A stylized illustration of Hansel and Gretel in a forest. Hansel, with blonde hair, wears a red tunic and blue pants. Gretel, also with blonde hair, wears a white dress with a brown bodice. They are standing close together, looking down at something in their hands. The background is a dense forest with large, textured leaves in shades of green and blue.

HANSEL and GRETEL

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

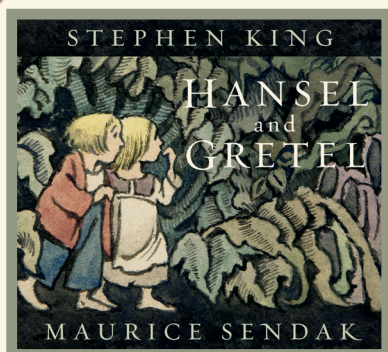
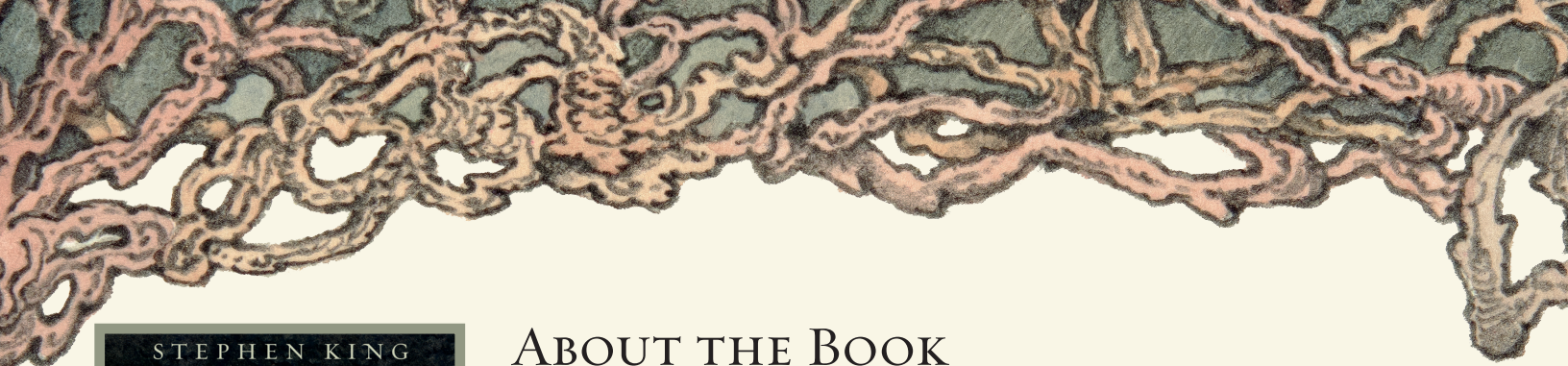
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ABOUT THE BOOK

Maurice Sendak's mysterious, magical illustrations highlight Stephen King's stirring retelling of the classic tale "Hansel and Gretel." A brother and sister are left alone in the deep, dark woods, where they encounter an evil witch. With bravery, ingenuity, and trust in one another, the children outsmart the witch and survive to return home. Like many fairy tales, this one has a happy ending to satisfy readers of all ages.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

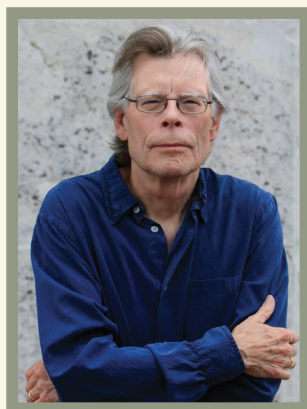


Photo by Shane Leonard

Stephen King is the author of more than sixty books, all of them worldwide bestsellers. His recent work includes *Never Flinch*, *You Like It Darker* (a *New York Times Book Review* top ten horror book of 2024), *Holly* (a *New York Times* Notable Book of 2023), *Fairy Tale*, *Billy Summers*, *If It Bleeds*, *The Institute*, *Elevation*, *The Outsider*, *Sleeping Beauties* (cowritten with his son Owen King), and the Bill Hodges trilogy: *End of Watch*, *Finders Keepers*, and *Mr. Mercedes* (an Edgar Award winner for Best Novel). His novel *11/22/63* was named a top ten book of 2011 by the *New York Times Book Review* and won the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for Mystery/Thriller. His epic works *The Dark Tower*, *It*, *Pet Sematary*, *Doctor Sleep*, and *Firestarter* are the basis for major motion pictures, with *It* now the highest-grossing horror film of all time. He is the recipient of the 2018 PEN America Literary Service Award, the 2014 National Medal of Arts, and the 2003 National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. He lives in Bangor, Maine, with his wife, novelist Tabitha King.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

