

# ROALD DAHL'S THE WITCHES

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## THE WITCHES

### CHARACTERS:

BOY  
GRANDMOTHER  
EVENT MANAGER/DEPUTY HIGH WITCH  
GRAND HIGH WITCH  
BRUNO JENKINS  
MRS JENKINS  
MR JENKINS  
FRENCH WITCH  
AMERICAN WITCH  
WILLY THE WAITER  
ITALIAN CHEF  
COCKNEY CHEF  
WITCHES

### GRANDMOTHER'S WARNING

*Grandmother sits in her armchair, lights her cigar and addresses the audience*

Today, children, I will tell you about witches. In fairy-tales, witches always wear silly black hats and cloaks, and they ride on broomsticks. In the movies they study at Hogwarts and save the world. But this is not a movie...This is NOT a fairy-tale. This is about REAL WITCHES. The most important thing you should know about REAL WITCHES is this. Listen very carefully. Never forget what is coming next. REAL

WITCHES dress in ordinary <sup>1</sup>clothes and look like ordinary women. They live in ordinary houses and they work in ORDINARY JOBS. That is why they are so hard to catch. A REAL WITCH hates children. She spends all her time plotting to get rid of children. It is all she thinks about the whole day long. 'Which child,' she says to herself, 'exactly which child shall I choose for my next squelching<sup>2</sup>?'. Squish them and squiggle<sup>3</sup> them and make them disappear. That is the motto<sup>4</sup> of all witches. A witch never gets caught. A witch is always a woman. I do not wish to speak badly about women. Most women are lovely like me. But the fact remains that all witches are women. A REAL WITCH is easily the most dangerous of all the living creatures on earth. What makes her doubly dangerous is the fact that she doesn't look dangerous.

You can never be quite sure. She might even be your lovely school-teacher who is sitting close to you at this very moment. Look carefully at that teacher. Perhaps she is smiling at the craziness of such a suggestion<sup>5</sup>. Don't let that fool <sup>6</sup>you. It could be part of her cleverness. I am not, of course, telling you for one second that your teacher actually is a witch. All I am saying is that she might be one. It is most unlikely. But it is not impossible. Oh, if only there were a way of telling for sure which witch is a witch, then we could round them all up and put them in the meat-grinder<sup>7</sup> and make Witchwurst. Unfortunately, there is no such way. But there are some signs you can look out for. Pay attention and listen carefully, because if you dont...well something terrible could happen to you...

### REAL WITCHES

*BOY is in bed, sleeping. He tosses and turns a little and then suddenly sits bolt upright)*

BOY: *[A horrified cry]* Mama! Papa! No!

*GRANDMOTHER goes over to him and comforts Boy, trying to calm him.*

GRRANDMOTHER: Don't worry darling, you are safe here with me. Grandma is here.

BOY: Will I ever see them again? Mama and Papa?

GRANDMOTHER: Someday darling, yes, someday darling.

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<sup>1</sup> alltaglich

<sup>2</sup> zerdrucken, zermatschen

<sup>3</sup> Erfundenes Wort

<sup>4</sup> Wappenspruch

<sup>5</sup> Vorschlag

<sup>6</sup> jmdn betrugen

<sup>7</sup> Fleischwolf

BOY: But I miss them so much-

GRANDMOTHER: I miss them too darling but right now you have to get some rest. Tomorrow we are going on holiday, to the seaside.

BOY: But Grandma, can you tell me a story...

GRANDMOTHER: Oh Boy...it is late...

BOY: Just one story Grandma....please

GRANDMOTHER: Well....

BOY: Please...

GRANDMOTHER: Just one

BOY: Just one

GRANDMOTHER: Ok, ok I have a funny one about a chicken...  
A long time ago, in my village, there was a little girl I once knew.  
Her name was Birgit Svenson, she lived just across the road from us. One day she started growing feathers all over her body.

BOY: Feathers?

GRANDMOTHER: Yes Feathers! Within a month, she had turned into a large white chicken. Her parents kept her for years in a pen <sup>8</sup>in the garden. She even laid eggs.'

BOY: What colour eggs?

GRANDMOTHER: Brown ones. Biggest eggs I've ever seen in my life. Her mother made omelettes out of them. Delicious<sup>9</sup> they were.

BOY: Are you being truthful Grandma? I think you are pulling my leg<sup>10</sup>...

GRANDMOTHER: I am not pulling anything. That was a true story.

BOY: You swear you aren't pulling my leg?. You swear<sup>11</sup> you aren't just pretending?'

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<sup>8</sup> Gehege

<sup>9</sup> köstlich

<sup>10</sup> jmdn. auf den Arm nehmen

GRANDMOTHER: Listen, I have known no less than five children who have simply vanished<sup>12</sup> off the face of this earth, never to be seen again. The witches took them.

BOY: *(quietly)* Witches...

GRANDMOTHER: I am trying to make sure you don't go the same way<sup>13</sup>. I love you and I want you to stay with me. I don't want you to end up like Sabine Christiansen.

BOY: What happened Grandma? What happened to Sabine?

GRANDMOTHER: You don't believe me so why should I tell you? And it's time to sleep.

BOY: Oh please! Grandma, just tell me please. I can't sleep if I am so curious...

GRANDMOTHER :Ok.

The Christiansen family, they lived in the Black Forest, and they had an old oil-painting in the living-room which they were very proud of. The painting showed some ducks in the yard outside a farmhouse. There were no people in the painting, just a flock<sup>14</sup> of ducks on a grassy farmyard and the farmhouse in the background. It was a large painting and rather pretty. Well, one day their daughter Sabine came home from school eating an apple. She said a nice lady had given it to her on the street. The next morning little Sabine was not in her bed. The parents searched everywhere but they couldn't find her. Then all of a sudden her father shouted, "There she is! That's Sabine feeding the ducks!" He was pointing at the oil-painting, and sure enough Sabine was in it. She was standing in the farmyard throwing bread to the ducks. The father rushed<sup>15</sup> up to the painting and touched her. But that didn't help. She was simply a part of the painting, just a picture painted on the canvas.

BOY: 'Did you ever see that painting, Grandma, with the little girl in it?

GRANDMOTHER: 'Many times, and the peculiar<sup>16</sup> thing was that little Sabine kept changing her position in the picture. One day she would actually be inside the farmhouse and you could see her face looking out of the window. Another day she would be far over to the left with a duck in her arms.

BOY: Did you see her moving in the picture, Grandma?

