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IT'S NOT HANSEL AND GRETEL



Written by JOSH FUNK
Illustrated by EDWARDIAN TAYLOR

For Jane, Ellen, and Doreen

—J. F.

To Jamey and my mini wolf pack: Samurai, Jinx, Hansel, and Gretel

—E. T.

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Once upon a time, Hansel and Gretel lived with their mama and papa on the outskirts of the woods.

Hansel? Gretel? Where are you?

Shhh!

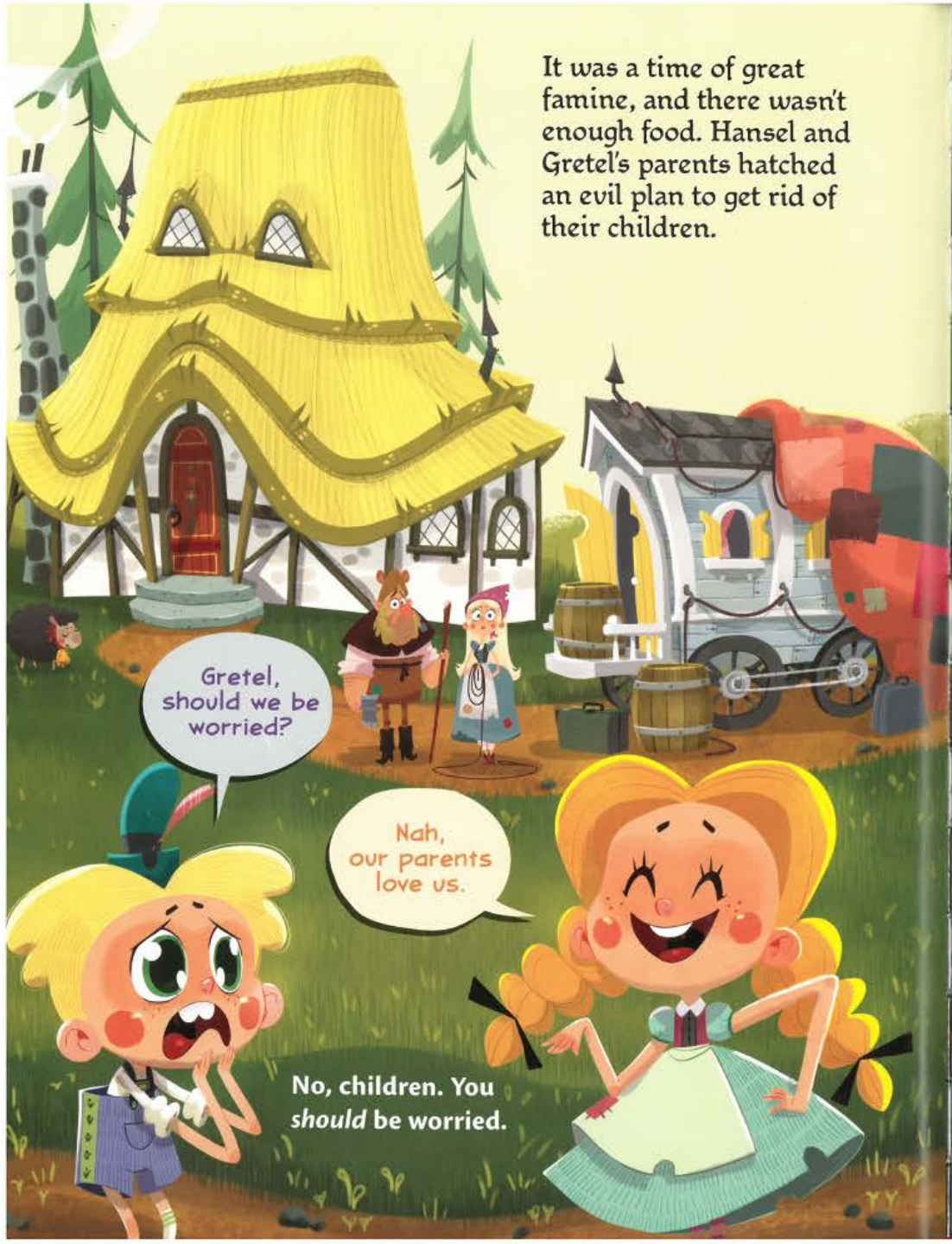
We're playing hide-and-seek with Cousin Jack!



Jack? The Jack from "Jack and the Beanstalk"?
GET OUT OF HERE! This isn't your story!

Pff!
Whatever!





It was a time of great famine, and there wasn't enough food. Hansel and Gretel's parents hatched an evil plan to get rid of their children.

Gretel, should we be worried?