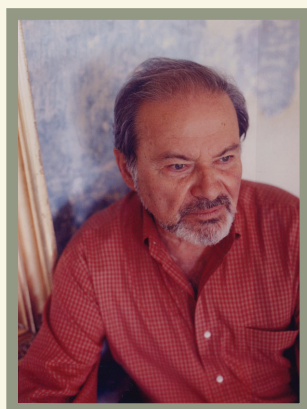


Photo by John Dugdale

Maurice Sendak's books have sold over 50 million copies and have been translated into more than 40 languages. He received the 1964 Caldecott Medal for *Where the Wild Things Are* and is the creator of such classics as *In the Night Kitchen*, *Outside Over There*, *Higglety Pigglety Pop!*, and *Nutshell Library*. In 1970 he received the international Hans Christian Andersen Medal for Illustration, in 1983 he received the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award from the American Library Association, and in 1996 he received a National Medal of Arts in recognition of his contribution to the arts in America. In 2003 Sendak received the first Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, an annual international prize for children's literature established by the Swedish government.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read the first page. When does this story take place? How do you know?
2. What hardships do the broom maker's family face?
3. What is his wife's plan? How does the broom maker feel about the plan?
4. Describe Hansel's and Gretel's dreams.
5. When Hansel overhears his stepmother's plan, why do you think he collects stones?
6. Why does Hansel lag behind as they all go deep into the forest? What excuse does he give?
7. Why do the children think their father is chopping wood nearby?
8. How does Hansel's plan help the children find their way home?
9. The second time Hansel overhears his stepmother, why can't he collect stones?
10. What does he drop behind him instead of stones? Did you think this plan would work?
11. Why are the breadcrumbs gone?
12. Why do the children follow the white bird? Where does it lead them? Who lives there?
13. What is magical about the old woman and her home? How does she trick the children?
14. Rhea the Witch is sneaky and strong, but what is her weakness?
15. What does the wind whisper to Gretel? How does she trick the witch?
16. What do Hansel and Gretel each think to take from the witch's house before they leave?
17. What happens when the children find their way home?





ACTIVITIES

How Sweet!

Ask your students to describe what the witch's cottage looks like when Hansel and Gretel first approach it. Your students will then design their own candy cottage using actual gingerbread pieces or graham crackers, a variety of candies, and icing. Alternatively, students can glue mixed media, such as buttons, colored paper, and chenille stems, onto a cardboard box to represent a gingerbread house, or they may create a two-dimensional design by painting the house and all its tasty details. Display the houses so students can share their work with their classmates.

Well Played

Fairy tales are ideal stories for students to perform because they have a clear structure with distinct characters. First, discuss the elements of the story with the children (characters, setting, problem, solution). Your students will then perform a play about Hansel and Gretel. Older students can write a script for their classmates to use, while younger students can retell the story in their own words. Have students create the settings (the children's home, the forest, the witch's house) on large pieces of mural paper. They must design masks or costumes and make or collect any necessary props. Students should rehearse their play before performing it for another class or for their parents.

Same Difference

There are myriad versions of the story of Hansel and Gretel. Compile several versions and present

them to your students. You can read them aloud to younger students, while older students can read them independently. Students will compare and contrast the retellings, including this new book. What is the same? What is different? Which version do they like the best? Why?

Double Take

Show the students the pages with the old lady and the witch. How does her appearance change? What details do they notice? Discuss how the house transforms as well. Have the students use a paper bag or tagboard and a stick to design a double-sided puppet which represents how the witch or the house changes. Alternatively, students can create their own character that alters its appearance and then design a two-sided puppet which shows how their character changes.

Dreaming

Discuss the meaning of Hansel's and Gretel's dreams. Then ask your students to recount one of their own dreams. Each student will write about their dream and add an illustration. Younger students can tell a partner about their dream before they draw it. If some students cannot recall an actual dream, ask them instead to write about and illustrate something they would, or would not, like to dream about. Have students share their work with a partner.

Guide prepared by Sue Ornstein, an educational consultant with 35 years of elementary teaching experience.