

## Frank's Frantic Festival

**Harry Binnendyk**

**Tom Palomares, Illustrator**

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*The entertaining picture book Frank's Frantic Festival follows a boy through the consequences of his magic-based misbehavior.*

Harry Binnendyk's picture book *Frank's Frantic Festival* follows a boy and his best friend through their magical mishap.

When Frank and his father visit the town wizard to get medicine for their farm animals, Frank is sure that an old, broken wand won't be missed. And when he encounters his best friend, Henry, on the way home, Frank can't resist trying the wand out. With a made-up spell, Frank turns Henry into a very startled pig—just ahead of the village's barbecue festival.

Henry is terrified that he will be barbecued, and so he escapes. All of Frank's attempts to reverse the spell only turn Henry into other animals—all candidates for the grill. Henry's frantic efforts to avoid capture throw the farm into chaos. Only a true wizard can help.

Clear about its message that thievery is a bad way to create excitement, the story follows as Frank's sense of panic steadily grows. And as shape-shifting Henry runs for his life, he leaves chaos in his wake. Slapstick jokes are used to tone down the story's terror, while multi-sensory descriptions flesh its details out: as a goose, Henry hisses and launches itself at Frank's mother, who screams and falls backwards, tossing the wet, clean laundry into the air. But there is an instance of missing words that undermines the story.

The active, colorful illustrations concentrate on characters' emotions, from the look on Frank's face when he is up to mischief, to his horror when the fun is over. The shocked facial expressions and body language of Frank's family members, and the changing expressions of the old wizard, are also all clear. And the time period is also established via the pictures' details: the characters do farm chores by hand and are dressed in old fashioned apparel. However, several illustrations contain errors: a pig appears to be floating in the air above his pen, and a rabbit, said to be laying on the grass, is shown sitting down.

Containing a lesson about the magic of friendship, the entertaining picture book *Frank's Frantic Festival* follows a boy through the consequences of his misbehavior.

KRISTINE MORRIS (June 6, 2022)

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