

# BRAVE RED, SMART FROG

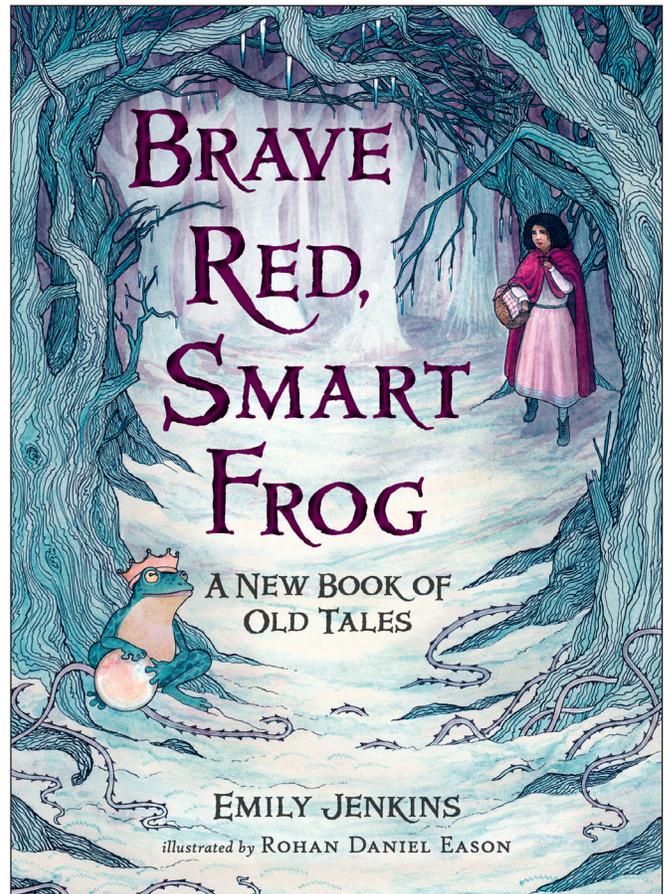
## A NEW BOOK OF OLD TALES

EMILY JENKINS

*illustrated by* ROHAN DANIEL EASON

### ABOUT THE BOOK

There once was a frozen forest so cold, you could feel it through the soles of your boots. It was a strange place where some kisses broke enchantments and others began them. Many said witches lived there — some with cold hearts, others with hot ovens and ugly appetites — and also dwarves in tiny houses made of stones. In this icy wood, a stepmother might eat a girl's heart to restore her own beauty, while a woodcutter might become stupid with grief at the death of his donkey. Here a princess with too many dresses grows spiteful out of loneliness, while a mistreated girl who is kind to a crone finds pearls dropping from her mouth whenever she speaks. With empathy and an ear for emotion, Emily Jenkins retells seven fairy tales in contemporary language that reveals both the pathos and the humor of some of our most beloved stories. Charming illustrations by Rohan Daniel Eason add whimsical details that enhance every new reading.



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#### Common Core Connections

This discussion guide can be used with large or small groups and will help students meet several of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts. These include the reading literature standards for key ideas and details, craft and structure, and integration of knowledge and ideas (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL). Questions can also be used as writing prompts for independent work.

This guide was created by Kellee Moyer, a middle-school reading coach and teacher from Orlando, Florida. She is the co-author of the blog *Unleashing Readers* and the author of various teaching guides.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### “Snow White”

1. Snow White’s mother is quite unhappy in the castle. What about the castle and world she is living in is not right for the type of person she is? Do you believe her unhappiness plays a hand in her death?
2. At the beginning of the story, dwarves are included with witches and sprites, making them feel villainous. How is this different from the seven dwarves we meet later in the story? Do they fit the negative connotation or are they different from what the villagers assume?
3. When the dwarves see Snow White, a stranger, in their home, they have quite a conversation about whether they should trust her. Why do you think they decide to trust her?
4. January knows the forest very well and has no trouble guessing where Snow White might find shelter. Why would January know the forest so well? What can you assume about her because she knows the forest?
5. At the end of the story, the dwarves put Snow White in the sunshine to warm her and wake her, but a prince also gives her a kiss. What do you think wakes Snow White, the warmth or the kiss?

