



## **A Great Cake - Tina Matthews**

**Published by Walker Books RRP \$27.99**

Harvey wants to bake a cake but his mother says, "We don't have all the things we need."

Harvey is a cheerful, resourceful boy who finds a way around the inadequate supplies. He conjures up a cake from ingredients he discovers in the bathroom.

His mother says, "It's a great cake for snails." Together, they go to find some.

In subsequent days, Harvey repeats his desire to bake a cake and receives the same 'lack of ingredients' response. Each time he produces a cake with unlikely materials. Then his mother and small brother join him to find creatures that would appreciate his creation.

Like most children, Harvey is oblivious to the work that goes on around him as he focuses on what he wants to do. The delightful story gives a realistic view of a busy family. Yet, they still find time for the small things that are important. The joyful conclusion unites family, friends and neighbours.

Exquisite woodblock and stencil illustrations by the author expand the storyline with the detail of daily life. There are many humorous touches to be found (I particularly liked the skipping rope Harvey used as a dressing gown cord and the mother wearing socks with jandals). Vibrant colours, household clutter, a spacious backyard, and well-proportioned people with friendly faces all combine to make a splendid picture book. A quality, hardback publication that will give hours of pleasure.

**Reviewed by children's book author Jean Bennett**

