three children, who are going to leave their parents home. Then daddy pig says, "*Watch out for the Big Bad Wolf!*" (Lloyd, 2019, p.3). The illustration reflects how daddy pig represents a caregiving person but gives no actions, this symbolizes responsibility for the three pig's safety.



The three little pigs hadn't walked far when the first little pig grew tired.

"This will do," yawned the lazy little pig. He quickly built a house from straw that was laying nearby.

The story continues, the three pigs have not walked far when the first pig gets tired. "*He quickly built a house from straw that was laying nearby*" (Lloyd, 2019, p.5). Tatar states, "*The haste of actions in fairy tales often serves as a metaphor for the dangers of impulsive decisions*" (Tatar, 2009, p. 12). This observation aligns with the behavior of the first pig in *The Three Little Pigs*, who makes the decision to build a house out of straws; this symbolizes the act of impulsiveness and an aversion to hard work. By constructing his house with

easy-gathered materials, the first pig represents a lack of foresight, exposing the consequences of prioritizing immediate comfort rather than prioritizing safety and stability. The story uses the first pigs' decisions as an example of the consequences of making quick decisions without considering the potential danger.

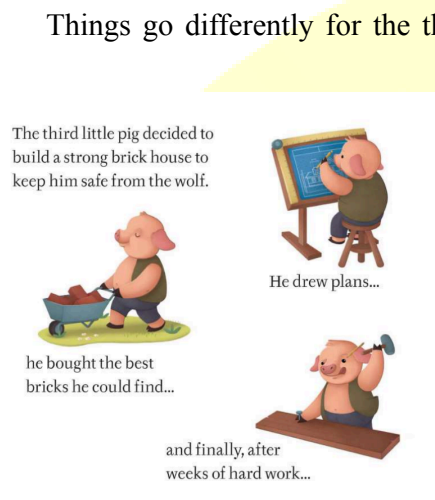
Not so long after the first pig stops and builds his house made of straws, the second pig stops and looks around her. Then, "*She swiftly built a house from the sticks and branches scattered around her*" (Lloyd, 2019, p.6). According to Tatar's observation, "*Children's literature*

It wasn't long before the second little pig stopped walking and looked around her.



"This will do," she said and swiftly built a house from the sticks and branches that were scattered around her.

contrasts quick solutions with the risks they entail" (Tatar, 2009, p. 14). This observation describes the second pig's decision to build a house made out of sticks and branches. Although the sticks are more sturdy than the straws, the stick house still remains as a product of impulsive decision making, and prioritizing speed and ease over durability. According to Tatar's insight, such narratives could teach children that shortcuts often result in precarious situations, helping young readers understand the importance of taking time and putting effort into their choices.



Things go differently for the third pig, he walks on and on until he finally finds the perfect place to build his house. *"He drew plans, bought the bricks, and finally, after weeks of hard work, built his house"* (Lloyd, 2019, p.8). The third pig's actions align closely with Tatar's insight, *"Preparation and effort in stories symbolize virtues that lead to success"* (Tatar, 2009, p. 18). The third pig decides to build a sturdy house out of bricks, illustrating the benefits of hard work and careful planning. Unlike his siblings, the third pig invests time and his efforts on building a strong and safe house. Tatar emphasizes that

fairy tales use such examples to encourage children to adopt virtues like diligence, patience, and responsibility.

The hungry Big Bad Wolf comes across the first and the second pig's house then, *"The wolf huffed and puffed and blew the house down!"* (Lloyd, 2019, p.18). This event serves as a reminder, demonstrating the consequences of impulsive decision-making. *"Fairy tales often depict the consequences of lack of preparation to instill the importance of caution in children"* (Tatar, 2009, p. 22) Tatar emphasizes that such narratives allow children to understand the consequences of carelessness. Frye said that the structure of literature itself rewards characters who are cautious in their decisions and skilled at anticipating future events, so they plan ahead, noting that *"the hero is the one who moves toward a goal of freedom or survival"* (Frye, 1957, p. 187). The third pig meets this criterion with his preparedness.

When it comes to the third pig's house, the big bad wolf was unable to blow the house down. The story's resolution, where the brick house made by the third pig withstands the wolf's attacks, reflects Tatar's point, *"Survival and success in these tales emphasize the rewards of thorough preparation"* (Tatar, 2009, p. 26). This observation shows how children's stories rewarded characters that exemplify preparation and forethought, teaching children the benefits of perseverance and effort.

