

# Parenting PEOPLES

## Sticks and stones . . .

**M**ost of us can recall—in vivid detail—at least one painful, childhood moment when we were teased. But what's really painful is that we know our children will have to deal with this same traumatic situation. "Nothing in the world will stop teasing. No advice can prevent childhood verbal assaults," says Lisa Passen who's own personal experiences gave her the inspiration to write the children's book *Fat, Fat, Rose Marie* (Henry Holt & Co.). The story revolves around overweight Rose Marie, who is befriended by shy Claire, but mercilessly teased by popular Genevieve. Peer pressure causes Claire to abandon her friend, although she doesn't really want to, just so she won't be teased herself. Eventually good prevails and Genevieve gets her comeuppance—satisfying young



readers and adding punch to the parable.

Passen feels there's a little Rose Marie and Genevieve inside every child. Parents can use the book to help their kids empathize with victims, and if they find themselves as the object of ridicule, Passen advises parents to "encourage their children to have self-esteem and self-respect, and to not worry so much about standing out in a crowd."

—Vivien Santana Hughes

