



The Hinky-Pink: An Old Tale

Megan McDonald (Retelling) , Brian Floca (Illustrator)

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A happy Hinky-Pink is a fine thing. An unhappy Hinky-Pink **pinches!**

That is what happens to Anabel, a young seamstress in Old Italy who has only days to finish her dream: sewing a gown for the princess to wear at the Butterfly Ball.

Thanks -- or no thanks -- to the Hinky-Pink Anabel is woozy for want of sleep. Her lace looks like cheesecloth; her hems, like saddle cinches. Night after night, the Hinky-Pink keeps wrestling her bedclothes to the floor -- and pinching. What is its problem? And how is Anabel to help?

A grand old favorite of storytellers is here given sprightly new life.

The Hinky-Pink: An Old Tale Details

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Author : Megan McDonald (Retelling) , Brian Floca (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review The Hinky-Pink: An Old Tale for online ebook

Janessa says

My six-year old daughter says all five stars for this book. Here is her review:

When Anabel was bored, she heard a knock on her door. It was the princess Isabella's maid, Mag. Anabel was invited to stay in the castle and make a beautiful dress for the princess. Inside the castle there was a little tiny hinky pink pinching on Anabel every night because it wanted a bed of its own. Anabel couldn't sleep and couldn't make pretty stitches until she finally made the right size bed for the Hinky Pink. When Anabel saw the hinky pink she couldn't believe how tiny it was. Finally the hinky pink was happy, and Anabel could sew her dress for the princess. It was perfectly beautiful.

And here is my review:

I loved a princess book from the point of view of the Princess' seamstress. Anabel is darling, resourceful, talented and creative. It is so much fun to see her triumph in the end, and be just as happy as if she were the one wearing the fancy dress to the ball. McDonald's storytelling is wonderful to read aloud, and Floca's illustrations enhance the story at every turn of the page. His paintings are full of energy and life, and capture the magical feel of Old Florence.

Cheryl says

I had never before heard of the Hinky Pink, which the author's note tells us was inspired by the story "The Bed Just So" by Margery Bailey from the book *Whistle for Good*, and loved by children's librarians. The retelling is by Megan McDonald (of Judy Moody fame). "Old Italy" (which appears to be Florence, with its terracotta rooftops and distinctive Duomo). Anabel is a seamstress in who's been appointed to sew a gown for the Princess Isabella Caramella Gorgonzola in time for the Butterfly Ball, while they eponymous little creature interferes with her nightly sleep. "Holy Pincushions!" Full of textile vocabulary, like embroidery, whip-stitch, silk satin, voile, chiffon, organza, crinoline, and crepe.

Rodolfo A. says

This book is about a girl named Anabel, she lived in a tany room. She trying to make a beatifull dress to the Quin. Some minute later she knew witch color of the dress she going to used. She needed those materials to make the dress. She need scissors and string. In her head she rememeber were she put the materials. Later she was finish doing the dress and the quin put it on and was beatifull and the quin like it.

I like this book because how she work. This book is fantisia because their a princes.

Jennifer says

Anabel feels plain, as she is only a seamstress who dreams of being like a princess, with long golden locks and a name that ends in 'ella'. Even though she is not a princess, what she is is the best seamstress around, with cross-stitching abilities to die for. One day she has the opportunity to make a dress for the princess, and finds it is harder with a hinky pink giving her trouble. This fairy tale set in Italy is a lovely story that uses Italian words and phrases, and teaches the value of ingenuity. Its easy-to-hold size is also a bonus.

Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says

This was a cute, unusual story, reminiscent of Rumpelstiltskin, in which the seamstress Anabel is whisked to the princess' tower to make her a gown for the ball. Alas, a mischievous hinky-pink keeps making a mess, keeping Anabel from her sleep, and slowing down the progress of the gown to a crawl. What to do? What I really enjoyed about this story was the way it was told, with interjections of Italian words and phrases here and there. Cute. I read it aloud to the cats. They liked it. Recommended.

