

TRS “Hansel and Gretel”

Once there lived a poor woodcutter with his two children and their stepmother. The boy was named Hansel and the girl was named Gretel. There was a severe **famine** in the land and the family was starving. Desperate, the stepmother said out loud to herself, “The children must go, else all of us will die of starvation.”

The children were so hungry that they had not been able to sleep, and they had heard their stepmother.

At sunrise, the stepmother woke the two children, saying, “Get up, we are going into the forest to gather wood.” She gave them each a bit of bread and said: “That’s all we have. Save it for your lunch.”

The stepmother led the children deep into the forest. Seeing her plan, Hansel dropped a small crumb of bread every few minutes, so that they could find their way home. Once they were completely lost, the stepmother ran away, leaving Hansel and Gretel alone.

“Don’t worry, Gretel,” said Hansel. “I have left a path to guide us back home. We will wait until father gets home and follow the trail by moonlight.”

Unfortunately, a flock of birds found and ate the trail of bread crumbs. Now, the children really were lost. Looking for water, the children saw a lighted **cottage**. They knocked on the door and an old woman welcomed them in to eat. She told them that she would help them go home the next day. She gave Hansel his own room and had Gretel sleep in the kitchen.

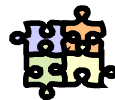
However, in the morning, they found the door to Hansel’s room locked. The old woman said, “I’ve been hungry, too. Last night, I fed you the last of my food. Now, you two will be my next meal!”

The old woman built a fire in her huge bread oven. Then, she told Gretel to open the oven door. But Gretel said, “The door is too heavy for me to open.”

As the old woman opened the door, Gretel gave her a shove into the oven. She shut the iron door and drew the bolt. How the old woman screamed! Gretel found an axe and broke the lock to Hansel’s room. As the children were leaving, Hansel caught a **glint** of light from something in a black pot by the door. The pot was full of precious rubies! Taking the jewels, they ran out into the woods. Just then, Hansel saw a bread crumb. The birds had not found all of them! The children followed the bread crumb trail back to their home.

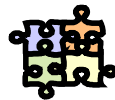
Their father greeted them with a hug and said, “Your stepmother told me what she did and she left.” The children showed their father the rubies and told their story. The family of three lived happily ever after.

Connect



(1) What other stories feature a forest as a dangerous setting?

Connect



(2) What other stories have an old woman as an evil character?
