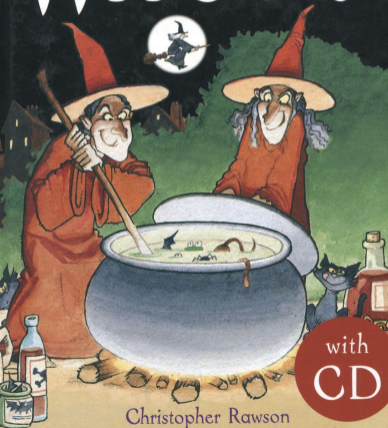


USBORNE YOUNG READING



Stories of

# WITCHES



with  
**CD**

Christopher Rawson  
Illustrated by Stephen Cartwright

Stories of  
**WITCHES**

Christopher Rawson  
Adapted by Gill Harvey

Illustrated by  
Stephen Cartwright

Reading Consultant: Alison Kelly  
Roehampton University



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## Chapter 1

# The lost broomstick

This story begins with a witch called Bess and an invitation to a party. Bess loved parties. There was just one problem.



Bess couldn't remember where she had put her broomstick. She looked everywhere.

Boots... spare  
cauldron... hmmph.  
No broomstick.



But it was no good. The broomstick was lost. At last, Bess had to give up.

Now what could she do? She couldn't fly without her stick and it was too far to walk.

Then she had a great idea. "My magic rope!" she cried.



"I can turn someone into a horse and ride to the party. I just need to find someone."

Bess hid behind a tree and waited. Soon, a man came along. His wife walked behind him, carrying all their heavy bags.



Bess let the man pass.  
“He’s no good, he’s limping,”  
she said. “Besides, his wife  
will be strong from carrying  
all those bags.”

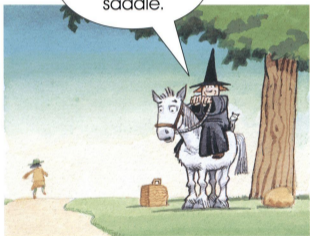


She jumped out and threw  
her rope over the woman.



At once, the woman turned into a horse. Bess climbed onto her back.

I wish I'd brought a saddle.



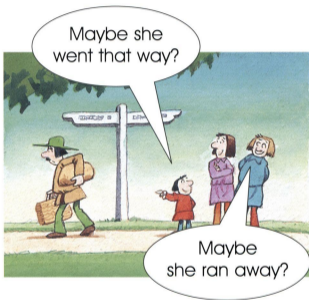
“Now for the party. Giddy-up!” she cried.

The man kept limping. At first, he didn't notice what had happened. But when he looked back...



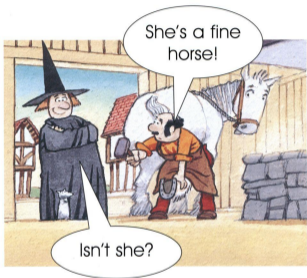
...all he could see were his bags, and a horse galloping off in the distance.

The man went to get the bags, but he couldn't find his wife. Nobody had seen her.



Crossly, the man picked up the heavy bags. "I'll just have to carry these myself," he said.

A long way away Bess had stopped. The horse was worn out – and so were her shoes.



At the next village, Bess took her to a blacksmith. With four new horseshoes, the horse was ready to go.

At the party, the other  
witches pointed to the horse.

“Look at Bess without a  
broomstick!” they said and  
cackled with laughter.



But Bess didn't mind. It was a wonderful party. The witches skipped around a cauldron, singing silly songs...



...before casting spells on each other, just for fun.

All too soon, the party was over. The other witches flew off on their broomsticks. Bess untied her horse and set out for home.



Fly safely!

Bess was nearly home when she met the man she had seen before. He was still carrying the heavy bags.



“Hello,” she said. “Would you like to buy this horse? I don’t need her anymore.”



“What a good idea!” said the man. “Then I won’t have to carry these bags. I lost my wife, you see.”

Bess said nothing. She just smiled.



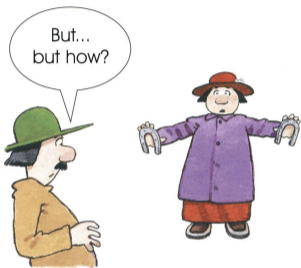
The man gave Bess a bag of gold and climbed onto the horse.

With the horse to carry him, the man was home in no time. He took the horse to a stable.



“What a fine beast you are,” he said, patting her. He took off the rope...

...and jumped back with surprise. The horse had turned into his wife – just like that!



She was pleased to see that being a horse hadn't changed her too much. But there was one difference...

...which meant she couldn't carry the bags anymore. From then on, every time they went shopping, her husband had to do it.



He kept asking her to turn back into a horse, just to show him the secret. She never did.



## Chapter 2

# Dog spell



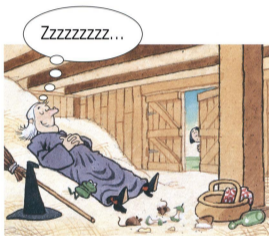
Early one morning, Farmer Crumb and his wife set off to work in the fields. Their daughter Kate carried a picnic basket, full of food.

They worked hard all morning. Then Farmer Crumb looked up. "Time for lunch!" he said.



Kate ran off to the barn where she had hidden their picnic basket.

