



## STORY SUMMARY

When she receives a mysterious crown for her birthday, Pistachio becomes convinced that she is really an abducted princess. But her lofty airs only make her parents sigh, her friends laugh, and her baby sister Penny insist on “playing princess,” too. When Pistachio’s angry wish makes Penny disappear, she needs the courage of a true princess to get her back.

## ALSO AVAILABLE

Princess Pistachio and the Pest  
Early Ready Ages 5–8  
ISBN: 978-1-927485-73-6



★ Ontario Library Association Best Bet

★ Today’s Parent “100 Best Canadian Children’s Books of All Time”

## OTHER RESOURCES

### Author Website:

[marielouisegay.com](http://marielouisegay.com)

### Publisher Website:

[pajamapress.ca/book/princess\\_pistachio](http://pajamapress.ca/book/princess_pistachio)

### Literacy Poster Download:

[pajamapress.ca/resource/princess\\_pistachio\\_extra\\_content](http://pajamapress.ca/resource/princess_pistachio_extra_content)

### Princess Pistachio’s Royal Vocabulary Activity:

[pajamapress.ca/resource/princess\\_pistachio\\_teaching\\_guide](http://pajamapress.ca/resource/princess_pistachio_teaching_guide)

## REVIEWS

“The skillful combination of text and illustrations addresses many serious concerns of early childhood—and even of parenthood—without straying from the book’s tone of fun and frivolity....A playful and entertaining take on children’s perennial questions surrounding ideas of personhood, family and community.”—**Kirkus Starred Review**



“Airy spot illustrations keep the comedy fresh, drolly portraying Pistachio’s lofty airs...”—**Publishers Weekly**

“Young readers transitioning to chapter books will be enthralled by Pistachio and her big personality and imagination....A wonderful new offering from Gay to take her picture book readers to the next stage.”—**School Library Journal**

“...vividly portrays the characters’ emotions in both the text and the many colorful ink-and-wash illustrations. Sometimes charming and sometimes funny, the story is as satisfying as its protagonist’s name: Pistachio Shoelace.”—**Booklist**

“Gay’s tale is a clever twist on the many, many secret-destiny stories that haunt children’s literature (not to mention children’s own imaginations).”—**Quill & Quire**

Early Reader Ages 5–8 | ISBN: 978-1927485-69-9 | Pages: 48

## THEMES

Family, Siblings, Identity, Humor

## BISAC CODES

JUV019000 / JUVENILE FICTION / Humorous Stories  
JUV045000 / JUVENILE FICTION / Readers / Chapter Books  
JUV013070 / JUVENILE FICTION / Family / Siblings  
JUV051000 / JUVENILE FICTION / Imagination & Play

## BEFORE READING

Ask students to brainstorm the differences and similarities between a picture book, an illustrated reader like *Princess Pistachio*, and a novel. Use a Venn diagram to organize their ideas.

## ROLE PLAY

For much of the story, Pistachio seems to believe that being a princess means she does not have to use good manners anymore. Have one student roleplay “Princess Pistachio” and then “Polite Pistachio.” He or she will respond to a line delivered by another student representing Pistachio’s sister, parent, teacher, or friend. Rotate the roles so that everyone has a turn.

Possible lines for the secondary characters include:

- “Pistachio, please go clean your room.”
- “Pistachio, will you play with me?”
- “Pistachio, it’s time for a math test.”
- “Pistachio, why are you wearing a crown to school?”

## Discuss:

- Was it easier to come up with an answer as Princess Pistachio or Polite Pistachio? Why?
- What would it be like if everybody came to school acting like Princess Pistachio one day?
- Do you think real-life royalty acts like Princess Pistachio did? Why or why not?
- How did Pistachio’s friends react to her princess attitude?
- If one of your friends started acting rude, how would you react?

## A PRINCESS IS BRAVE

When Pistachio is searching for Penny, she says to herself, “A real princess is brave.” Since Pistachio wants to act like a real princess, this thought encourages her to keep going even though she is afraid.

Have your students think about a role they aspire to (e.g. pilot, teacher, princess, magician, parent, etc.). Ask them to think of a positive quality that they especially admire about people who perform that role. To remind

them to keep striving toward that quality, have them draw a portrait of themselves in their chosen role with the caption, “A [role] is [quality].” For example, “A teacher is patient.”

## BIRTHDAY LETTERS

At the beginning of the school year, teach your students how to address an envelope, writing their own address in the center and the school’s address in the top left-hand corner. Collect the envelopes.

Next, have students write generic birthday cards and “forget” the signature; for example:

“My dear friend,

I wish you a very happy birthday.

Sincerely,”

Choosing randomly, put a card in each envelope. As each child’s birthday arrives, send him or her the appropriately addressed card. If you have the resources, you can stamp and mail the letter; if not, use a sticker in place of a stamp and leave the envelope on the student’s desk.

## Discuss:

- How does it feel to get a letter?
- Can you guess who wrote your birthday card? Why or why not?
- What kind of confusion could result from getting an unsigned letter?

## RETELL THE STORY

The following retell activities can be written or oral:

- Tell the story from Penny’s perspective
- Identify the main action or main idea of each chapter
- Describe the introduction of the story and identify Pistachio’s main emotion at that time; do the same for the middle and the conclusion.