2. The Value of Preparation in The Three Little Pigs' Outcome for Its Young Audience

In a lot of ways, the story's outcome reinforces the value of preparation for its young audience. The quote *"As for the little pigs, they lived happily ever after in their house made of bricks"* (Lloyd, 2019, p.29). often seen in fairytales, convey a deeper meaning. *"The resolution of fairy tales often conveys a clear message: hard work and preparation bring lasting peace"* (Tatar, 2009, p. 30). This quote means that fairy tales that teach hard work and preparation can give an effect that is never ending. According to Tatar, these types of endings are not just about making the ending of the story happy, but it serves to teach an important lesson that preparation leads to everlasting success and stability. Since the brick house is built with a lot of hard work, they reap the benefit of long term protection. This story encourages young readers to adopt these values in real life so they can get the rewards.

As children, it is very important for them to know what is right and what is wrong. Without this awareness, our moral principles will not be strong. That is why children's stories are the answer. Make no mistake, children's stories are very effective in training their minds. Literature *"cultivates the capacity for ethical reflection"* (Nussbaum, 1990, p. 45). So, in the story of the three little pigs, we know which traits are undesirable and should not be emulated, and which ones we should take as examples. In this story, the contrast between the two types of characters is very clear, so it should be easy.

Kohlberg argues that moral development progresses from self-interest to rational logic, where individuals begin to act according to ethical considerations in the future (Kohlberg, 1981). In this story, the third pig represents this, where he places more importance on long-term safety than short-term convenience. Moral maturity can be defined as *"a sense of responsibility based on internalized principles rather than fear of punishment"* (Kohlberg, 1981, p. 412).

In the story, the third pig does something vastly different from the other pigs. Instead of rushing to build the house which ultimately leads to the destruction of their homes, he decides to take his time and be patient. He draws plans and buys the best bricks he can find. The results show that his brothers' houses get absolutely destroyed by the big bad wolf and the third pig's house remains intact. *"Effort in constructing one's life is a recurring motif that encourages children to value perseverance"* (Tatar, 2009, p. 32). This quote by Tatar illustrates the importance of effort. The more effort into something, the longer it will last. In this case, the third pig put

The third little pig decided to build a strong brick house to keep him safe from the wolf.



He drew plans...



he bought the best bricks he could find...



and finally, after weeks of hard work...

more time and effort into his house which leads to his house staying solid. One of the most captivating parts from the text in the story is that the pig bought a high quality brick. It has the word “best” which means the most excellent, effective, or desirable type or quality. Rather than settling for regular bricks that are pretty good quality but not top tier, instead he chose the best quality of bricks. This shows that the quality of the materials plays a prominent role in the outcome of the product.

The big bad wolf in this story acts as the main adversary of the three little pigs. He is always relentlessly pursuing the pigs so they have a hard time protecting themselves. *"Adversaries in fairy tales serve to demonstrate the importance of being well-prepared against life's challenges"* (Tatar, 2009, p. 35). This citation implies that antagonists in children's literature are not merely for the sake of conflict, they represent the difficulties and challenges that happen throughout our lifetime. For



but nothing happened. The house didn't even wobble!
The wolf was furious and VERY hungry. He climbed up onto the roof and jumped down the chimney... splash!

example, the wolf represents life's obstacles such as fear and danger. The three little pigs represent preparation. It gives a glimpse of how well you need to be prepared to face those barriers. The wolf's attempt to destroy the pigs' houses portrays the harsh reality of life, showing that danger can come at any moment, sometimes without a warning. The book also shows how the three pigs respond to the wolf's

actions. The first and second pigs are not confident in their own creations. When their houses get destroyed, they get frightened and immediately go to the third pig's place. The third pig feels pretty confident in what he builds. He gets to show his wit by placing a pot of boiling hot soup inside the fireplace which is the very spot the wolf lands. By accentuating the consequences of the pigs' actions, it encourages the readers to consider the significance of diligence, caution and careful planning when tackling life challenges.