Hajnal says

My favorite line from this book sums up the humor in the text: "Holy macaroni!". This a nontraditional fairy tale of a girl named Anabel, who wishes she was a princess, and real princess, Isabella, who doesn't quite behave or look like the princess Anabel thinks she should be. Isabella demands that Anabel sew her a beautiful dress in one week. But a mysterious Hinky-Pink keeps messing up Anabel's work! How will she ever get the dress done? This book is geared towards early readers, and there are plenty of illustrations to guide readers along. The character of Anabel is a realistic heroine who battles the odds against a not-so-nice and not-so-beautiful princess, making this a good story for little girls.

Rhyme Owens says

I liked this book because even though the words were tiny like a chapter book and not a picture book, the story was pretty good.

Rebecca says

Five stars to this "old tale retold" -- if you've ever felt like you've heard all the fairytales and are looking for something "new," this is the book for you. Anabel, a poor but talented seamstress, gets the chance of a lifetime when she is asked to sew a dress for the princess to wear to the ball. Trouble is, someone or something is haunting the tower room where she works, waking her every night with pinches and throwing her covers on the floor. What is this thing, and can she appease it in time to make the dress?

The language is wonderful, with sprinklings of Italian words and fun, fresh metaphors ("Anabel tried to

make her cross-stitch look like snowflakes, but it turned to cauliflower"). Author Megan McDonald notes that librarians have long loved to tell this story out loud, and it begs to be audible, but that would mean missing the soft, expressive, hilarious illustrations. Highly recommended!

Bronwyn says

A classic old tale. Fun language - especially for those who see!

Kathryn says

I'm giving this three stars because probably I would have liked it as a kid, though I found it just a tad boring now... Even so, I was curious how she would finally find a bed suitable for the Hinky-Pink (and would we ever actually SEE the Hinky-Pink???)

Sherry says

McDonald's "The Hinky-Pink" is a charming reinvention of a classic tale - a seamstress trying to make a princess' gown is stymied by a mischievous little haunt in an old Florentine castle. Certain things ring familiar to Judy Moody fans, like the seamstress' occupation with succeeding at something important, while having just the right name or the right flair. Italian words are inserted here and there for emphasis, and the colorful and fluid illustrations are integral to the charm of this book. Renaissance Florence shines through pen and ink and watercolor, showcasing the costumes, objects and interior rooms of the period, as well as the Palazzo Pitti, Palazzo Vecchio, and the Duomo of Santa Maria del Fiore. Great for booktalking to ages 7-9.

Author's Note: The Hink-Pink was inspired by the tale "The Bed Just So" by Margery Bailey in the book "Whistle for Good Fortune" (Little, Brown & Coampany, 1940). It was later retold by Jeanne B. Hardendorff (Four Winds Press, 1975). I have restored the tale to its original setting (Firenze, Old Italy) and style, but the invention of the princess tale is mine, and the original story featured a tailor rather than a young seamstress. Librarians the world over love to tell this tale aloud, and I first heard it told at the Carnegie Library in Pittsburg, PA, where I once had my beginnings as a children's librarian and storyteller. M.M.

Betsy says

A good original fairy tale is a hard creature to conjure. To come up with a story of appropriate length, charm, and originality often requires that its author be ready to do a little research and a little digging in ye olde history files. Megan McDonald is a former children's librarian and storyteller, though you probably know her better for her Judy Moody stories than anything else. But as a storyteller, she has acquired a fine ear for a tellable tale. Of course the appeal of *The Hinky Pink* is that it isn't wholly reliant on the fact that few of us have heard this story of a mischievous little magical critter. No, between McDonald's brisk and catchy telling and Brian Floca's evocative settings and funny images, *Hinky Pink* is what they call in the business a charmer. An all new retelling of a story that is bound to be beloved, always assuming that enough people go out and find it.