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<sup>11</sup> schwören

<sup>12</sup> verschwand

<sup>13</sup> dass das gleiche dir passieren wurde

<sup>14</sup> Schar

<sup>15</sup> drängte

<sup>16</sup> seltsam

GRANDMOTHER: Nobody did. Wherever she was, whether outside feeding the ducks or inside looking out of the window, she was always motionless, just a figure painted in oils. It was all very odd<sup>17</sup>. Very odd indeed. And what was most odd of all was that as the years went by, she kept growing older and older in the picture. Then all at once, she disappeared from the picture altogether.'

BOY: You mean she died?

GRANDMOTHER: Who knows? Some very mysterious things go on in the world of witches.

BOY: With silly black hats and black cloaks, riding on broomsticks?

GRANDMOTHER: No. They're for fairy tales. I'm talking of *real* witches.

BOY: *Real* witches?

GRANDMOTHER: Real witches. Real witches dress in ordinary clothes and look very much like ordinary women. That's why they're so hard to catch.

BOY: But why should we want to catch them?

GRANDMOTHER: Because, my darling Boy, they are evil. They hate children. They get the same pleasure from squelching a child as you get from eating a plateful of Marzipan and Lebkuchen.

BOY: Squelching?

[ACTORS *mime* GRANDMOTHER'S *following speech, one playing a witch, the other her victim*]

GRANDMOTHER: She chooses a victim; softly stalks it. Closer and closer, then ... phwisst! ... she swoops<sup>18</sup>.

GRANDMOTHER: And the child disappears. Poof! Just like Birgit and Sabine.

BOY: A witch wouldn't come in through my window in the night, would she?

GRANDMOTHER: No, a witch will never do silly things like climbing up drainpipes<sup>19</sup> or breaking into people's houses. You'll be quite safe in your bed. Come along dear. I'll tuck<sup>20</sup> you in.

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<sup>17</sup> seltsam

<sup>18</sup> schnappt

<sup>19</sup> Abzugsrohr

<sup>20</sup> Jemanden zudecken

*Boy lies in bed wide-eyed.*

BOY: Grandma.....What...well...what if...well, you said they look like ordinary women- how ...how do I know if a witch is actually a witch?

GRANDMOTHER: In the first place, a REAL WITCH is certain always to be wearing gloves<sup>21</sup> when you meet her.

BOY: Surely not always, what about in the summer when it's hot?'

GRANDMOTHER: Even in the summer, because she doesn't have finger-nails. Instead of finger-nails, she has thin curvy claws, like a cat, and she wears the gloves to hide them.

BOY: Mamma used to wear gloves-

GRANDMOTHER: Not in the house, Witches wear gloves even in the house. They only take them off when they go to bed.' '

BOY: How do you know all this, Grandma?' '

GRANDMOTHER: Don't interrupt<sup>22</sup>. Just take it all in. The second thing to remember is that a REAL WITCH is always bald.<sup>23</sup>

BOY: Bald?

**GRANDMOTHER** *sings* : A REAL WITCH is - Bald as a boiled egg!<sup>24</sup>

She wears a first-class wig, my fig,  
and it covers an nasty Wig-rash.  
And IF you see a woman who nose holes are big,  
Then you might want to dash<sup>25</sup>.

Pulling ladies hair is not the thing to do,  
even though she's wearing gloves.  
But you'd have to tug<sup>26</sup> her hair to know who's who,  
so watch out, now because -

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<sup>21</sup> Handschuhe

<sup>22</sup> unterbrechen

<sup>23</sup> glatzköpfig

<sup>24</sup> kahl wie ein gekochtes Ei

<sup>25</sup> abhauen

<sup>26</sup> zerren

**CHORUS:**

She wears gloves, my love,  
has large nose holes and no toes,  
first class wig, she's bald as a pig.  
It can be that you'll see, not just one clue, but two,  
Then you'll know, it's time for you to go!!

**VERSE 2:**

The next clue to know a REAL WITCH is...  
You can tell by her feet, my sweet,  
she has no toes.  
Squishing square stumps<sup>27</sup> into narrow<sup>28</sup> shoes is her  
feat,  
it's amazing she walks and goes -

Searching to pick up the scent, my gent,  
of stink waves oozing<sup>29</sup> from a child.  
A smell like dog-poo poo tells where he went  
And it sends her whirling<sup>30</sup> wild!

**CHORUS:**

She wears gloves, my love,  
has large nose holes and no toes,  
first class wig<sup>31</sup>, she's bald as a pig.  
It can be that you'll see, not just one clue, but two,  
then you'll know, it's time for you to go!!

**VERSE 3:**

To *spot* a Witch I think you now can, little man  
with the help of these clues.  
Should you see this last one, it is best if you ran,  
So be sure you wear good shoes!

The last clue is a little wet, my pet,  
Look real close or this, you won't get.  
Just *one* more and then that's it, little Brit.  
A REAL WITCH has blue spit!

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<sup>27</sup> Die Stummel

<sup>28</sup> schmal

<sup>29</sup> sickern

<sup>30</sup> wirbelnd

<sup>31</sup> Perücke

**CHORUS:**

She wears gloves, my love,  
has large nose holes and no toes,  
first -class wig, she's bald as a pig  
If you're quick, then you'll see she has blueish<sup>32</sup> spit.  
Look out lad<sup>33</sup> ! You better run like mad!!!

*(The dancers rush off stage )*

BOY: Grandma ...

GRANDMOTHER: Yes? *[She lights another thin cigar]*

BOY: Are there any witches in England?

GRANDMOTHER: Of course. Every country has its own Secret Society of Witches.

BOY: I'm sure I won't meet one.

GRANDMOTHER: I sincerely hope you won't. English witches are probably the most vicious in the whole world.

BOY: What do they do?

GRANDMOTHER: Their favourite spell<sup>34</sup> is to mix up a potion<sup>35</sup> that turns a child into a creature all grown-ups hate.

BOY: Such as?

GRANDMOTHER: A slug<sup>36</sup>, Then the grown-ups step on and squish it without knowing it's a child, maybe.

BOY: That's awful.

GRANDMOTHER: That's English witches for you.

BOY: These ... Societies of Witches. Do they have meetings? Like our Chess Society at school?

GRANDMOTHER: They have an annual meeting, attended by the Grand High Witch of all the world.

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<sup>32</sup> bläulich

<sup>33</sup> Junge

<sup>34</sup> Zauberspruch

<sup>35</sup> Zaubertrank

<sup>36</sup> Nacktschnecke

BOY: The Grand High Witch!

GRANDMOTHER: Well, now you know what to look out for, and you are safe with me in this house. Now let's get you back to sleep

GRANDMOTHER: Goodnight now Boy.

