



Teacher's Notes

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Story Summary

It's a damp and dull day, but in the kitchen it's warm and cosy. David and his mother are baking, and the delicious smells bring a greedy witch to their garden. Witches love to steal freshly baked cakes!

She is going to use every magic trick she knows to steal their scrumptious treats, but can David outsmart her?



Margaret Mahy (1936–2012) is one of New Zealand's most celebrated children's writers. She is the author of more than 150 titles, which have been translated into many different languages and sold around the world. Appointed to the Order of New Zealand in 1993, Mahy also won many global prizes for children's writers, including the Carnegie Medal and the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Award.

'It is in the nature of books, that they have the capacity to make you feel powerful about what you can alter and achieve in your life' - Margaret Mahy

About the Illustrator

Jenny Williams is a hugely talented illustrator whose style is recognisable at a glance. A native of London, Williams was educated at the Wimbledon School of Art and University of London. She started drawing as a very young child, making up stories about the characters she created and her drawings have appeared in many different types of books, including fairy tales and nursery rhymes, animal stories and folk tales, published throughout the world.

Suggested Shared Reading Questions

- † What is a witch? Do you believe in witches? What are some characteristics of witches from stories you have read or heard?
- † What is a cinder? Can you move like a whirling cinder?
- † Can you guess what season it is in the story? What clues did you get from the illustrations?
- † What does sly mean?
- † Why didn't David invite the witch in? If you accidentally invited a witch into your house where might they sleep?
- † What does 'admiringly' mean?
- † What sound do cakes make to witch's ears?
- † What could a magical egg-beater do?
- † Why is the spell broken?
- † What is the witch doing when she 'squinned through the windows'? What might your face look like if you 'squinned'?
- † How do David and his mother keep the witch's magic out?
- † Do you think David's cakes will be safe in the top of the oven?
- † What is a 'cockabully'? Can you move your hand 'as quick as a cockabully'?
- † Can you make your body into the shape of a 'crumpled witch'?
- † David eats a cake to help calm himself. What is something you might do to help calm yourself down?

- † Do you feel sorry for the witch? Why, or why not?
- † Why were David's cakes black on top?
- † Why does David see a witch when his mother can only see a blackbird?

Suggested Activities

Art

The illustrator, Jenny Williams uses hatching and cross-hatching techniques to add texture and shading to the illustrations in *The Witch and the Cherry Tree*. Demonstrate the technique and use examples from the book for the students to design their own witch or other magical character and shade using hatching and cross-hatching.

Design

Design and make a poster advertising the witch's Great Cake Baking Contest. Think about the colours you will use and choose lettering/font that people will be able to read easily. Will you tell the competitors that it's a witch's contest? Will you offer a prize? How will you illustrate your poster so that people want to enter?

S.T.E.M

The witch offers David's mother a magical egg-beater as a prize in her cake competition. Draw and label a magical egg beater that you have invented. What does it do and how do you make it work? Perhaps it does more than just beat eggs in a magical way? Think about the materials you would need to make it and list them.

Literacy

Poetry/Word families/Rhyme: Work with the students to produce a rhyming word bank to form the basis of a rhyming spell for the witch to use to make it rain when she dances

Creative Writing: Write, or draw a scene for the story telling the reader another way the witch could have tried to trick David or his mother into giving her a cake

Transactional Writing: Write a recipe for a cake that a witch might like. Draw a picture of the finished cake. Remember to make sure you cook it for too long!