



THE BIG GREEN BOOK

BY ROBERT GRAVES
ILLUSTRATED BY MAURICE SENDAK

ABOUT THE BOOK

A little boy named Jack discovers a big green book of magic in the attic and learns all sorts of spells—spells to change the look of things, spells to make him old and gray or disappear entirely! Jack makes the most of his new magic powers, and his poor old aunt and uncle are quite bewildered.

This enchanting tale by noted British author Robert Graves is masterfully illustrated by Maurice Sendak, seven-time Caldecott Honor recipient, National Book Award winner, and the Caldecott Medal-winning creator of *Where the Wild Things Are*.

STORYTIME ACTIVITIES

- **SPELL IT OUT:** Ask the children to describe what was special about *The Big Green Book* and to recall some of the spells Jack found in it. Remind them that most of the spells began: “First you make a magic circle around you with a long stick, then you take three deep breaths . . .” Then tell the children they will compose their own magic spell. First, they should decide what magic the spell is for, then they should compose it, and finally they should add an illustration. Collate the pages into a class “Book of Spells.”
- **DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC?:** Ask the children to think about what they would do with magic powers. Would they use their powers to trick someone like Jack did? Or would they use their magic to help someone? Or would they change their own life in some way? Have the children write a story about what they would do if they found a book of magic spells.
- **HOME SWEET HOME:** Sendak shows the reader the inside of Jack’s house by drawing a cutaway picture. Point this out to the children and discuss how a cutaway drawing is made. Then ask the children to create a cutaway drawing of their own house. Remind them to think about how many floors are in their home, and which rooms can be found on each level. Encourage the children to add many details to bring their home to life.
- **IN THE CARDS:** Jack turns some old leaves into a deck of cards and proceeds to play cards with his aunt and uncle. Ask the children if they know any card games. If they do, have them work in pairs or small groups to teach each other the directions for the card game and then play it together. Otherwise, teach them a card game (e.g., Go Fish, Gin Rummy, or War) and then give them an opportunity to play the game.
- **ALL IN THE FAMILY:** Jack lives with his aunt and uncle. Ask the children to explain how an aunt or uncle is related to them. Talk about other family members (e.g., grandparents, cousins) and how they are related. Then have the children create a simple family tree that includes themselves, their siblings, parents, and grandparents. Older children can add aunts, uncles, and cousins to their family tree.

