Hansel and Gretel by Rachel Isadora

Hansel And Gretel With A New Look

Caldecott Honor winner Rachel Isadora gives readers a stunning new interpretation of this classic Brothers Grimm fairy tale, setting the infamous witch's cottage deep in a lush African forest. Hansel and Gretel's plight feels all the more threatening as they're plunged into the thick, dark jungle of Isadora’s rich collages.

My Personal Review:
Once upon a time in Africa there lived a woodcutter and his wife who had fallen on some very tough times. His wife, the selfish stepmother of his two children, decided that the best idea would be to take them and take them "deep into the forest" and leave them there. They were going to starve if they kept those kids and if he didn't agree to that she was going to bother him forever and a day. Hansel and Gretel overheard them talking and were prepared to get through the ordeal by collecting pebbles to drop along the way so they could wend their way home.

The next night, when they had been abandoned in the forest it was so dark and scary to be out in the open under starry skies that Gretel began to cry. Hansel hugged and comforted her telling her not to worry. Of course the "pebbles Hansel had dropped glistened in the moonlight and the children followed them home." The stepmother was so mad she looked like she was going to pop any minute. The children were locked in the house and were unable to collect more pebbles. This time when they were taken into the forest they dropped bits of bread, only to have birds devour them. They came across a house "built entirely for bread with a roof made of cake and windows made of sugar." Very soon the children were captured by a wicked witch whose only plan was to fatten up poor Hansel and have a "tasty meal." Were they ever going to get out of this mess alive?

This "retold" story was very appealing, not so much for the story line, but rather the art work. The combination of bold painted strokes and collage melded together to create an endearing family group on the one hand and a wicked stepmother and an evil witch on the other. The dark forest
scenes were alive with vegetation and animal life and the reader almost wants to reach into the book and comfort poor Gretel. If you are into fairy tales that have had new life breathed into them, this one is a wildly interesting one you just might want to consider! Now the witch in this one is something else!

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