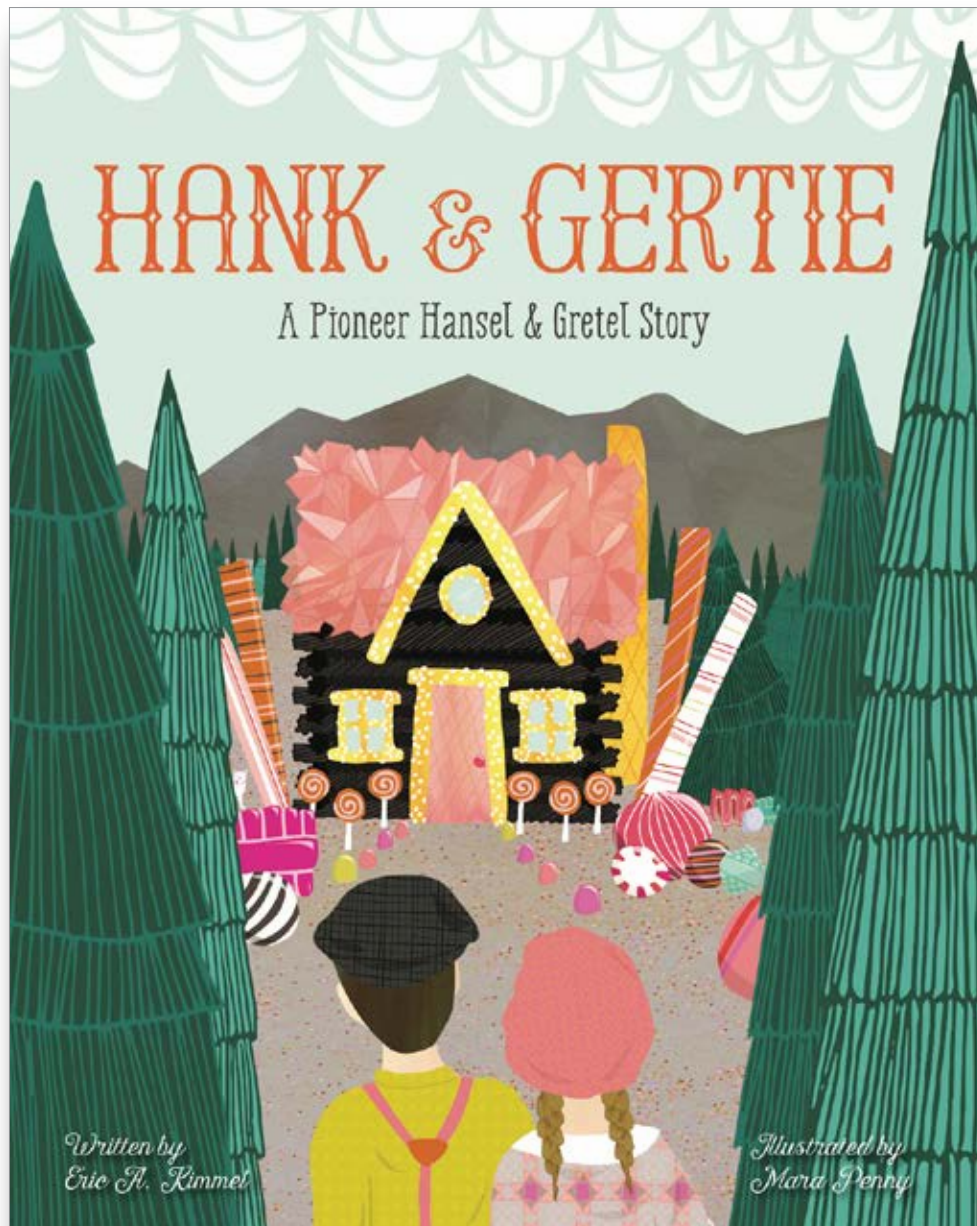




BOOK GUIDE FOR
Hank and Gertie
A Pioneer Hansel and Gretel Story

Written by Eric A. Kimmel
Illustrated by Mara Penny



Fry Readability: 3

Lexile Measure: 540L

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SUMMARY

While on a break from traveling west on a wagon train, young pioneers Hank and Gertie wander off the road and find themselves lost in a canyon. They stumble upon a cabin made of candy and a scary witch with magic powers. This is a Western retelling of the Grimm Brothers' classic *Hansel and Gretel*.



