



2009

# The Witch's Guide to Cooking with Children

Tessa McMillan

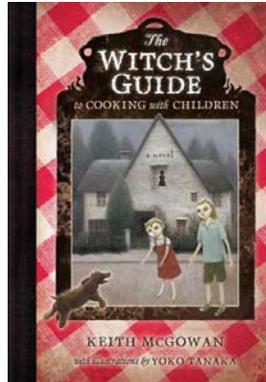
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McGowan, Keith. *The Witch's Guide to Cooking with Children*. Illustrated by Yoko Tanaka. Henry Holt, 2009. ISBN 9780805086683. \$15.99. 177 p.

Reviewer: Tessa McMillan

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Adventure stories; Fairy tales;

Subject: Brothers and sisters--Juvenile fiction; Witches--Juvenile fiction; Inventors--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Sol and Connie Blink have just moved to Grand Creek. While checking out the neighborhood on their first day, they meet Fay Holaderry and her dog, J. Swift. Sol notices a strange bone in Swift's mouth. After doing some research, Sol realizes the bone is a human femur. Both Connie and Sol decide to investigate Holaderry, and they find out that she is a real witch who eats children. Later, one of Holaderry's helpers kidnaps Connie. Sol realizes his sister has been captured and comes to her rescue, using his heat detection invention to figure out where Holaderry will cook Connie. Once Sol finds Connie, he too gets captured. But, with the help of Swift, the children are able to escape and push Holaderry into a fire pit. Sol and Connie leave Grand Creek to stay with their aunt. Holaderry survives the fire pit but has gained terrible scars to remind her of her encounter with the Blink children.

McGowan's debut novel is a modern take on the Brothers Grimm story of Hansel and Gretel. Some character explanations are too wordy and could confuse readers, but the book is still a suspenseful page-turner. This could be a good resource for teachers when doing a unit about fairy tales.

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