BOY: Goodnight, Grandma,

### **THE GRAND HIGH WITCH**

*Grandmother and boy enter with their luggage.*

GRANDMOTHER: Ah smell that sea air boy! This is good for the lungs! (*starts coughing*)

*[The EVENT MANAGER comes out of the doorway. She sniffs the air and stands at the entrance pompously]*

EVENT MANAGER: Welcome to the Hotel Magnificent!

*A guest enters*

GUEST: Buena Sera!

EVENT MANAGER: Good-day, madam. Straight through for the meeting.

*The door is held open by the EVENT MANAGER. The LADY enters the hotel*

*A tubby<sup>37</sup> boy enters.. He is eating a doughnut  
Grandmother approaches the reception with her cigar in her mouth, the EVENT MANAGER shows her a no smoking sign.*

EVENT MANAGER: No smoking on the premises please. Madame may smoke over there if she wishes.

*The EVENT MANAGER takes her bags inside.  
Boy sees Bruno playing in the garden. Boy is very carefully holding a box with holes in the top of it.*

BOY: Hello

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<sup>37</sup> pummelig

BRUNO: (*greedily*) What you got in there? Something to eat?  
Give us some.

BOY: I've been to the pet shop. Grandma gave me some money.

BRUNO: What've you got?

BOY: White mice. I'm going to call them William and ...Kate.

BRUNO: Boring. Guess what pets I got.

BOY: What?

BRUNO: Snakes and crocodiles

BOY: Oh?

BRUNO: Gonna make me a leather jacket

BOY: Oh.

BRUNO: (*Concentrating on his magnifying-glass<sup>38</sup> now*) Bet  
my dad earns more than yours.

BOY: Probably.

BRUNO: How many cars has he got, your dad?

BOY: None.

BRUNO: Mine's got three.

BOY: What are you doing with that magnifying-glass?

BRUNO: Roasting worms

BOY: That's horrible. Stop it.  
*[He tries to grab the magnifying-glass]*

BRUNO: Here. Get away. Shove off.  
*[A scuffle<sup>39</sup> breaks out]*

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<sup>38</sup> Lupe

<sup>39</sup> Handgemenge/ Rauferei

[MRS JENKINS *enters, carrying a paper bag*]  
MRS JENKINS: 'Bruno!  
(*She tries to pull the boys apart*)

BRUNO: Ow! Mum ...

MRS JENKINS: (*Going to BRUNO and brushing him down*) Look at you, your shorts are all grubby.'

BRUNO: He tried to nick my magnifying-glass.

MRS JENKINS: (*To BOY*) You keep away from my little Bruno, d'you hear?

(*GRANDMOTHER returns*)

GRANDMOTHER: (*referring to Bruno*) Who are you calling little? Come on Boy. Let's go inside.

MRS JENKINS: (*To BRUNO*) There's your doughnut, treasure. (*MRS JENKINS off*)

BRUNO: Mum, it has no Nutella in it...'

[*Another LADY, The GRAND HIGH WITCH, enters. Seagull cries stop. The EVENT MANAGER turns and sees her. She reacts as if mesmerized<sup>40</sup> by her*]

EVENT MANAGER: Good-day, madam.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: [*Charming*] Good-day. Is this the correct hotel for the Annual General Meeting of the Royal Society for the Prevention<sup>41</sup> of Cruelty<sup>42</sup> to Children?

DOORMAN: Yes, madam, this is the Hotel for the Annual General Meeting of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Welcome. [*She holds the door open for her*]

[*The GRAND HIGH WITCH suddenly starts sniffing, as genteelly as possible, and turns to see the source of the stink-waves, which is BRUNO. She approaches him*]

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Yell, hello, little man.

BRUNO: Eh?

GRAND HIGH WITCH: You are liking your doughnut, yes?

(*BRUNO nods*)

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<sup>40</sup> fasziniert

<sup>41</sup> die Vermeidung

<sup>42</sup> Mishandlung, Qualerei

GRAND HIGH WITCH: But vot happens ven it is finished? Would you like some chocolate?

*[She hands him a bar of chocolate]*

BRUNO: *[Enthusiastically]* Yeah.

*[He breaks off a piece and eats it]*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Good?

BRUNO: Great.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Would you like some more?

BRUNO: Yeah.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: I vill give you six more chocolate bars like that if you vill meet me in the ball-room of this hotel at twenty-five past three.

BRUNO: Six bars! I'll be there.

*(The GRAND HIGH WITCH enters the hotel)*

You bet I'll be there!

*(He greedily stuffs more chocolate into his mouth as the scene ends)*

### **THE WITCHES' ANNUAL MEETING**

*MUSIC plays while the Grand Ballroom is being set up for the Annual General meeting.*

*Boy goes through the auditorium carrying a box with holes in the lid. He climbs on to the stage.*

*Suddenly we hear the EVENT MANAGER'S voice offstage*

EVENT MANAGER: This way, ladies.

*(BOY hides as a troupe of ladies (WITCHES) enter)*

*[They arrange themselves, seated facing the stage. As they talk, some scratch their necks with gloved hands]*

EVENT MANAGER Ladies of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, pray welcome your .....

President.

*(Enthusiastic applause, The GRAND HIGH WITCH enters in style)*

*(Silence, Slowly the GRAND HIGH WITCH removes her wig and then her mask, revealing a wizened, horrible rotting face..)*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Rise! Squish them, squiggle them, make them disappear! Now sit! You may rreee-moof your vigs, and get some fresh air into your spotty scalps<sup>43</sup>.  
*[With sighs of relief, the WITCHES reveal their bald heads, placing their wigs in handbags or on the floor.]*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Vitches of the World. Miserrable vitches. Useless lazy vitches. You are a heap of idle good-for-nothing ~losers~! <sup>44</sup>.  
*(A murmur of concern among the WITCHES)*

As I am eating my lunch, I am looking out of the vindow at the beach. And vot am I seeing? I am seeing a rreeevolving<sup>45</sup> sight, which is putting me off my food<sup>46</sup>. Hundreds of rrrotten rreepulsive children. Playing on the sand. Vye haf you not got rrrid<sup>47</sup> of them? Vye?

*[No response]*  
You vill do better.

WITCHES: We will do better.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: My orders are:  
every single child in Inkland shall be rrrubbed out, sqvashed, sqvirtd, sqvittered and frittered before I come here again in vun year's time.

*(The WITCHES gasp)*

FRENCH WITCH : *Every single one* of them? We can't possibly wipe out *all* of them.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Who said that? Who dares to argue vith me? *(She looks around. She points dramatically at the children in the audience .*

It vos you, vos it not? )

FRENCH WITCH : I didn't mean it, your Grandness.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Come here.  
*[She beckons. French Witch mesmerized, has to go on stage]*

FRENCH WITCH : I didn't mean to argue, your Grandness. I was just talking to myself. I swear it.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: A vitch who dares to say I'm wrrrong vill not be vith us very

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<sup>43</sup> Kopfhaut

<sup>44</sup> Versager

<sup>45</sup> abscheulich

<sup>46</sup> nimmt den Appetit weg

<sup>47</sup> Etwas los werden

long!