The story's resolution showcases the perks of preparation by showing that the pigs will never see the Big Bad Wolf again. This conveys that preparation and planning can protect them from harm in the long run. This illustration gives the idea that if the three of the pigs made the same choice to rush the building process, the Big Bad Wolf would probably still haunt them for the rest of their lives. Maria Tatar explains, *"The absence of further threats reinforces the moral that preparation secures one's future"* (Tatar, 2009, p. 38). With the Big Bad Wolf no



As for the little pigs, they lived happily ever after in their house made of bricks. They never ever saw the Big Bad Wolf again!

longer present, the tale reassures readers that preparing for important tasks and planning ahead can lead to lasting peace, reinforcing the moral lesson of thinking long-term.

A monumental moment in the story is when the third pig walked on and on. This action reflects the pig's patience and persistence. Unlike the first two pigs who rushed their tasks and tried to build the houses as fast as they could as if they were in some sort of competition, the third pig took some time to plan and execute things perfectly. Tatar comments, "*Patience and persistence are subtly celebrated in children's literature as keys to overcoming impulsivity*" (Tatar, 2009, p. 40). This message advocates young people to value perseverance and understanding that relentless dedication leads to success, while shortcuts more often than not result in failure. Through moments like this in the story, we learn that preparation and persistence are essential to our everyday lives.

3. The Big Bad Wolf's role as a narrative device in testing the pigs' preparedness versus impulsivity.

In the classic fairy tale of The Three Little Pigs, the character of Big Bad Wolf is quite significant. He is the villain, but more than that, he tests the pigs in the sense that their choices of whether to act impulsively or to prepare well for facing dangers are reflected in how they end up facing such dangers. "*Little pig, little pig, let me come in!*" (Lloyd, 2019, p.11) followed by, "*The wolf huffed and puffed and blew the house down!*" (Lloyd, 2019, p.12) are all words that clearly reveal and demonstrate just how vulnerable the pigs are when not taking the time to plan wisely.

The characters have a fixed structure, so there are sidekicks, heroes, and villains. According to Propp, the function of the villain is to "*cause harm or injury to a member of a family*" (Propp, 1968, p. 21), testing the moral resilience of the hero. The wolf fulfills this role; he functions as the villain, a character whose morals contrast with those of the pigs, and his main function is to destroy their morale. We, as the audience, naturally support the pigs.

As fairy tales scholar Maria Tatar puts it, "*Fairy tale villains symbolize the challenges that test the consequences of one's actions*" (Tatar, 2009, p. 42). Wolf stands for threats and all unexpected obstacles in life. He does not just scare the pigs; he stands as a reminder that preparation is very important. The hasty pigs who constructed homes of straw and sticks soon reap the consequences of their impulsiveness: comfort and speed neglect strength and security. When the wolf comes, their houses simply don't cut it.

"Little pig, little pig, let me come in," said the wolf.

"Not by the hair on my chinny-chin-chin!" cried the first little pig.



"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house down!" howled the hungry wolf.

Tatar further states that, *"External threats in tales serve to teach children about the importance of preparation and vigilance"* (2009, p. 45). Wolf's threats and eventual destruction of the weaker houses must drive home this point. The story teaches that unpreparedness leaves them vulnerable (as will be the case for the straw and stick houses), while preparation (like the third pig's sturdy brick house) can protect from danger.

Thus, the Big Bad Wolf is more than a typical mustache twirling, conspiring, eccentric villain. He is a narrative tool that teaches a lesson in a very important way about the consequences of selection. By testing the options that pigs make in trying to save themselves from danger, he shows that not all choices are equal.

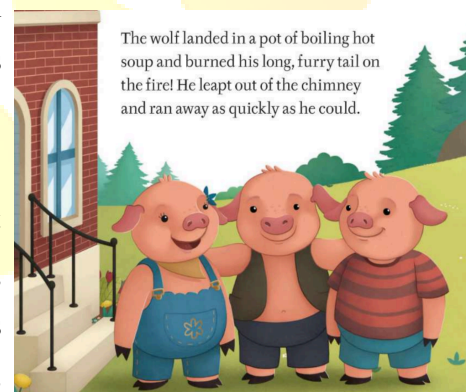
The wolf was unable to blow the brick house down. Expert Citation: *"Stories often demonstrate that careful preparation outlasts impulsive threats"* (Tatar, 2009, p. 50).

The wolf's failure against the brick house highlights Tatar's point that fairy tales often resolve with the success of the prepared, providing a clear, reassuring moral for young readers.

