

Jub jumped. A twisted old woman with a face like the bark of a tree and horrible claw hands was standing on the path in front of Jub. She had fierce red eyes like poisonous berries.

"What's in the sack?"

"Let me pass, please," said Jub.

"What's in the sack, I said!"

The old woman had grabbed hold of Jub's arm. Her touch nipped like pepper.

"Let me alone!" gasped Jub. "I must go on."

"Shut up!" said the vicious old woman, and she spat green spittle in Jub's face. Jub was so shocked that she took a step backwards and tripped over a tree-root. Faster than fury, the old woman was on her and had snatched the sack of

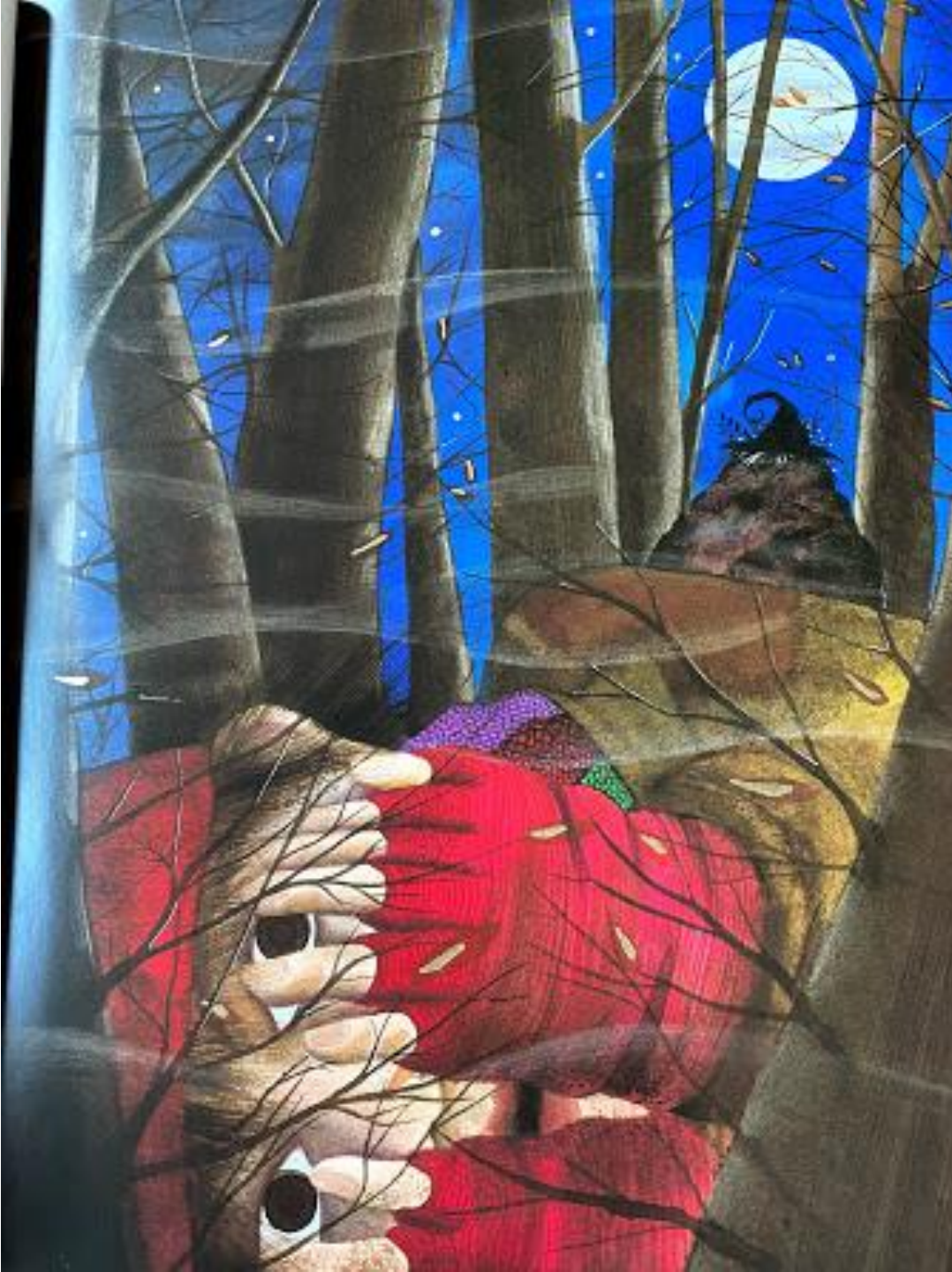
Happy Endings.





"I'm having this, my six-fingered dearie," she snarled. Then she spat at Jub again and hobbled rapidly away into the darkness and the fog. Jub lay there for a long time, terrified that the witch would return.

The fog began to lift and the moon turned the narrow path through the forest to a long silver finger. An owl's hoot questioned sadly. Jub got to her feet. The Happy Endings were lost! She turned and ran back down the path towards her home, scattering bitter tears into the cold black night.



As Jub ran sobbing through the forest, children in their beds were listening to their bedtime stories. But tonight there were to be no Happy Endings. Hansel and Gretel were trapped screaming in the Gingerbread House while the wicked witch made the oven hotter and hotter. Some of the children started to cry.