WITCH : Forgive me, your Grandness. *(She arrives on stage)*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: A stupid vitch who answers back must burn until her bones are black!

FRENCH WITCH : No! No! Spare me!

*[ Sparks fly. Smoke rises. FRENCH WITCH shouts]*

Aaaaaaaaaaah!

*[FRENCH WITCH disappears]*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: I hope nobody else is going to make me cross today.

AMERICAN WITCH: Oh no. Not me.... I'm out of here.

*(GRAND HIGH WITCH finds the smouldering<sup>48</sup> remnants of FRENCH WITCH's clothes. She holds them up).*

Frrrizzled like a frrritter. Cooked like a carrot. You vill never see her again. Now vee can get down to business.

*[The following sequence should be rhythmic and grow in intensity. TEACHERS in the audience chant the Witches's lines.]*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Down vith children! Do them in!

WITCHES: Boil their bones and fry their skin!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Bish them, sqvish them, bash them, mash them!

WITCHES: Break them, shake them, slash them, smash them!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: I am having a plan. A gigan- ticus<sup>49</sup> plan!

WITCHES: She is having a plan. A giganticus plan!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: You vill buy sweetshops.

WITCHES: We will buy sweetshops,

GRAND HIGH WITCH: You vill fill them high vith luscious sweets and tasty chocs!

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<sup>48</sup> schwelend

<sup>49</sup> Erfundenes Wort, etwas sehr großes

WITCHES: Luscious sweets and tasty chocs!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: You will have a Great Gala Opening with free sweets and chocs for every child!

WITCHES: Free sweets and chocs for every child!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: You will be filling every choc and every sweet with my latest and greatest magic formula.

*[A sigh of admiration as she produces a potion bottle]*

Formula Eighty-Six Delayed Action Mouse-Maker! *[Excited cheers and applause]*

EVENT MANAGER: A stroke of genius!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Inject your droplet of the formula in each sweet or choc, open your shop, and as the children pour in on their way home from school ...

*[She chants the following rhyme to music]*

Crrram them full of sticky eats,

Send them home still guzzling<sup>50</sup> sweets,

And in the morning little fools

Go marching off to separate schools.

A girl feels sick and goes all pale-

She yells, 'Hey, look! I've grown a tail!'

A boy who's standing next to her

Screams, 'Help! I think I'm growing fur!'

Another shouts, 'Vee look like freaks!

There's whiskers<sup>51</sup> growing on our cheeks!'

A boy who was extremely tall

Cries out, 'Vot's wrong? I'm growing small!'

Four tiny legs begin to sprout<sup>52</sup>

From everybody around about.

And all at once, all in a trice<sup>53</sup>,

There are no children! Only mice!

The teachers cry, 'Vot's going on?

Oh, where have all the children gone?'

Then suddenly the mice they spot,

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<sup>50</sup> verschlingen

<sup>51</sup> whiskers: Schnurhaare

<sup>52</sup> sprießen

<sup>53</sup> Augenblick

Fetch mousetrrraps strrrong and kill the lot!  
They sweep the dead mice all away  
And all us vitches shout

ALL: *[Standing] Hooray! [They rise to a big finish]*

Down vith children! Do them in! Boil their bones and fry their skin!

Bish them, sqvish them, bash them, mash them!

Brrreak them, shake them, slash them, smash them!

*[Suddenly the EVENT MANAGER spots mice]*

EVENT MANAGER: Look! Look! Mice!

BOY: *[Seeing them from behind the table]* Oh no! William and Kate!

EVENT MANAGER: Our leader has done it to show us! The Brainy One has turned two children into mice!

*[The dancing witches scream and run off stage]*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Qviet!

These mice are nothing to do with me. These mice are *pet* mice, qvite obviously belonging to some rreepellent little child in this hotel.

EVENT MANAGER: A child! A filthy child. We'll sniff him out.

*[The WITCHES start sniffing and some move ominously towards the table. BOY stiffens]*

*[Then, in the nick of time<sup>54</sup>, there is a knock on the door offstage]*

BRUNO: *[Outside the door]* Hey! Let me in!

*[More knocks]*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Qvick, vitches. Vigs on!

*[The WITCHES hurry to make themselves respectable]*

BRUNO: *[Outside the door]* Hurry up! Twenty-five past three you said.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Vitches. Vat'ch this demon-strrration. Earlier today I am giving a chocolate bar vith formula added to a smelly boy.

BRUNO: *[Outside the door]* Where's them chocolate bars you promised? I'm here to

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<sup>54</sup> Gerade zur rechten Zeit

collect! Dish 'em out!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Not only smelly but grrreedy.  
The formula is timed for half past three.

*[She puts on her wig and sunglasses]*

*(She waves her hand and magically unlocks the door, we hear the sound effect of a door being unlocked, BRUNO enters and approaches)*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: *[Soft and gentle]* Darling little man. I haf your chocolate all rready for you. Do come and say hello to all these lovely ladies.

*(BRUNO walks closer to the front of the stage, eyed eagerly by the WITCHES)*

BRUNO: OK, where's my chocolate? Six bars you said.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: *(Checking her watch)* Thirty seconds to go.

BRUNO: What?

*(He receives no reply. He approaches the GRAND HIGH WITCH)*

What the heck's going on?

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Twenty seconds!

BRUNO: *[Getting suspicious]* Gimme the chocolate and let me out of here.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Fifteen seconds!

BRUNO: *[Looking at the WITCHES]* Will one of you crazy ladies kindly tell me what all this is about?

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Ten seconds!

*(She turns her face to BRUNO, who reacts with a terrified scream)*

WITCHES:

Nine ... eight

seven

six ... five ... four ... three ... two

one

zero!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Vee haf ignition.

*(An alarm clock rings loudly as BRUNO changes into a mouse)*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: This smelly brrrat, this filthy scum

This horrid little louse<sup>55</sup>  
Vill very soon become  
A lovely little MOUSE!

*(A flash. An eerie sound effect, BRUNO'S head darts about like a mouse; his hands, like paws, brush imaginary whiskers. Then he appears to shrink behind the watching WITCHES He disappears from view. The WITCHES back away from the table. BRUNO has gone, In his place on the table-top is a mouse)*

WITCHES: *[Applauding]* Bravo! She's done it! It works! It's fantastic!