Anabel is just a simple seamstress living out her days in her tiny room in Old Italy. She longs to someday make gowns and sew delicate fabrics fit for a princess. Not that she's ever seen one before, but she's sure they're all delicate and lovely. Anabel unexpectedly has her wish granted when the resident princess, one Isabella Caramella Gorgonzola, ruins her best gown with a well-placed raspberry tart. She tells the seamstress that she has only one week to produce the mother of all gowns. One, "the color of a ruby snowbird's wing. With sequins that glitter like sparkleberries and stitches as lacey as snowflakes." Fair enough. Yet the room in which Anabel is to stay while she creates this marvel is haunted by a sprite called a hinky pink. Every night when she goes to fall asleep the hinky pink pinches her and throws her covers to the four corners of the room. Local nursemaid Mag tells Anabel that the creature will only be appeased if the girl makes it its own little bed. Yet making the perfect bed is by no means easy, and as the night of the ball grows closer Anabel will have to find a way to appease not only a hudgein, as Mag calls it, but a cranky princess as well. McDonald has culled her tale from Margery Bailey's *The Bed Just So* in *Whistle for Good Fortune* and from Jean B. Hardendorff's retelling.

There are certain expectations a small child has when they are read a fairy tale. These expectations can be lined up neatly in a row as follows:

If there is a poor girl at the beginning . . . she will be rich by the end.
If she does not have a husband she will have one by the end.
If she meets a princess who is not saintly . . . that princess will be punished by the end.
If she is a seamstress she will BE the princess by the end.

See? Simple rules but we've seen them followed so meticulously over the years that I was wholly unprepared for McDonald's own story. There's a certain distinctly American expectation that if you start a story out as a poor seamstress, even if you enjoy your work you are going to be introduced to greater grander things by the story's close and you'll never return to your life of sewing ever again. McDonald's heroine, however, dreams only of someday getting to produce a dress that is fit for a princess. "A dress that would dance the tarantella." And she gets her wish in the end, though it is almost as if she accomplishes two wishes at once. You see, at the start of the book Anabel dreams of what a real princess would look like. When she sees her first live one the effect is disheartening. However, once Anabel's dress is placed on the princess, it transforms the woman into someone more princess-like than could have been expected (or hoped for). Anabel sees the essence royalty that has been created by her own hands. Maybe that's why the last image in the book is of Anabel dancing with Mag outside of the ballroom while the princess is in the out-of-focus background. If this book is about anything, it's about the triumph of working class people to keep their jobs in spite of awful odds and awfuller employers.

Another oddity associated with this story is the hinky pink itself. Many of us have heard of stories like this where mischievous spirits must be appeased before they'll grant a wish or a boon. Yet the hinky pink isn't like that. If you're expecting it to reward Anabel for figuring out what it wants, you are bound to be let down. The hinky pink grants the girl only what she would have had in the first place; sleep. The crux of the story isn't how Anabel will use the hinky pink for her own devices, but rather how she'll outwit this very personal problem that has been haunting her. Heck, if you even wanted to call this story a great big metaphor, I wouldn't stop you. Seems about right to me.

And all the while McDonald's writing sets the story's tone. Little sentences are worked in that you might not spot on a first or second reading, but that become very clear and distinct the more you look at the book. When Anabel is certain that she will fail because she is too tired to work properly Mag bucks her up with a sturdy, "walk with your slippers until you find your shoes." Or, "The barking of dogs does not reach heaven." Of course, we never do discover how it is that Mag knows that Anabel is a magnificent tailor, one to be believed in, even to the very last minute. But this concern is brief and fleeting and though I've little doubt that some enterprising young reader will wonder as well, it's not so much of a flaw as it is a narrative gap.