Nah, our parents love us.

No, children. You should be worried.

That afternoon, Papa took the children deep into the forest.



Should we be worried NOW?

Yes! Your parents want to get rid of you!

No, Hansel, this is just our regular Thursday afternoon walk.

When the sky grew dark, Papa ran off without a word.
Hansel and Gretel grew cold and hungry.

Gretel,
I'm cold and
hungry.

Don't fret,
Hansel. I'm
sure Papa will be
right back with
blankets and
food.

You're
right. Our
parents
love us.



Oh, brother.



Luckily, Hansel had left a trail of bread crumbs leading back home.

Bread crumbs? I
didn't bring any
bread crumbs.

What kind
of person SAVES
bread crumbs?

It's a
time of great
famine. If there
are bread crumbs
left, we eat
them!



Okay! Forget the
bread crumbs!



Now I'm
hungry! Why'd you
have to bring up
bread crumbs?!



The next morning, Hansel and Gretel were completely lost. They began searching for a way back home but couldn't—

Look!
There's our house!

What?

YAY!
WE FOUND
IT!

No! You can't find it! That's not how the story goes!

Excuse me,
but we've lived
on the outskirts of
these woods our
whole lives. I think
we know our way
around.

Mama!
Papa! We're
home!

Gretel,
where are
Mama and
Papa?



Maybe Papa
got lost on the
way home to get
blankets and food.
He does have a
terrible sense of
direction.



NO! HE DIDN'T GET LOST!

But where's
Mama? She's
not in her
workshop.



She's
probably out
searching
for us.



**SHE'S NOT SEARCHING FOR YOU!
IT WAS THEIR EVIL PLOT TO GET RID OF YOU!**

**WAAA!
WAA-AA-
AA!**



Look what
you did! You
made Hansel
cry!



I—I didn't mean
to do that.

Don't
worry, Hansel.
We can find
Mama and Papa
ourselves!



Sniff.
Okay.



Wait! You can't leave without me! I'm the one telling the story!

Hansel and Gretel trekked deeper and deeper into the—

Excuse me, but why is it always Hansel and Gretel?

What do you mean?

Why isn't it ever Gretel and Hansel?

Umm . . . that's just how it's always been. . .

Just because it's always been that way doesn't make it right.

Plus, alphabetically, Gretel comes first.

Okay, okay. How's this? Gretel and Hansel trekked deeper and deeper into the woods . . .

Much better.

until they came upon . . .



... a gingerbread
hou—

**A SUPER-
TASTY COOKIE
HOUSE!**

**No! It's a
gingerbread house!
And outside of the
house stood—**

Ooh,
look! A
sweet old
lady.

Would you two STOP interrupting me?!

**No, you offer
them some food!**

Oh,
but it's so
cold! I could
use a little
oven time.

**NO
OVEN
TIME!**

Come
inside from
the cold, little
dearies. I can put
you in my oven to
warm you up.



The old lady was really a witch—who liked to eat children!

Don't be silly. She's a sweet old lady.


I promise you, she's a witch!

I don't really have any magical powers, so I'm not exactly a witch.

See, I told you she's not a witch!

WHY WON'T YOU CHILDREN BELIEVE ANYTHING I TELL YOU?!?

Stop yelling! Do you want to make Hansel cry again?



The witch (who was NOT a sweet old lady) locked Hansel in a cage and forced him to eat candy and treats to fatten him up.

YAY!
CANDY!

I wanna be
put in the candy
cage! Can I go
in the candy
cage?

No, you can't!
Gretel was forced to
do chores around
the house.

This is ridiculous!
The boy gets to sit
around and eat candy
while the girl has to
cook and clean? Get
with the times—this
is the fifteenth
century!

Ugh! Fine!
Hansel AND Gretel—

Ahem.

I mean, Gretel AND
Hansel were locked
in a cage and forced
to eat candy.

But who's
going to
clean my
toilet?

The witch could see that it would be weeks before the children became fat and puffy enough to eat. So—

That is NOT part of the story!
He is NOT allergic to strawberries!

He looks puffy enough to me.

Puffy?
Oh no! Was that strawberry shortcake?
Hansel's allergic to strawberries.

Bluh-bluh-blob.

Excuse me, Dr. Storyteller, but food allergies are NOT a joke. They can be VERY serious! Luckily Hansel is only mildly allergic to strawberries!

I'd better start the oven.

NO! It's too soon in the story!