*(The GRAND HIGH WITCH whacks at the mouse with her whip)*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Vitches, I vill meet you all for dinner at eight. I have prrrepared for you *[She shows the potion bottle]* a bottle each, containing a limited quantity. Five hundred doses.

Room Four-Five-Four. Any qves-tions?

EVENT MANAGER: One, 0 Brainy<sup>56</sup> One. What happens if one of the chocolates we are giving away in our shops gets eaten by a grown-up?

GRAND HIGH WITCH: That's just too bad for the grown-up. This meeting is over.  
*[The WITCHES start to go]*

*[Behind table BOY relaxes, relieved, He stretches and rubs his aching knees]*

EVENT MANAGER : *[Shouting]* Wait! Hold everything.  
*[She flares her nostrils, sniffing eagerly. Her face turns towards the table.]*

Dogs' droppings. I've got a whiff of fresh dogs' droppings.

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Vot rubbish is this? There are no children in this rrrroom!

EVENT MANAGER: It's getting stronger. Can't the rest of you smell it? Dogs' droppings.

*[ALL the WITCHES are sniffing now]*

WITCHES: Dogs' droppings! Yes! Yes! Dogs' drop-pings! Dogs' droppings! Pool Poo-oo-oo-oo-oo!

*[They head towards the table , the GRAND HIGH WITCH goes to the table and slams her hands down on it]*

WITCH I: *[With a shriek]* Boy! Boy! Boy! Boy! *[ BOY runs through the WITCHES, desperate to escape. He runs any-where and everywhere. The WITCHES chase*

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<sup>55</sup> Laus, Drecksack

<sup>56</sup> gescheit

*him. He yells]*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: *[Prom the platform]* Grrrab it! Stop it yelling! Catch it, you idiots!

*(THE EVENT MANAGER casts a spell on BOY, forcing him to come to the table)*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Spying little vurm! You stinking little carbuncle<sup>57</sup>. You haf observed the most secret things. Now you must take your medicine!

BOY: Help! Help,! Grandma!

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Open his mouth!

*[The WITCHES do so. Dramatically the GRAND HIGH WITCH opens the potion bottle and raises it up]*

Five hundred doses! So strrrong vee see INS TAN-TANEOUS<sup>58</sup> ACTION!

*[She pours the potion into BOY'S mouth. BOY starts jerking his head] Strange distorted alarm bells ring. Perhaps the lights flash. Then, as the effects stop, the WITCHES step aside]*

*[On the table there is no sign of BOY. Just a trembling mouse]*

## **THE BOY -MOUSE**

*[Enter BOY, dressed as a mouse. He scampers in and sniffs around, then looks about]*

BOY: *[Calling]* Bruno! Bruno Jenkins!

*Cool, I can talk!*

*( BOY frisks around happily)*

*[To the audience]* I should be sad. I should feel desperate. I mean, I've never dreamed of being a mouse, like I've dreamed of being, say, a movie star. But now that I *am* one, I'm beginning to see the advantages. I know mice sometimes get poisoned or caught in traps but boys sometimes get killed too - run over or get some awful illness. Boys have to go to school. Mice don't. Mice don't have to pass exams. When mice grow up they don't have to go out to work. Mmm. It's no bad thing to be a mouse. I'm as free as William and Kate. Hope they're all right.

*[BRUNO, dressed as a mouse, enters eating a piece of a sandwich]]*

Hello, Bruno. *[BRUNO nods]*

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<sup>57</sup> Karfunkel

<sup>58</sup> Instantaneous: sofort

What have you found?

BRUNO: An ancient sandwich. Pretty good.  
Bit pongy.<sup>59</sup>

BOY: Listen, Bruno. Now we're both mice, I think we ought to start thinking about the future.  
[BRUNO *stops eating*]

BRUNO: What do you mean, we? The fact that you're, a mouse has nothing to do with me.

BOY: But you're a mouse, too, Bruno.

BRUNO: Don't be stupid, I'm not a mouse.

BOY: I'm afraid you are, Bruno.

BRUNO: I most certainly am not. You're lying. I am most definitely not a mouse.

BOY: Look at your paws.

BRUNO: You're barmy<sup>60</sup>! My paws? [*He looks at them*]  
Aaaaah! They're all hairy. [*He feels his ears and whiskers*] Ugh! I am a mouse. [*He bursts into tears*]

BOY: The witches did it.

BRUNO: I don't want to be a mouse! [*He cries some more*]

BOY: Don't be silly, Bruno. There are worse things than being a mouse. You can live in a hole.

BRUNO: I don't want to live in a hole.

BOY: And you can creep into the larder at night and nibble through all the packets of biscuits and corn-flakes and stuff. You can stuff yourself silly.

BRUNO: [*Perking up*<sup>61</sup>] Well, that's a thought. But how can I open the fridge door to get at the cold chicken and leftovers? I do that every evening at home.

BOY: Maybe your rich father will get you a special little mouse-fridge all to yourself. One you can open.

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<sup>59</sup> übelriechend

<sup>60</sup> verrückt

<sup>61</sup> aufheitern

BRUNO: *[Sudden thought]* My father. What's he going to say? And my mum? She hates mice. *[Wailing<sup>62</sup>]* What are we going to do?

BOY: We'll go and see my grandmother. She'll understand. She knows all about witches ..,

BRUNO: What's all this about witches? Which witches?

BOY: The witches who turned us into mice. The Grand High Witch gave you the chocolate, remember?

BRUNO: What, her? The miserable old bat.

BOY: Yes, well. Follow me to Grandmother's room.  
Down the corridor, run like mad.

BRUNO: B-b-but ...

BOY: No talking. And don't let anyone see you.  
Don't forget that anyone who catches sight of you will try to kill you!

BRUNO: *[Terrified]* Ooooh!

BOY: Come on.

*[Music accompanies the journey of BOY and BRUNO to GRANDMOTHER'S room, First they scuttle<sup>63</sup> along imaginary walls, occasionally stopping to check that the coast is clear. They edge cautiously round imaginary corners, then set off again along another wall, BRUNO lags behind and has to be encouraged and even pushed! Should be very Mission Impossible style]*

BOY: Quick, over here, it's Grandma's room!

*[The scene changes to GRANDMOTHER'S hotel bedroom. Grandmother knitting a large sock with three needles]*

*[A female scream from outside her door makes her jump. She puts down her knitting, goes to the door and looks out]*

GRANDMOTHER: What on earth is going on out here?

*(We hear a female voice offstage)*

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<sup>62</sup> Heulen/ jammern

<sup>63</sup> wieseln

VOICE: Aaaaah! A mouse in the house! Ahhhh!!!!

BOY: *[Off]* Grandma! It's me, Boy!  
Down here.  
The witch got me.