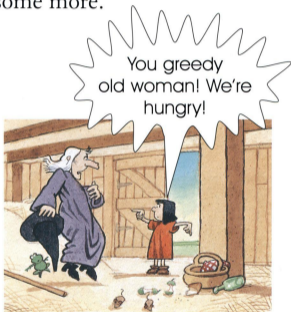
But before she reached the barn, Kate heard a strange sound. Zzzzzzzzz, it went. Zzzzzzzzz...



She peeked inside. An old witch was lying in the hay, fast asleep. And she'd found the picnic basket.

Kate was very angry. "How dare you!" she cried.

The witch woke up with a jump. Kate shouted at her some more.





“How dare you speak to me like that,” snarled the witch. “I’ll teach you a lesson!”



Before Kate could move, the witch had cast a spell. “Maxi-baxi-jollybee-hog, get on the ground and bark like a dog!”

Poor Kate crawled back to her mother and father.

“Woof!” she barked. She couldn’t say anything else.

“What happened?” cried her mother.



Farmer Crumb chased after the witch. “Come back here!” he yelled. “What have you done to my daughter?”



The witch just laughed. “You can’t catch me!” she shouted, as she flew off on her broomstick.

Farmer Crumb and his wife took Kate home.

“What can we do?” they asked their friends. Mrs. Crumb was very upset.



But no one knew how to help.

“We must go to Rimpole,”  
said Farmer Crumb, at last.  
Rimpole was an old wizard  
who lived on a hill. “If anyone  
can help us, he can.”



She's done  
nothing but bark for  
three days!

Kate had to crawl to his house on her hands and knees. “Please help,” begged her dad.



Rimpole frowned. “I can’t break the spell,” he said. “But I might be able to catch the witch for you.”

He stared into his crystal ball. “Aba-doo-well! Who cast the spell?” he cried.



The witch's face appeared in the ball. “Ah, it's *you*, is it?” muttered Rimpole. “I might have known.”

Rimpole fetched toadstools, nails, mustard powder and red berries. He mixed them and he pounded them. Then he added a splash of ketchup.





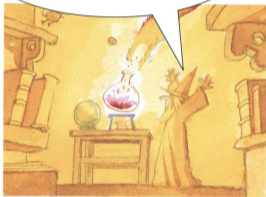
He heated the brew until it bubbled gently. “Perfect!” he said. He looked into his crystal ball again.



But the witch wasn't scared of anyone – especially Rimpole.

As the brew began to bubble more fiercely, the wizard chanted a spell.

Tongues of fire,  
flames of might, give the  
nasty witch a fright!



At once, the cork flew out of the bottle and flames shot up the chimney.

That wiped the smile off the witch's face. She began to look very worried indeed.



She saw the flames creeping up on her. "Help!" she squealed and began to run...

But the flames were too quick for her.

“Oh, stop them, stop them!” cried the witch.



As soon as the witch made her promise, Kate jumped to her feet. She wasn't a dog anymore.



The family never saw the witch again. But, after that, Kate was always careful where she hid the picnic basket.



## Chapter 3

# The farmer's revenge



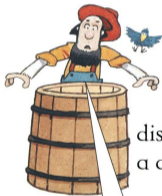
Farmer Jones had a big brown cow. Every day, she gave him five buckets full of the creamiest milk in the village.

In the same village, there lived a greedy witch. She didn't have a cow, but she did love creamy milk.



One day, she had an idea for a wicked spell. "From now on, the milk will all be mine!" she cackled.

Next morning,  
Farmer Jones  
took the buckets  
of milk to his  
milk churn,  
as usual.



But as he  
poured it, he  
got a shock.  
The milk just  
disappeared. Not  
a drop was left.

Where's it gone?



Farmer Jones was furious.

“Calm down, dear,” said his wife. “That won’t bring the milk back. I’m sure we can find out what the problem is.”



I'll soon  
sort this out!



And she set off for the village, to see what was going on.

The witch  
was pumping  
water at the  
village pump.



“That’s funny looking  
water!” muttered Mrs. Jones.



The witch  
filled her  
bucket. She  
walked off,  
grinning.

The naughty witch hadn't pumped water at all.

"Aha!" cried Mrs. Jones and ran all the way home.

I've found  
the thief! I've found  
the thief!



When she told her husband about the witch, he smiled.

“I know what to do,” he said. “I have a sneaky plan.”

A large, white, oval-shaped thought bubble with a black outline. Inside the bubble, the text "This problem needs sorting out!" is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font. The bubble is connected to the character below by a thin black line that tapers into a small circle at the top of the character's head.

This problem  
needs sorting out!



The next time he went to milk his cow, he took a big box with him.

He emptied the milk  
into the churn. It  
disappeared,  
just as before.  
But then  
he did  
something  
else.



Ha-ha! See how  
that tastes, witch!

He opened  
the box and  
tipped in  
lots of white  
powder, too.



In the village, the witch  
filled her bucket with milk.  
She dipped her mug into it.

“Lovely milk!” she cried,  
and took a big gulp.



But the milk began to bubble and froth. The witch began to splutter and cough. Farmer Jones had added soap powder to it.



Soon, the witch was burping bubbles. She had soapy hiccups for a week – and she never stole milk again.