

Hansel and Gretel

Once upon a time, two children shoved an old woman into her oven and baked her.

Once upon a time, a little bit earlier, the same two children struggled free from the chains that held them prisoner. In their struggle, they'd pulled away part of the gingerbread that held up the roof. Luckily, the owner was off in the woods collecting herbs to spice up her dinner. A dinner that was to consist of boiled child. They hid in a corner and waited for the woman to return.

Once upon a time, even earlier than that, the two little darlings knocked on a very strange door. The edge was decorated with ornate sugar paste. It was set into a dark brown wall that bowed slightly in the middle. The house had the look of a pot-bellied stove. A vivid pink gumdrop served as a handle. Beads of sweat trickled down the young girls forehead and the boy shivered slightly despite the spring air. They flinched at a nightingale singing in the canopy. They certainly didn't want to be knocking on that door.

Once upon a time, a little bit before the door, our two heroes were lost in an unfamiliar forest. They'd been wandering backwards and forwards for hours. Each tree they passed started to look the same as every other. Over time, they started to see faces in the bark. They reassured each other that they knew where they were going. The boy took the girl's arm and held her tight; he promised her they'd find shelter soon. In the end, it wasn't until nearly dusk when they stumbled upon the sugary cottage.

Once upon a time, before they were lost, the pair of angels were engaged in a heated row with their mother. During the night, a freshly-baked apple pie had gone missing from the pantry. Only the tin and a handful of crumbs remained. With no other suspects, their mother had pinned the blame on them. Furious, she'd demanded that they head into the forest to collect another bushel of apples. They argued that they didn't know the way. It didn't matter. In the end, she'd sent them packing.

Once upon a time, in the dead of night, a freshly baked apple pie slowly cooled in the pantry. The scented steam drifted out of the window and into the cool air. There, it wafted up into the trees, past the uncaring nose of a sleeping fox, under the wings of a hunting owl and into the nostrils of a hungry squirrel. Unaware of the devastation that was to follow, the squirrel pricked up its ears and followed the aroma. It was a very hungry squirrel. All it left was the tin and a handful of crumbs.