GRANDMOTHER: The witch?  
*[GRANDMOTHER picks up the puppet BOY-MOUSE and brings him into the room. She is shocked and starts to cry]*

BOY: Don't cry, Grandma. Things could be a lot worse. I'm still alive. So's Bruno. The witch got him too.

*[GRANDMOTHER sits, stunned]*  
*[Suddenly BRUNO sees a bowl of fruit]*

BRUNO: Mmm. Bananas. I like bananas. Can you peel<sup>64</sup> one for me, please?  
*[GRANDMOTHER, almost in a trance, peels one for him]*  
Mmm! *[He makes eating noises]*

BOY: Say something, Grandma.

GRANDMOTHER: Oh, my darling Boy, my poor sweet darling, what has she done to you?

BOY: It's all right, Grandma, really. I'm getting used to it. It's quite fun when you get the hang of it<sup>65</sup>.

GRANDMOTHER: Where did it happen? Where is the witch now? Is she in the hotel?

BOY: Room four-five-four, She's the Grand High Witch of all the World!

GRANDMOTHER: The Grand High Witch, here?

BOY: Yes, And there are masses of other witches in the hotel too.

GRANDMOTHER: You don't mean they're having their Annual Meeting here?

BOY: They've had it, Grandma. I was there! Hiding<sup>66</sup>. They call themselves the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

GRANDMOTHER: Huh! Typical! And how did they catch you, my darling?

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<sup>64</sup> abschälen

<sup>65</sup> Wenn Mann sich daran gewöhnt

<sup>66</sup> versteckt

BOY: They sniffed me out.

GRANDMOTHER: Mmm. Dogs' droppings, was it?

BOY: Yes. And then the Grand High Witch demonstrated her new magic formula. It turns children into mice.

GRANDMOTHER: I can see that, my darling, only too well.

BOY: But Grandma, they plan to turn all the children of England into mice.

GRANDMOTHER: The vicious creatures. That's English witches for you.

BOY: We've got to stop them!

GRANDMOTHER: Impossible. Witches are un-stoppable. They've got you. Now they'll get the others.

*[Short pause]*

BRUNO: Can you peel me another banana, please?

GRANDMOTHER: *[Peeling one]* Doesn't he ever stop eating?

BOY: No, *[Suddenly]* And that's another thing, Grandma, Bruno's parents. They don't know he's a mouse,

GRANDMOTHER: I can deal with that. But stopping the witches' grand plan is another kettle of fish.

*[Suddenly a voice is heard, GRANDMOTHER and BOY react as if it is coming from below them]*

GRAND HIGH WITCH'S VOICE: Down with children! Do them in! Boil their bones and fry their skin!

*[She cackles<sup>67</sup>, then chants the rest, her voice getting softer, while BOY and GRANDMOTHER continue their conversation]*

Bish them, sqvish them, bash them, mash them! Brrreak them, shake them, slash them, smash them!

BOY: It's her, Grandma, it's her!

GRANDMOTHER: The Grand High Witch?

*[She goes out on to her balcony and looks down, then returns]*

*[Furious<sup>68</sup>]* Would you believe it? The evil woman is in the room below mine! I can

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<sup>67</sup> schnattert

<sup>68</sup> wütend

see her balcony! The doors into her bedroom are open.

*[We hear a cackle from the GRAND HIGH WITCH]*

BOY: *[Having an idea]* Grandma, if she's down there, so is her magic formula...

GRANDMOTHER: Well?

BOY: *[Working out his plan]* If I could only steal one tiny bottle. Five hundred doses! Works on grown-ups as well as children, she said. So who's to say it wouldn't work on *witches*? Don't you see?

GRANDMOTHER: *[Slowly]* I do! I do see.

BOY: Witches who are meeting for dinner at eight o' clock tonight!

GRANDMOTHER: Then there's no time to waste, My brilliant, darling, daring Boy.

BOY: Mouse.

GRANDMOTHER: Boy-Mouse, then. Climb in here. I will lower you down.  
*(Grandmother puts Boy into the sock she was knitting<sup>69</sup> and lowers him down onto the balcony below)*

For the salvation of the children of England. Action!

GRANDMOTHER: *[Calling]* Out you get! Hurry up!

GRAND HIGH WITCH'S VOICE: Vot is this knitting-wool hanging down here?

GRANDMOTHER: *[Innocently]* Oh, hello. I just dropped it over the balcony by mistake. So sorry. I've still got hold of one end, so I can pull it up.

*[She starts to pull up the wool]*

GRAND HIGH WITCH'S VOICE: Who vur you talking to just now? Who vur you telling to get out and hurry up?

GRANDMOTHER: *[Retrieving her knitting, now empty]* My little grandson, He's er ... been in the bath for ages, reading his book, the little darling. It's time he got out. Do you have any children, my dear?

GRAND HIGH WITCH'S VOICE: Certainly not!

*[The sound of the balcony door slamming shut]* [GRANDMOTHER looks concerned]

GRANDMOTHER: *[Fervently]* Good fortune be with you, my darling Boy-Mouse.

[BOY-MOUSE *(the actor in mouse-costume)* enters, treading gingerly]

*[He freezes when suddenly the GRAND HIGH WITCH,, is heard booming overhead]*

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<sup>69</sup> Strickarbeit

GRAND HIGH WITCH'S VOICE: Down with children! Do them in! Boil their bones and fry their skin!

Bish them, sqvish them, bash them, mash them! Brrreak them, shake them, slash them, smash them!

*[In the lull that follows, the BOY-MOUSE scuttles across, He arrives under the bed]*

*[The GRAND HIGH WITCH happily hums a version of her chant. It echoes in sinister fashion, Suddenly, out jumps a creature. It grabs BOY-MOUSE, but not roughly, Nevertheless<sup>70</sup>, BOY-MOUSE jumps]*

BOY-MOUSE: Aaah!

*[The creature is a FROG, He springs away, trembling<sup>71</sup>]*

Hello.

*[He advances. The FROG backs away]*

Hey, Frog. I won't hurt you. '

*[He stretches out a paw. The FROG huddles up, enjoy-ing the company]*

What are you doing here? Did the Grand High Witch magic you too?

*[The FROG nods]*

You were once a child?

*[The FROG nods]*

Have you never tried to escape?

*[The FROG shakes its head, fearfully]*

You're frightened of her?

*[The FROG nods]*

So am I. Listen, Frog, do you know where she keeps her magic-formula bottles?

*[After a thinking pause the FROG points offstage, to further under the bed]*

Thanks, Frog.

*[Frog fetches the potion bottle and BOY tries to carry it and drops it]*

Aaaaah!

