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The Singing Bones

Jarrett Bell

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Book Review

Title: The Singing Bones
Author: Shaun Tan
Reviewer: Jarrett Bell
Publisher: Aurthur A. Levine Books
Publication Year: 2015
ISBN: 9780545946124
Number of Pages: 185
Interest Level: Intermediate, Young Adult
Rating: Excellent



Review

In 1815, two German brothers with the surname Grimm published the first edition of Children's and Household Tales, a complete flop. However, their luck changed in 1823 when they received a new edition, published in London with one major change: the addition of illustrations. Ever since then, fairy tales have been interpreted by the accompanied artwork. *The Singing Bones* is a first attempt to add minimalism sculpture, rather than imaginative illustration, to the fairy tales. This leaves the interpretation of the story to the reader, the way the author believes the Brothers Grimm meant them to be.

The Singing Bones is more of a collection of art than a collection of fairy tales. The sculptures echo the Brothers Grimm original intent with a sense of ancient pottery that reminds readers of pieces like *The Venus of Willendorf*, and other prehistoric carvings. These sculptures are frightening, introspective, creative, and wacky, but also very kid friendly. Keep in mind that this book is not meant for first-time readings of classic fairy tales as each page does not have the full text, but rather a snippet. There are full summaries of each fairy tale in an appendix, but readers looking for the full text will need to look elsewhere.