Sometimes an author will set a book in a very distinctive location, like Spain or England, and the accompanying illustrator will work up a quick and dirty sense of the location. England? Great, just slap some furry hats on guys in red coats and voila! Instant British Isles. Brian Floca is not one of these artists. To call him meticulous is to hint at a kind of anal-retentive nature in this work, but I'm having a hard time describing his pictures in this book in any other way. In her Author's Note, McDonald says that she has, "restored the tale to its original setting (Firenze, Old Italy)". Under Floca's hand, that sentence takes on greater weight. From its window-side glances to its multiple aerial views, Floca gets deep into the heart of Firenze. He writes in his Illustrator's Note that while "*The Hinky-Pink* is no substitute for a reputable art history survey," many of the buildings seen here are particular to Florence. And as Mr. Floca says, "A problem with Florence is that it looks good from every angle. This makes decisions difficult." One can only speculate as to what was rejected, particularly since the final product seems so self-evident and perfectly done.

The colors of the book are interesting too. Set in a kind of 1800s period, the book is awash in pinks, creams, golds, and light cloud-ridden blues. But the pinks and roses are the most significant here. From the shock of hair lighting up the hinky pink's head to the princess's fairytale dress, pink is the name of the game (which may be inspired, in some small part, by the name of the sprite itself). That doesn't mean that Floca doesn't stretch his muscles in other areas as well. I loved the dull, almost dirty colors of Anabel's tiny room where she hems for a living. Or the late afternoon gold that stretches from the Great Castle of Firenze to the bottom of the page. Or, best of all, the explosion of riotous color emanating from the teeny tiny hugin when at last it finds its own perfect bed.

The speech balloons are an interesting touch for a book containing such classical styles and designs. They are most often exclamations like "Aargh!", "Alas", "At last," and "Holy macaroni". Many of them are Italian in nature, like "Santo cielo!" and "Che bella!" We can't know whose decision it was to create such little cries either. Maybe McDonald wrote them in intending that they be part of the narrative and Floca plucked them out. Or maybe he wrote them on his own and inserted them into the text. Or maybe they were always meant to be balloons. It's hard to say. Yet they offer a nice complement to the sheer amount of action Floca packs into this book. I mean, when that hinky pink first pinches Anabel and pulls off her covers, it's not done gently or lightly but in such a way that she is tossed head over heels backwards, feet in the air. And when she runs about trying to find the hobbled-gob the panels are broken up with ornate columns, like a comic rife with classical architecture. So between the speech balloons on the one hand and the running, diving, tossing, and turning on the other, this is a pretty lively concoction.

Let's tick them off on our fingers shall we. You have a fun fairytale of an entirely new nature - tick. You have unexpected twists and turns in what at first appears to be an already familiar plot - tick. You have beautiful architecture and an eye pleasing shades and hues - tick. And on top of all that you have enough action and movement to keep you engaged from start to finish - tick tick tick. The pairing of McDonald and Floca wouldn't have occurred to me but then I'm not an editor, am I? That's why they get paid the big bucks, y'know. So if your fairytale sections are running a bit low and you need something wholly new to please your older storytime crew, *The Hinky Pink* will fit the bill. One-of-a-kind in the best possible way.

Ages 4-8.

Magaly A. says

This book is about a woman named "Anabel". Anabel is a poor woman that's needs to work all day. There are three princesses the first one is Isabella, the second one is Caramella and the third one is Gorgonzola. Is called the hinky pink because Anabel asked the princess Isabella if she could stay. Isabella said "YES" but Anabel needs to make her a dress for a ball. So she did but a creature "called" hinky pink kept on stealing what

Anabel was going to use, so Anabel made the hinky pink a bed and she liked it and then Anabel made the prettiest dress ever. This book is traditional literature. I want to recommend this book to people that love fairy tales. I like this book because I like story's with princesses.

Shayla says

Super cute, and gave my kids a taste for Florence.

Spencer E. says

This story was funny. Anabel was great at sewing. Mag worked for a princess. The princess needed a new dress. Mag took Anabel to the castle to sew a dress. But, Anabel could not sew because something was pinching her and would not let her sleep. Anabel stayed up for three nights. She finally saw the creature. It was a Hinky Pink that needed a bed to sleep in. Anabel made many different kinds of beds. A thimble was the right one. The Hinky Pink was happy and let Anabel sleep. Anabel could finally sew the princesses dress. I would recommend this book to my sister. She loves stories about princesses.
