The Three Little Pigs

The story, The Three Little Pigs, is a familiar one for most of us. Due to the numerous versions and varieties of the Three Little Pigs, there is no credit given to an author for its origin. In this classic tale, there is a very hungry wolf who targets three innocent little pigs. In some versions, the wolf makes a meal of at least two of the pigs; in others, all three piglets escape unscathed. This is a typical portrayal of a bully; the wolf looks, acts, and thinks the part of a bully.

One commonality among the numerous story versions is the characterization of the wolf. The wolf is a bully. He is described as being ‘big’ and ‘bad’. In the Disney film of the story, the pigs sing, “Who’s afraid of the big, bad wolf…” The wolf is even depicted in illustrations as looking rough and mean. His thoughts and actions give further evidence of his bullying in that he knocks down the little pigs’ houses and chases them.

The unknown author uses the plot line to support the bullying theme. Most versions depict the pigs as happy and carefree, minding their own business when the wolf appears. He targets the weakest pig first, the one living in the house of straw. Then, he targets the pig in the house of sticks. This shows that he is trying to get them because he does not believe they will be hard to overtake. He saves the pig living in the brick house for last because this pig presents more of a challenge. Bullies sometimes take on challenges, but only after gaining confidence by usurping “easy” targets.

One of the more popular versions of the Three Little Pigs is told from the pigs’ viewpoint. This technique supports the idea that the wolf is a bully because the audience views the wolf through the eyes of the little pigs. The pigs are afraid of the wolf and try to out-smart him, which is a common strategy for dealing with a bully. The pigs are the protagonists in the story and the reader is on their side, wanting them to win. The reader is sympathetic to the pigs due to the story being told from the pigs’ point of view. Therefore, the reader feels the way the pigs do toward the wolf - that he is a bully.

The Three Little Pigs is an ancient tale with a present day theme of bullying. The story shows how people can defeat bullies by sticking together and not giving up. Although there are several authors for the variety of versions of this story, common elements include: point of view, characterization and plot. No matter who you are or where you live, no one deserves to be bullied.