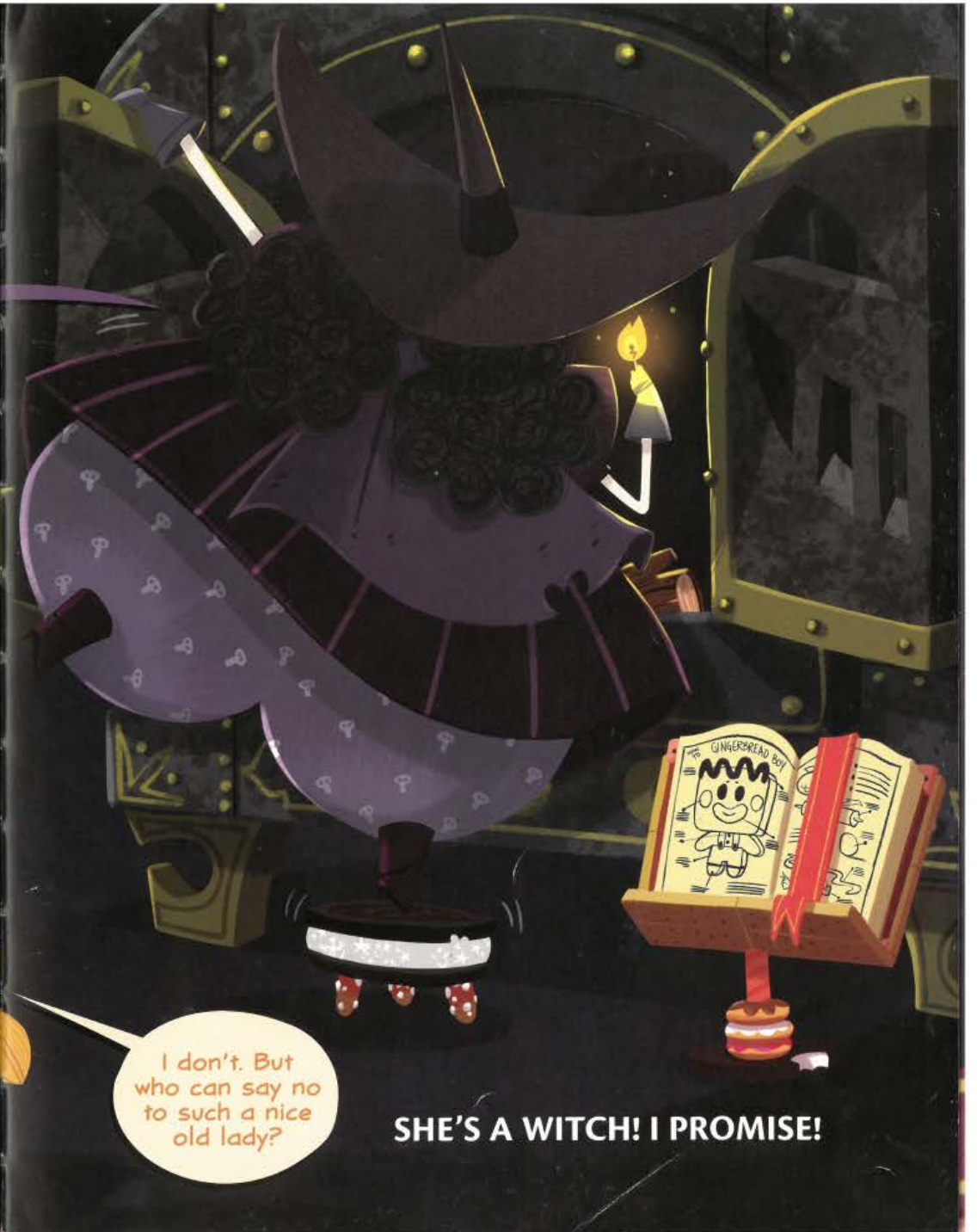
Even though it was far too soon,
the witch prepared the oven.

I fink
I mokay.

Double, double
toil and trouble...

I can't hear
you over that
noisy oven. Did
you say TOILET
trouble?

Ugh! I thought you
didn't want to do
chores. Gretel?



I don't. But
who can say no
to such a nice
old lady?

SHE'S A WITCH! I PROMISE!



Hmm, if I borrow some beans from the giant, I can make a little-boy chili.

Oh, are you chilly? Do you need some oven time? Here, I'll help you.

AAHHHHHHH!



Gretel, I found this book.

Fifty Recipes for Cooking Children?

You know, something tells me she wasn't such a nice lady after all.

YES! That was ME!

I WAS TELLING YOU THAT!

No need to get your undies in a twist!



If you two won't listen to me, you might as well tell the story yourselves!

Ooh! Can we do that?

Let's try it!

