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Raspberries!

Megan Harris

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Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell
Reading Level: Preschool, Primary
Rating: Outstanding
Genre: Picture books;
Subject: Raspberries; Baking; Neighborliness; Books--Reviews;

Red-haired Simon is a kind-hearted and famous baker. People come from miles around to watch him prepare bread dough and to purchase freshly-baked loaves and other treats. Simon loves to sell young Sally, his favorite customer, two loaves of bread for a penny because she is too poor to purchase bread at the regular price. When his two fellow bakers steal all of Simon's money, Simon moves away to another town, starts an egg selling business. He begins wearing a hat which hides his red hair and most of his face. One day Simon sees Sally, who has matured into a beautiful young lady. Sally gives him a little pouch full of dried raspberry seeds to thank Simon for the years he saved her family from starving. He doesn't think much about the gift until the morning after he flings them into the air during a thunder and lightning storm. The next morning Simon's farm is covered with bushes of ripe raspberries. After one taste, he jumps up happily singing "Rasssspberrrieeees!" At first, the people in the town are not interested in buying raspberries from their egg man. However, the town baker, seeing the delicious raspberries in Simon's wagon, purchases a box and together they make raspberry tarts. One bite of the freshly baked tarts makes the baker jump up happily singing "Rasssspberrrieeees!" Simon's life is transformed. Lines of people now want raspberry tarts and everyone, even the adults, are jumping in the air singing "Rasssspberrrieeees!" Simon is happy and he no longer needs to hide under his hat. His raspberry tarts unite the town as they celebrate the town's birthday.

The famous story-telling author, Jay O'Callahan, and the illustrator, Will Moses, have come together to present a fun read-aloud story of how the results of one man's earlier kind acts return to bless his life. The colorful, folksy illustrations add to this selection's appeal. In the text, when the word "Rasssspberrrieeees!" appears, the fancy font is fittingly raspberry red! Also included is a CD of O'Callahan reading the selection.

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