

CHAPTER THREE



Do you remember I told you about a certain young witch named Ethel who had succeeded in teaching her kitten from the very first try? Ethel was one of those lucky people for whom everything goes right. She was always top of the class, her spells always worked, and Miss Hardbroom never made any icy remarks to her. Because of this, Ethel was often rather bossy with the other girls.

On this occasion she had overheard the whole of Mildred's encounter with Miss Hardbroom and couldn't resist being nasty about it.

'I think Miss Cackle gave you that cat on purpose,' Ethel sneered. 'You're both as bad as each other.'

'Oh, be quiet,' said Mildred, trying to keep her temper. 'Anyway, it's not a bad cat. It'll learn in time.'

'Like you did?' Ethel went on. 'Wasn't it last week that you crashed into the dustbins?'

'Look, Ethel,' Mildred said, 'you'd better be quiet, because if you don't I shall ...'

'Well?'

'I shall have to turn you into a frog – and I don't want to do that.'

Ethel gave a shriek of laughter.

'That's really funny!' she crowed. 'You don't even know the beginners' spells, let alone ones like that.'

Mildred blushed and looked very miserable.

'Go on, then!' cried Ethel. 'Go *on*, then, if you're so clever. *Turn* me into a frog! I'm waiting.'

It just so happened that Mildred did have an idea of that spell (she had been reading about it in the library). By now, everyone had crowded round, waiting to see what would happen, and Ethel was still jeering. It was unbearable.

Mildred muttered the spell under her breath – and Ethel vanished. In her place stood a small pink and grey pig.



Cries and shouts rent the air:
'Oh, no!'

‘That’s torn it!’

‘You’ve done it now, Mildred!’

Mildred was horrified. ‘Oh, Ethel,’ she said. ‘I’m sorry, but you did ask for it.’

The pig looked furious.

‘You *beast*, Mildred Hubble!’ it grunted. ‘Change me back!’

At that moment Miss Hardbroom suddenly appeared in the middle of the yard.

‘Where is Ethel Hallow?’ she asked. ‘Miss Bat would like to see her about extra chanting lessons.’

Her sharp gaze fell on the small pig which was grunting softly at her feet.

‘What is this animal doing in the yard?’ she asked, coldly.

Everyone looked at Mildred.

‘I ... let it in, Miss Hardbroom,’ Mildred said hesitantly.

‘Well, you can just let it out again, please,’ said Miss Hardbroom.

‘Oh, I can’t do that!’ gasped the unhappy Mildred. ‘I mean, well ... er ... Couldn’t I keep it as a pet?’

‘I think you have quite enough trouble coping with yourself and that kitten without adding a pig to your worries,’ replied Miss Hardbroom, staring at the tabby kitten which was peering round Mildred’s ankles. ‘Let it out at once! Now, where is Ethel?’

Mildred bent down.

‘Ethel, dear,’ she whispered coaxingly in the pig’s ear. ‘Will you go out when I tell you to? Please, Ethel, I’ll let you in again straight away afterwards.’



Pleading with people like Ethel never works. It

only makes them feel their power.

‘I *won’t* go!’ bellowed the pig. ‘Miss Hardbroom, I *am* Ethel! Mildred Hubble turned me into a pig.’

Nothing ever surprised Miss Hardbroom. Even this startling piece of news only caused her to raise one slanting eyebrow.

‘Well, Mildred,’ she said, ‘I am glad to know that you have at least learned *one* thing since you came here. However, as you will have noticed in the Witches’ Code, rule number seven, paragraph two, it is not customary to practise such tricks on your fellows. Please remove the spell at once.’

‘I’m afraid I don’t know how to,’ Mildred confessed, in a very small voice.

Miss Hardbroom stared at her for a few moments.

‘Then you had better go and look it up in the library,’ she said, wearily. ‘Take Ethel with you, and on your way drop in and tell Miss Bat why Ethel will be late.’

Mildred picked up her kitten and hurried inside, followed by the pig. Fortunately, Miss Bat was not

in her room, but it was most embarrassing going into the library. Ethel was grunting loudly on purpose and everyone stared so much that Mildred could have crawled under the table.

‘Hurry up,’ moaned the pig.



‘Oh, stop going on!’ said Mildred, as she flicked hastily through the huge spell book. ‘It’s all your fault, anyway. You actually *asked* me to do it. I don’t see why you’re complaining.’

‘I said a frog, not a pig,’ said Ethel, pettily. ‘You couldn’t even do *that* right.’

Mildred ignored the grunting Ethel and kept looking in the book. It took her half an hour to find the right spell, and soon after that Ethel was her horrible self again. The people in the library were most surprised to see the pig suddenly change into a furious-looking Ethel.



‘Now, don’t be angry, Ethel,’ Mildred said softly.

‘Remember: “Silence in the library at all times”.’

And she rushed into the corridor.

‘Wasn’t that awful, Cat?’ she said to the kitten, which was curled up inside her cardigan. ‘I think I’d better put you in my room and then go and revise for the potion test. Don’t tease the bats, will you?’

Task – please answer the following questions.

1. How is Ethel described on page 1?
2. What does she tease Mildred about on page 1?
3. Why does Mildred turn her into a pig?
4. What rule had Mildred broken (page 4)?
5. What does the word *hastily* mean on page 4?