

Penelope Perfect

Shannon Anderson • Illustrated by Katie Kath



Penelope Perfect

A Tale of Perfectionism Gone Wild



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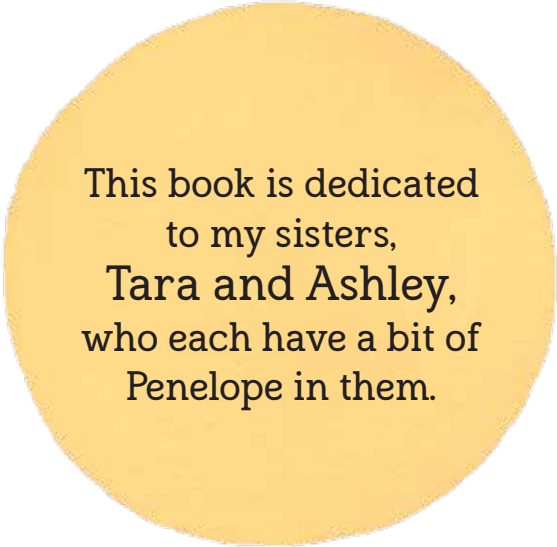
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This book is dedicated
to my sisters,
Tara and Ashley,
who each have a bit of
Penelope in them.

They call me Penelope Perfect.
If you know me, I'm sure you agree.

Have you ever heard of Old Faithful?
Well, that geyser has *nothin'* on me!



I wake up at five every morning
To begin my daily routine.



I smooth all the wrinkles out of my sheets,
And make my room perfectly clean.



Activities and Discussion Questions

Penelope's story can be a jumping-off place for conversation, reflection, and fun with children in school settings, at home, or elsewhere. The following activities and questions offer some ideas to get started. Feel free to adapt them and add your own.

Laugh Out Loud

Invite children to talk about how being able to laugh when things don't go according to plan can help them face challenges and cope with unexpected situations.

After your discussion, split children up into smaller groups of three or four and have each group create a short, funny skit about a day that goes all wrong. Encourage children to exaggerate and get really silly. Then have groups perform their skits.



Learning and Growing

Making mistakes is a natural part of life, especially as we learn and grow. As a group, talk about examples of this concept. If children need help getting started, suggest some ideas, such as a toddler learning to walk, a kid learning to ride a bike, or a basketball player practicing layups. You might also share stories of famous people who experienced failure before they became successful, such as Dr. Seuss, J.K. Rowling, or Michael Jordan. Ask questions such as:

- What do you think people can learn from their mistakes? How can they use that knowledge later on?
- What is a time when you made a mistake? What did you do about it? Do you feel different about it now than you did at the time? How so?
- What is something you'd like to learn to do? How can you handle the challenges and mistakes that go along with learning something new?



What If?

Children can sometimes get stressed by minor details and obsess about the ways things might go wrong. Propose some hypothetical situations to your group and ask them to brainstorm things that *could* happen as a result of each. Try to make these scenarios realistic, but not too serious. For example, what if:

- Joseph forgets a school book at home?
- Mikaela's cat knocks over a glass of water and it spills all over her homework?
- Adnan's little brother moved his stuff around, and now Adnan can't find a toy he borrowed from a friend?
- Bai is setting the table when she drops a glass and it breaks?

Talk about children's ideas, their possible implications, and how likely they are to happen. Help children see that worries can grow larger than life sometimes. If you like, have the group role-play these scenarios and how children might cope with them.



Hop to It

Invite children to work together (in one large group, or in small groups) to draw a hopscotch outline on mural paper, or outdoors on a blacktop or other surface. Ask children to choose a goal or a desire and draw it in the highest-numbered space. Then have them decorate each remaining space with drawings of things that they like and things that are fun to do. Some of these drawings can be related to the goal, but they don't have to be.

Remind children that each day brings many possibilities and many ways to get to the same outcome or goal, that sometimes goals change, and that even when we don't reach our goals, we might discover new friends, interests, and adventures along the way.

Then, especially if you're outside, play!