The story's resolution reinforces the importance of preparation for its audience. The line, *"As for the little pigs, they lived happily ever after in their house made of bricks"* (Lloyd, 2019, p.29) exemplifies a classic fairy tale ending. According to Tatar, *"The resolution of fairy tales often conveys a clear message: hard work and preparation bring lasting peace"* (2009, p. 30). By investing time and effort into building the brick house, the third pig secures long-term safety and comfort, embodying the moral that diligent preparation leads to enduring rewards.

In this story, the third pig takes a distinct approach compared to his brothers. Instead of rushing, he carefully plans and builds with the best materials available. *"Effort in constructing one's life is a recurring motif that encourages children to value perseverance"* (Tatar, 2009, p. 32). This effort is exemplified by his choice to use high-quality bricks, reflecting the importance of investing in excellence. His decision shows young readers that the quality of one's efforts significantly affects the outcome.

The wolf is portrayed as more than just the antagonist; he represents the inevitable challenges and threats in life. Tatar states, *"Adversaries in fairy tales serve to demonstrate the importance of*



being well-prepared against life's challenges" (2009, p. 35). His relentless attempts to destroy the pigs' homes highlight the need for preparation when facing adversity. While the first two pigs' houses are destroyed, the third pig's brick house withstands the wolf's attacks, showing the consequences of their choices. The story's conclusion emphasizes that careful planning and hard work equip individuals to overcome life's difficulties and emerge victorious.

The wolf serves as a crucial narrative device, embodying the challenges that test the pigs' preparedness and exposing the consequences of impulsive actions. The line, *"The wolf ran away as quickly as he could"* (Lloyd, 2019, p.28) marks the turning point where danger is vanquished. Expert Citation: *"The retreat of danger signals to children that preparedness is their best defense"* (Tatar, 2009, p. 53). The wolf's retreat underscores Tatar's assertion that preparedness not only resolves immediate threats but also serves as a shield against future dangers.

The wolf's relentless attacks on the pigs' homes reveal the consequences of their choices. The first two pigs' impulsive decisions to construct houses of straw and sticks leave them vulnerable, while the third pig's deliberate planning and use of sturdy bricks ensure his safety. This contrast demonstrates how the wolf functions as a narrative test of the pigs' actions. *"Adversaries in fairy tales serve to demonstrate the importance of being well-prepared against life's challenges"* (Tatar, 2009, p. 35). The wolf's attempts to destroy the houses amplify the stakes, illustrating the value of caution and effort.



Ultimately, the wolf's retreat after his failed attempts at the brick house reinforces the story's moral lesson. *"Stories often demonstrate that careful preparation outlasts impulsive threats"* (Tatar, 2009, p. 50). This resolution reassures young readers that diligence and preparedness can overcome even the most persistent challenges. By positioning the wolf as a recurring threat, the story teaches that life's obstacles, while inevitable, can be managed and even defeated through careful planning and persistence.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the narrative of Three Little Pigs teaches the relevance of having skills such as preparation, diligence and thoughtful decision making. This narrative presents a striking juxtaposition between impulsivity and preparation. Through the big bad wolf's relentless attacks on the pigs' houses, the narrative accentuates how challenges and obstacles in life can be

overcome by laying a solid foundation. The first two pigs, who rapidly built houses of straw and sticks, represent the dangers of not having any sense of anticipation and acting without considering future consequences. Their impulsive decisions lead to their inevitable downfall, as they cannot withstand the wolf's force. In comparison, the third pig's decision to carefully plan and build a brick house illustrates the value of hard work, perseverance and resilience. The wolf as the main antagonist serves as a powerful symbol of life's many uncertainties, testing the pig's readiness and putting up a difference between being unprepared and being well prepared. challenges. By having these two opposing traits, we can observe the impacts of their actions, making us consider our future decisions. Maria Tatar's insights into fairy tales reinforce this moral, suggesting that stories like *The Three Little Pigs* are not just about entertainment but serve to teach children the importance of preparation and persistence. The resolution, where the third pig's brick house withstands the wolf's attack, encapsulates the story's moral which is that careful preparation leads to everlasting success and protection from life's obstacles. Finally, the narrative encourages young readers to embrace qualities like patience, planning and perseverance. The book guides them to understand that success and safety are achieved through consistent effort and planning, not by too rushing.

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