GRAND HIGH WITCH'S VOICE: Vot vas that? I heard a noise.

*[Suddenly the curtain/screen behind swings back to reveal the huge upside-down face of the GRAND HIGH WITCH peering under the bed]*

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<sup>70</sup> trotzdem

<sup>71</sup> zittert

[BOY-MOUSE manages to drag the bottle into a dark area. The FROG is there]

Vas that you, little frrroggy? Making a noise? Are you being good? Guarding my magic bottles? Are you being a good votch-frrrog? [She cackles] Soon I will be giving my bottles away and you need guard them no longer.

[The FROG looks chirpier]

Then I vill thrrow you out of the vindow and the seagulls can have you for supper-time snacks! [She cackles]

[The FROG trembles. A knock at the bedroom door is heard]

Ah-a.. [She calls in a sing-song<sup>72</sup> voice] I come.

[BOY-MOUSE, with the bottle, starts his journey again. He looks back at the trembling FROG]

Come on, Frog!

BOY-MOUSE: Off you go, Frog. You're free!

[FROG hops off. BOY-MOUSE waves, then looks at the potion bottle]  
And now it's time to add some spice<sup>73</sup> to their soup!

### **THE BOY-MOUSE DEFEATS THE WITCHES**

*(We are in the hotel restaurant, music is playing in the background)*

EVENT MANAGER: Ladies and gentlemen, dinner is served.

[GRANDMOTHER enters, along with a hotel guest. She holds, carefully, her large handbag in which are the two BOY-MICE. She waits until the WAITER approaches, other guests enter as well and are led towards the Witches table]

HOTEL GUEST: Buena sera! *(She leaves)*

EVENT MANAGER: Good Evening Madam

GRANDMOTHER: Good-evening.

EVENT MANAGER: Your table is this way.

GRANDMOTHER: Thank you.

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<sup>72</sup> In einer singsang Stimme

<sup>73</sup> Gewürz

*[She leads her to her table, set with two chairs. She sits on one and carefully rests her handbag on the table]*

EVENT MANAGER: Where is the young gentleman tonight?

GRANDMOTHER: He's not feeling quite himself. <sup>74</sup>He's staying in his room.

EVENT MANAGER: I'm sorry to hear that. Now, this evening, to start with there is green pea soup, and for the main course you have a choice of either grilled fillet of sole or roast lamb.

GRANDMOTHER: Just the lamb for me, please.

EVENT MANAGER: Thank you, madam.

GRANDMOTHER: Thank you!

*[The EVENT MANAGER leaves, heading for the kitchen] [GRANDMOTHER surreptitiously speaks into her handbag]*

Ready, my darling? Have you got the bottle?

HOTEL GUEST: Hallo!

GRANDMOTHER: Oh hellooo...

BOY'S VOICE: Yes. Grandma, what's the time?

GRANDMOTHER: *[Checking her watch]* It's five minutes to eight. We're just in time.

BRUNO'S VOICE: *[In the handbag]* I'm starving!

GRANDMOTHER: Quiet, Bruno. Have a bread roll. *[She takes a roll from a basket and pops it in the hand-bag]*

BRUNO'S VOICE: It's got no butter!

GRANDMOTHER: *[Loudly]* Halt die Klappe!

*(Focus shifts to the kitchen where we have two chefs<sup>75</sup> cooking. They are tapping out a rhythm with their pots. GRANDMOTHER checks that the coast is clear, and then puts BOY-MOUSE in the kitchen, near the soup pot)*

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<sup>74</sup> Er fühlt sich irgendwie komisch

<sup>75</sup> Chef bedeutet Koch auf Englisch

Go, my darling, go!

WILLY THE WAITER: *Where is my soup for table four ?*

CHEFS: *He dropped it on the floor  
We need to make some more  
Go back to table four  
And tell them to wait a little more  
Soup  
Soup for the group  
The group wants soup  
Pour in the soup*

BOY MOUSE: *It's time to add some spice  
To turn them into mice*

WILLY: *REEEEEMIIIIIX*

*All: I like big pots<sup>76</sup> and I cannot lie.  
You other chefs can't deny  
That when a pot roles in with an itty bitty taste.....*

STAGE MANAGER: *...STOOOOOP! This is still a children's show!*

COCKNEY CHEF: *What was that? [He looks round and up]*

Hey, look! A mouse! A mouse!

ITALIAN CHEF: *Where, where?*

COCKNEY CHEF: *There, there!*

*[The CHEFS grab a rolling-pin and ladle and try to wallop BOY-MOUSE, who quickly hides behind a pot]*

COCKNEY CHEF: *He's hiding! He's hiding!*

ITALIAN CHEF: *There he goes!*

*[They follow the imaginary progress of the mouse. Slapstick fun as the CHEFS try to whack the mouse but only succeed in whacking each other and bumping into each other]*

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<sup>76</sup> Töpfe

COCKNEY CHEF: Take that!

ITALIAN CHEF: Ow! Take that!

COCKNEY CHEF: Ow!

*[Suddenly the CHEF freezes in horror]*

COCKNEY CHEF: Eeeeeee!

ITALIAN CHEF: What is it?

COCKNEY CHEF: Jeepers creepers! It's gone up my trouser leg! Ah! Ah! Oo! Oo!

*[He comes out from behind the counter, jumping up and down, slapping his trouser leg]*

COCKNEY CHEF: Holy smoke! It's going all the way up! Ah! Oo! Help!

*[Now he is jumping up and down as though he is standing on hot bricks]*

Help! Help!

*[He stops suddenly]*

It's in my knickers! There's a mouse running around in my flaming knickers<sup>77</sup>!  
Aaaah!

ITALIAN CHEF: Quick! Get 'em off!

*[He attacks the COCKNEY CHEF, trying to get his trousers off The COCKNEY CHEF resists]*

COCKNEY CHEF: Stop it! Stop it! You're tickling! *[He laughs<sup>78</sup> hysterically]*

ITALIAN CHEF: Off! Off!

*[ITALIAN CHEF rips off COCKNEY CHEF's trousers, revealing another pair underneath. The chefs move offstage]*

*(BOY-MOUSE approaches Grandmother's table)*

BOY'S VOICE: Grandma, I'm back! Mission accomplished!

*[The BOY-MOUSE hops onto the chair next to GRANDMA)]*

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<sup>77</sup> Unterwäsche

<sup>78</sup> lacht

GRANDMOTHER: Well *done*, my darling. Well done, you.

BOY'S VOICE : Have the Witches arrived, Grandma?

GRANDMOTHER: They're over there, my darling. Look!

*[The WITCHES are talking animatedly]*

EVENT MANAGER'S VOICE: Ladies, your soup.

