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Mr. Semolina-Semolinus: A Greek Folktale



Synopsis

Since she cannot find the perfect man to marry, feisty Princess Areti decides to create a man of her own, Mr. Semolina-Semolinus, out of sugar, almonds, and semolina wheat, but when he is kidnapped by an evil queen, Areti must brave a perilous journey to get him back.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Kindergarten-Grade 3. This Greek folktale combines elements of "Pygmalion" and "East o' the Sun and West o' the Moon" to celebrate the power of enduring love. After rejecting many suitors, Princess Areti finally stirs up a man out of sugar, almonds, and semolina. Her prayers and God's blessing bring him to life, "five times beautiful and ten times kind." But a wicked queen steals the lovely man away, so the princess searches for him, wearing out three pairs of iron shoes and encountering three wise women who give her magical gifts. The story is not over when Areti finds Mr. Semolina-Semolinus, for she must release him from the queen's spell. The colored-ink and colored-pencil illustrations, executed in a naive, modern folk style, show deliberately disproportional people in modern dress. Muted colors, quirky composition, and the characters' theatrical poses all contribute to a sly, subtle humor that nicely flavors the romantic story line. A general note puts the story in European context, but does not identify a specific source. An unusual addition to folktale picture-book collections. Margaret A. Chang, North Adams State College, MA Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Ages 6^9. Finding no suitors appropriately appealing, Areti, a young Greek princess, decides to create the perfect mate herself. From a recipe of almonds, sugar, and semolina, which is both kneaded and prayed over, she makes a man who is "five times beautiful and ten times kind." Even in fairy tales, life is never simple, and Areti's creation is almost immediately kidnapped by an evil queen. The valiant princess wears out three pairs of iron shoes as she searches for her man. With the magic of the mothers of the moon, sun, and stars to help her, Areti comes, by story's end, to live "blissfully but no better," and the evil queen's attempt to cook up a perfect man sours. This engaging tale, told in flowing prose with the charming authenticity of oral tradition, is enhanced by Potter's use of colored ink and pencil. Older readers will relish the understated humor in the text and the way Potter conveys the humor through her illustrations. An excellent choice for reading aloud or for reader's theater. Karen Morgan

I have a young daughter who is beginning to understand how the opinions of others can shape how she views herself. I read this book with her and the positive message of believing in yourself was better demonstrated by the actions of the protagonist than I could ever hope to explain to her in my own words. Thank you for this book, Anthony Manna. I hope I am on the right path of teaching my daughter that in order for others to believe in her, she needs first to believe in herself.

This is a delightful telling of a lesser-known folktale. Highly recommended, especially if you like a story with a strong heroine.

has some classic motives...a quest...like east of the sun, west of the moon (Norway) and wearing out iron sandals....(Hungarian folktale)...absolutely delightful illustrations....and when princess areti met the stars....it opened up a window into a study of Greek constellations in the night sky.....my favorite folktale.....brave heroines...

This is a fantastic book! If you liked Paperbag Princess, you will love this book. The story is very well developed and is a positive book. (Especially for young girls!) This is a role reversal story about a princess who decides to create her own man (since she wasn't happy with any of the men she knew) and has to save him after he has been kidnapped by an evil queen! I give this book a definite 5 stars!

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