



Suggested Poisonous Fiction Reading

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll.

There are many adaptations of this classic. In Chapter 1, "Down the Rabbit Hole," Alice drinks from a bottle marked "Drink Me" and eats a cake marked "Eat Me." She does look to see if the bottle is labeled "poison." The lesson here is to never assume something is safe just because it is not marked with a warning label.

Clifford's Spring Clean-Up by Norman Bridwell. Ages 3-8

Watch out, it's spring cleaning time, Clifford style. Although Clifford uses his tongue to clean windows, a discussion about types of cleaners the mother probably uses, where she keeps them and how to use them and stay safe could start here. The book ends on an Earth Day message that could easily be changed to discuss National Poison Prevention Week.

Five Little Monkeys With Nothing To Do by Eileen Christelow. Ages 4-7

Five little monkeys are bored, but their mother has them clean up the house for Grandma Bessie's visit. In a great scurry, they clean their room, scrub the bathroom, beat the rug and pick berries for dessert. (Introduce the book by telling children that the very active monkeys in the book will need their help to stay safe. Tell them you are worried that the monkeys do not know what things in and around the home could be dangerous, and they could get hurt if someone doesn't teach them.)

Hog-Eye by Susan Meddaugh. Ages 4-8

A little piggy gets caught by a big, bad wolf that makes plans for a tasty pig stew. Luckily, this is a resourceful little piggy who figures out the wolf cannot read, and uses this to her advantage. You'll have to read the book to find out how poison ivy saves the day. While in real life, wolves don't own cookbooks and pigs don't talk, children *do* encourage each other to do things they shouldn't, like roll around in poison ivy. A discussion about what to do in that situation might be interesting.

Little Yau: A Fuzzhead Tale by Janell Cannon. Ages 4-8

Little Yau's friend, Trau, has been poisoned and is very sick. With guidance from the elder Fuzzheads, Little Yau goes on a search to find the plant that will create an antidote to save Trau's life. This story reinforces the idea that poisons can make you sick, and that it is important to seek help from adults to treat the sickness.

Snow White

There are many versions of this favorite fairy tale, but nearly all contain the poisoned apple. Disaster befalls Snow White when she does not follow the instructions of the trusted dwarves and eats the apple. A well-placed discussion here will reinforce the notion that poisons do not always look like obvious poisons. The message of "always ask first" also could be emphasized.

The Story of Babar by Jean deBrunhoff. Ages 4-8.

This story presents a wonderful opportunity to teach children to never eat a mushroom found outside. In this story, Babar the Elephant returns to the jungle and learns that the King of the Elephants has died from eating a poisonous mushroom. The poison lesson comes from the line, "Alas, that very day, the King of the elephants had eaten a bad mushroom."