### “The Frog Prince”

1. Crystal is beautiful — except for her character. She is spoiled because of her upbringing. Does this make it her fault that her character is flawed? Do you think her character can be changed?
2. After the frog leaves, Crystal is looking for him. Why does she miss his company? How is his company different from those of her ladies-in-waiting and family?

### “Three Wishes”

1. When Twig returns from the cold forest with no money, food, or wood, Butter is very upset and won’t listen about the sprite’s wishes. What should Twig have done instead of making a random wish? What three wishes could he have made to change his family’s situation completely?
2. What do you think Twig and Butter do the next day to change their situation?

### “Toads and Pearls”

1. After Cherry is enchanted, her stepmother says she loves her. Do you believe her? What do you think she really loves?
2. When Walnut goes to get water and bring it home, she is looking for a crone, but there is a boy there instead. What big mistake does Walnut make? What do you think would have happened if she’d given the boy some of the water?
3. Many might believe that Cherry’s enchantment is a curse, because she has pearls coming out of her mouth after every sentence, but it could also be a gift. How does Cherry take this enchantment and make it a gift?

### “Red Riding Hood”

1. What information that Red shared does the wolf use to his advantage? Do you think he would have successfully been able to get into Grandmother’s house without this information?
2. What the wolf does to Grandmother and Red is not kind, but do you think the wolf himself was unkind? Why?





## “The Three Great Noodles”

1. Why does Amity get sad about the ax hanging in their cellar? Is her sadness rational? Are emotions expected to be rational?
2. Blunt calls Amity and her family, as well as the old woman, the old man, and the crowd at the pond, noodles. What does he mean by that, as they are not literally noodles?
3. Through Blunt’s journey, what does he learn about himself and people in general? Why do you think he decides to return to Amity?

## “Hansel and Gretel”

1. Why would Gretel rather stay in the forest with Hansel than return home to her father and stepmother?
2. Old Mother ends up being worse than returning home, but Gretel stays. Why?
3. How do you think Hansel knows that their stepmother is dead as well? What can you infer from his knowledge?

## Author’s Note

1. Emily Jenkins explains her intention behind rewriting these stories in the simple way that she did. How did she adhere to the traditional stories while also putting her own spin on them?
2. The author also shares some questions that she wanted to answer that may not have been answered in the original fairy tales. Do you feel she answered these questions? What other questions did she answer that weren’t answered in the original stories?

## *Brave Red, Smart Frog*

1. After reading any of the stories in *Brave Red, Smart Frog*, what can you say about how the author changes the tale to make it new?
2. To help the reader visualize the setting and characters of the stories, the author includes descriptive words throughout. What is a passage that you feel is written with great imagery?
3. Many of the characters in the book are described as beautiful in looks and/or beautiful in character. Which of the characters fare well in their story? What do you think this says about the importance of character versus looks?
4. Consider the names of the characters throughout the book. How does each name give a clue to the character’s personality or looks?
5. Which two characters are stupid with grief and allow their families to suffer because of their grieving? In what other ways are these two characters similar? How are they different?
6. The stories all occur in and around the same forest, but they overlap in more ways than setting. What other overlapping do you notice?



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Emily Jenkins is the author of many books for children, including the recent picture books *Tiger and Badger*, illustrated by Marie-Louise Gay, and *Princessland*, illustrated by Yoko Tanaka. Her chapter books include the Toys series, illustrated by Paul O. Zelinsky, and the Upside-Down Magic series, which she co-authors. Emily Jenkins lives in New York City.



### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Rohan Daniel Eason has illustrated several books for children, including *My First Kafka: Runaways, Rodents, and Giant Bugs* by Matthue Roth. He lives and works in London.