

The Weird Sisters: A Note, a Goat, and a Casserole

Mark David Smith

Kari Rust, Illustrator

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Three witches team up with their new neighbor to solve local mysteries in Mark David Smith's illustrated chapter book *The Weird Sisters*.

Hildegurp, Yuckmina, and Glubbifer, along with their cat, Graymalkin, are planning a move to Covenly. A real estate agent shows them an old house with broken windows and an overgrown yard, and the three witches think that it's perfect.

Jessica lives down the street from the house, and her pet goat has gone missing. The Weird sisters agree to help her find the creature, but the mystery is compounded when Jessica discovers a torn note telling the sisters to leave the town "or else." With the aid of the sisters and their magic, Jessica sets out to solve the mystery around the note—and to find her goat. Neighbors, a police officer, and a casserole all fit together in the solution.

The book's twelve short chapters each come with a generous helping of illustrations; the format is ideal for the story's brisk pace. The language is fun and funny, from the sisters' giggle-worthy names through to continued wordplay throughout. Misunderstandings arise from the differences between the goat-related "kid" and "pen" and their more common everyday namesakes; when Jessica shows the sisters where she kept her pet, Hildegurp says, "Goat's pen? Your kid can write?"

Each character's appearance and personality is distinct, and the illustrations have a classic, Disney-like quality. The book includes two recipes for the sisters' Hurlyburly Soup: one intended to amuse, with ingredients like dragon's scales and toad venom, and another that substitutes more pedestrian items, like corn and diced tomatoes.

The Weird Sisters is a satisfying sleuthing adventure for young readers.

PETER DABBENE (May / June 2022)

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