



## Strega Nona

by Tomie dePaola

As a new kindergarten teacher in 1971, I fell in love with Tomie dePaola's books, and I have continued to love his art work and his wonderful characters. *Strega Nona* was published in 1975 and was loved immediately (over 38,000 ratings on [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com)). In 1976, it was a Caldecott Honor book in recognition of Mr. dePaola's unique art work that is heavily influenced by folk art.

Mr. dePaola recalls that at the age of four he announced to his family and the world that he wanted to be an artist. He never swayed from that desire. The character, *Strega Nona*, emerged from the doodles that Mr. dePaola drew during a meeting. He kept doodling, and his drawings have resulted in more than 200 children's books published in fifteen different countries. In addition to being recognized as a Caldecott Honor book for his art, his work has been recognized by the American Library Association and the Smithsonian Institute.

*Strega Nona* means Grandma Witch in Italian. The setting of *Strega Nona* is in Calabria, a region of Italy, a long time ago. *Strega Nona* is loved and respected by her fellow villagers for her willingness to help them solve their problems with her magic. Since she's getting on in years, she hires Big Anthony to help her with her daily chores. The story unfolds with magic, mischief, and a message about life. Your child and you will have an opportunity after the Third Reading to discuss what lesson Big Anthony might have learned.

The Reading Comprehension Best Practice that fits well with this story is **ANSWERING QUESTIONS DURING READING**. As you investigate the illustrations during the First Reading, questions will arise about what is happening in the pictures and what might be causing the actions. The simple text will hold many surprises, plus a few Italian words and a little chant that your child and you will enjoy putting to melody.

Think of this saying: "The punishment fits the crime." as you arrive at the end of this delightful story.