Wait, I didn't mean—



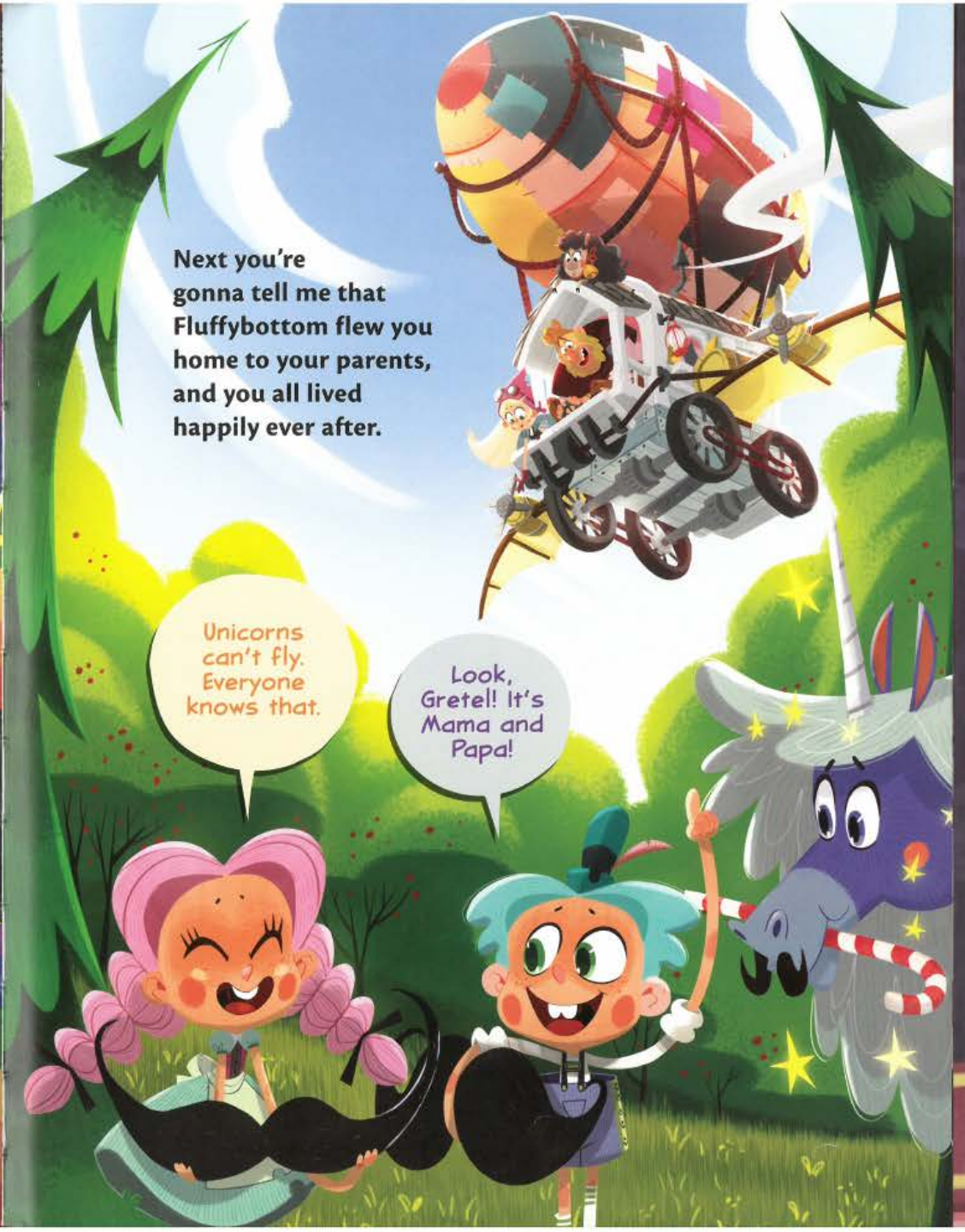
Hansel grew a mustache. I've always wanted a mustache.

Me, too! I want a mustache!

This is ridiculous.

Gretel grew a mustache, too! Now you try!

Gretel and Hansel met a unicorn named Fluffybottom.





I'm so sorry, children! I got lost on the way home to get blankets and food. You know I have a terrible sense of direction.

What?! No! You had an evil plot!

And I built this flying contraption to go searching for you.

That's exactly what I thought!

This is ALL wrong!



You know, if you take out the "child" ingredient, these recipes aren't half-bad.

Maybe we could live here and open a bakery!

Yes! Let's do it!



And we all lived happily ever after.

Ahem. He said, "And we all lived happily ever after...."

I suppose you want me to say "The End"?

THANK YOU!

Wait! No! I didn't mean to say "The End."

You only need to say it once. **NEXT!**

We'd like to buy something for our grandmother.