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The Brixen Witch by Stacy DeKeyser

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Author: DeKeyser, Stacy

Title: The Brixen Witch

Illustrator: Nickle, John

Year of Publication: 2012

Publisher: Margaret K. McElderry Books

ISBN: 9781442433281

Number of pages: 208

Rating: Excellent

Reading/Interest Level: Intermediate

Keywords: Fantasy; Witchcraft; Children; Rats; Village Life; Family; Magic; Music; Retold Fairy Tales

Review:

An ordinary boy on a rabbit hunt finds a valuable coin in the forest. What happens when he puts that enchanted golden guilder into his pocket is the story of, Rudi Baur, the village of Brixen and the Brixen Witch. Because the coin belongs to the witch, the whole village is cursed with an infestation of rats. A musical pied piper takes care of the rats, but leads the village children away when the townspeople can't meet his price. Rudi soon finds that he is the only one who can make the witch lift the curse his actions have caused.

Stacy DeKeyser has written an adventure story set in a small alpine village overshadowed by a mountain said to be inhabited by a witch. Told in third person her plot twists and turns as she develops the characters of the villagers of Brixen and the Baur family; especially Rudi and his grandmother. Weaving folklore and superstition throughout creates a suspenseful story as villagers deal with the effect that Rudi's thoughtless actions bring to the whole community. Reminiscent of the tale of the Pied Piper, DeKeyser broadens that idea to include how the children and Rudi use courage and innovation to foil a villain. Chapters are short, interesting and descriptive. Full of moral dilemmas and good intentions a young boy with his wise grandmother to advise him takes responsibility for his actions. This book would be one that parents and children would enjoy reading together

Reviewer: Cynthia Frazier

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