About the Author

Eric A. Kimmel is an award-winning author of more than fifty books, including other fractured fairytales including *Runaway Tortilla* and *Rattlestiltskin*. He lives in Portland, Oregon. Visit him at ericakimmel.com



About the Illustrator

Mara Penny is an Oakland-based illustrator who loves incorporating textiles and design into her artwork. Learn more at marapenny.com

DISCUSSION

Before Reading

Recount the popular version of *Hansel and Gretel* as told by the Brothers Grimm.

Look at the cover of the book and read the title. Who do you think Hank and Gertie are in the original *Hansel and Gretel* story? What does “pioneer” mean from the subtitle?

There is a house on the front cover, but it looks different from a normal house. What makes it look so different? Can you identify what the house is made of? Can you guess who owns the house?

After Reading

Hank and Gertie explore in the canyon when they get lost. What was their plan to find their way back? Why did that plan not work?

The witch in the story lives in a candy cabin. What kinds of candy is the cabin made of? Why do you think the witch’s cabin looks like that?

Look at the pages of Hank’s food. Which have you eaten? Which are your favorite foods? Why does Hank get to eat so much when Gertie barely gets dinner at all?

Gertie finds out that Hank was under the witch’s spell. What did the spell make him do? Why did the witch put a spell on Hank?

Look at the rattlesnake the witch turns into. What does the snake’s pattern look like that reminds you of the witch?

Bonus! Go through the book again, starting with the cover, and try to find the little white cats hidden throughout the story. There should be 13 total.



HISTORY

The story takes place on the Oregon Trail. What is the Oregon Trail? Look at a map and find where the trail goes.

Pioneers used to travel on wagon trains to go West and find new homes. Where did these pioneers come from? Where did they end up settling?

What were some problems people had on the Oregon Trail? Why was traveling on the trail difficult or dangerous?

SCIENCE

Look up the animals Gertie and the witch talk about: jackrabbits, coyotes, and rattlesnakes. Do some research on what they eat, where they live, and what kinds of animals they should avoid.

Gertie tricked the witch into turning the rock into a coyote and turning the witch herself into a rattlesnake. What other animals would you trick the witch into turning the rock and herself?

What are some animals that can pull wagon trains? What are some desert animals you think pioneers might have seen on the Oregon Trail?

LITERATURE

Name some other fairy tales or folk tales you know. Which are your favorite? Why?

Think about Hank and Gertie's story and then think about the original folktale of Hansel and Gretel. Where, in terms of setting, did Hansel and Gretel take place? Where does Hank and Gertie take place?

Compare and contrast the two. How are Hank and Gertie's adventures similar or different from Hansel and Gretel's?

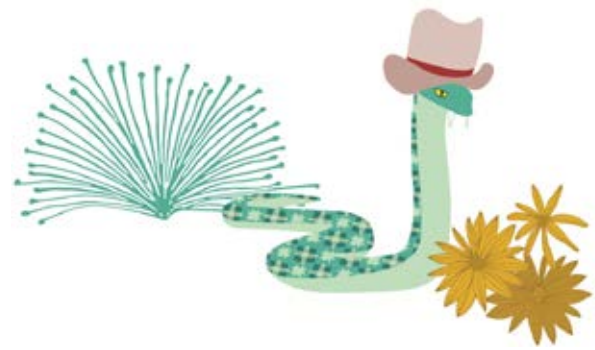
What do you think this fairy tale is trying to teach us?

ACTIVITIES

Draw your own candy house! Include your favorite candies and color it in.

Take another fairy tale and place the characters in another setting. Write your own story.

What if you turned into your favorite animal right now? Based on your clothes, what color would your animal be and what would it look like? Illustrate your animal self.



***Hank and Gertie* Word Search**

H D S R H N F W B B S Q L C Z
P N R C N G J A Q M H I A I D
K I N A K I R F J L A W F K H
Y S A I Z B B L J R C B L A R
E D X W E Z A B T Z K H M V C
A V M C A R U N L C O Y O T E
O J U Q R G O B V E J X C R N
W E J O T G O U Y T C J C E R
P P C V E N R N W Z I L A E E
P H N R M G Y E T U N S S N G
P O O O A P S S U R V O I O Y
J A C K R A B B I T A I N I W
E L A T K L O F W X R I S P H
L V H P M I I A R P H Z N J V
U M E S P Y K N B E E C Q P R

BARBECUE
BUZZARD
CORRAL
COYOTE
FOLKTALE
JACKRABBIT
MOCCASINS
NIBBLE
OREGON TRAIL
PIONEER
SHACK
WAGON TRAIN