*[They arrive at the WITCHES' table and start to serve it as the focus returns to GRANDMOTHER'S table]*

BOY'S VOICE: They're going to drink it, Grandma, they're going to drink it!

*[BOY-MOUSE bobs up and down<sup>79</sup>]*

GRANDMOTHER: Shhh! Keep still. And cross your fingers. <sup>80</sup>

BOY'S VOICE: I haven't got any fingers to cross.

GRANDMOTHER: Sorry. *[She smiles]*

*[MR and MRS JENKINS enter, scanning the restaurant. They see GRANDMOTHER and head towards her]*

BOY'S VOICE: Look out, Grandma. It's Bruno's parents.

*[GRANDMOTHER makes sure the puppet BOY-MOUSE is hidden from MR and MRS JENKINS.]*

MR JENKINS: Where's that grandson of yours?

MRS JENKINS: We reckon he's up to something with our ...

MRS JENKINS  
*[Together]* Bruno.

MRS JENKINS: Some devilment.

MR JENKINS: The little beggar's not turned up for his supper. Most unlike him.

MRS JENKINS: Most unlike him.

GRANDMOTHER: I agree. He has a very healthy appetite.

MRS JENKINS: How do you know? Have you seen him? Where is he?

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<sup>79</sup> Auf und ab springen

<sup>80</sup> druck die Daumen

GRANDMOTHER: I'm afraid I have some rather alarming<sup>81</sup> news for you. He's in my handbag.

*[She holds it out. MR and MRS JENKINS can't believe their ears]*

MRS JENKINS: In a handbag!

MR JENKINS: What the heck d'you mean, he's in your handbag?

MRS JENKINS: Are you trying to be funny?

GRANDMOTHER: There's nothing funny about it.  
Your son has been rather drastically altered

MRS JENKINS  
*[Together]* Altered?

MR JENKINS: What the devil do you mean?

GRANDMOTHER: My own grandson actually saw them doing it to him.

MR JENKINS: Saw *who* doing *what* to him, for heaven's sake?

GRANDMOTHER: Saw the Witches turning him into a mouse.

*[The JENKINSES' mouths gape<sup>82</sup>]*

MRS JENKINS: Call the manager, dear. Have this mad woman thrown out of the hotel.

GRANDMOTHER: *[Calmly]* Bruno is a mouse.

MR JENKINS: He most certainly is not a mouse! *[Suddenly GRANDMOTHER delves into the handbag and pops BRUNO-MOUSE'S head out. She moves him as he talks]*

BRUNO'S VOICE: Oh yes I am! Hello, Pa, Hello, Ma! *[MRS JENKINS nearly screams. She and MR JENKINS back off nervously, horrified]*

MR JENKINS: B-b-b-b ...

BRUNO'S VOICE: Don't worry, Pa. It's not as bad as all that. Just so long as the cat doesn't get me.

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<sup>81</sup> alarmierend

<sup>82</sup> klaffen

MR JENKINS: But I can't have a mouse for a son!

GRANDMOTHER: You've got one. Be nice to him.

MRS JENKINS: *[Approaching with difficulty]* My poor baby! Who did this? .

*[MRS JENKINS picks up BRUNO in the handbag, trying to hide her distaste<sup>83</sup>]*

GRANDMOTHER: That woman over there.

*[She points to the GRAND HIGH WITCH]* Black dress. Finishing her soup.

MR JENKINS: She's RSPCC. The chairwoman.<sup>84</sup>

GRANDMOTHER: No. She's the Grand High Witch of all the World.

MRS JENKINS: You mean *she* did it? That skinny woman over there?

MR JENKINS: What a nerve. I'll make her pay through the nose.<sup>85</sup> I'll have my lawyers<sup>86</sup> on to her for this. *[He turns towards the GRAND HIGH WITCH]*

GRANDMOTHER: I wouldn't do anything rash. That woman has magic powers. She might turn *you* into something. A cockroach, perhaps.

MR JENKINS: Turn *me* into a cockroach? I'd like to see her try!

*[He sets off again. We hear a very loud alarm bell. Smoke begins to swirl around and the other WITCHES start to writhe about, waving their arms. The GRAND HIGH WITCH looks about perplexed and horrified]*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: Vitches! Stop this! Ugh Get away! Away!,  
Ugh! Oh no! Cheeeldren. Uh Uh

*[Everyone watches as, screaming in a nightmarish echo, the GRAND HIGH WITCH gets pushed by GRANDMOTHER into the oversized pot and disappears, a separate hand being the last part of her to go.]*

GRAND HIGH WITCH: *[In pot]* I'm melting....  
*(The GRAND HIGH WITCH as a mouse pops up)*

GRANDMOTHER: *Take that!* *(GRANDMOTHER hits the mouse)*

GRANDMOTHER: *[Holding up BOY-MOUSE in triumph]* You did it boy! You have

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<sup>83</sup> Widerwille

<sup>84</sup> Vorsitzende

<sup>85</sup> Jemanden etwas teuer bezahlen lassen

<sup>86</sup> Anwalt

saved the children of England. (*into audience*) Can you call me a taxi dear, it's time to go home.

SO LONG AS SOMEBODY LOVES YOU

[GRANDMOTHER *sits in her chair, doing some embroidery. On her table alongside sits BOY -MOUSE, operated by BOY, hidden behind*]

*They have the radio on*

RADIO VOICE: "And in other news the mouse epidemic continues..."

BOY: Grandma, has the Grand High Witch really gone for ever?

GRANDMOTHER: Yes, my darling. But Grand High Witches are like queen bees. There's always another one to take over. Let's hope there are always people like you brave<sup>87</sup> enough to foil<sup>88</sup> their wicked plans.

BOY: Even if they end up as mice?

GRANDMOTHER: Even if they end up as mice. [*Pause*]

BOY: Can I ask you something, Grandma?

GRANDMOTHER: Anything.

BOY: How long does a mouse live?

GRANDMOTHER: Not very long, I'm afraid. Just a few years. [*Pause*]

BOY: And how much longer will you live, Grandma?

GRANDMOTHER: Just a few years.

BOY: Good. I'll be a very old mouse and you'll be a very old grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER: That would be perfect. [*Pause*]

My darling, are you sure you don't mind<sup>89</sup> being a mouse for the rest of your life?

BOY: I don't mind at all. It doesn't matter <sup>90</sup>who you are or what you look like, so long as somebody loves you.

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<sup>87</sup> tapfer

<sup>88</sup> Etwas zu durchkreuzen

<sup>89</sup> Und es macht ganz sicher nichts aus?

<sup>90</sup> Es ist mit ganz gleich...