Lovereading4kids.co.uk

Helping you choose books for children

0-5 5-7 7-9 9-12 12+

Opening extract from

Rumblewick's Diary: Unwilling Witch goes to Ballet School

Written by

Hiawyn Oram

Illustrated by

Sarah Warburton

Published by

Orchard Books

All text is copyright of the author and illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Non-Stop Swan Lake Day Night

Dear Diary,

My Uncle Sherbet (now retired but once a famous Familiar) has been to visit.

I'd written to him many times about Haggy Aggy and her GIANT unwillingness to be a proper-practising witch.

He always replied with good advice and helpful spells. Even so, I think he thought I was EXAGGERATING.

So I invited him to come and see for himself.



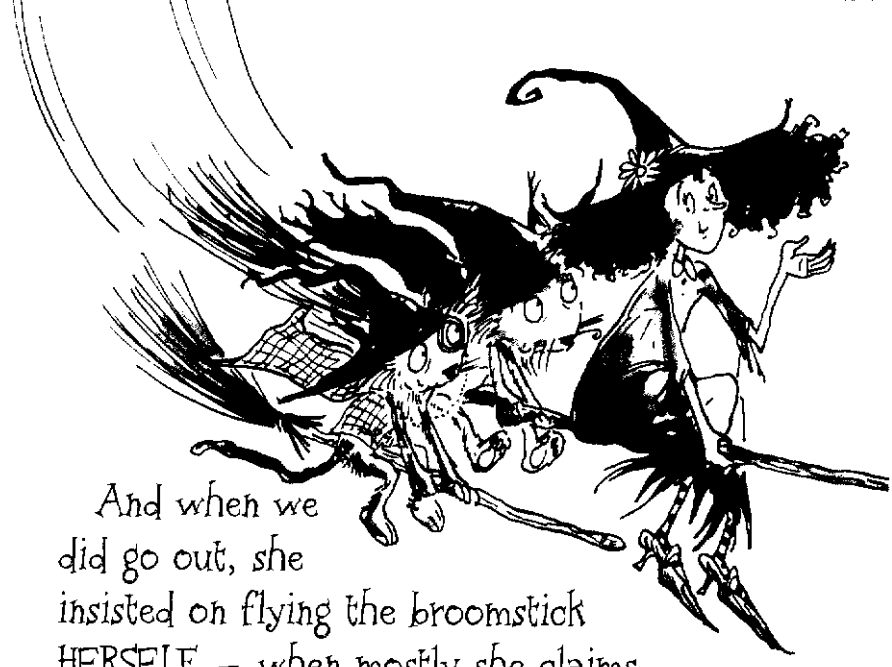
And guess what? She is just SO contra-turvy that for the three nights he was here, she behaved almost like a perfectly willing witch!!

She wore full witch's black (apart from a pink petticoat and a flower on her hat.)

She hardly STOPPED crouping, crawing and throat-hrobbling, when she usually complains cackling is cacophonous collywash!!

"Nothing like a good cackle-ophony to clear the air and send a message of witchradeship to your fellow wicans, don't you think, Sherbet?" she cawed when we went sightseeing over the Dragon's bog.





And when we did go out, she insisted on flying the broomstick HERSELF – when mostly she claims just looking at a broomstick makes her feel broomstick sick.

So now my favourite uncle has gone home not suspecting but believing I exaggerate her unwillingness.



But here's the thing, Diary. I DO NOT.

In fact, if I tried for thirteen moons I couldn't exaggerate it.

I mean, listen to this, the latest:

SHE IS ONLY PLANNING TO BECOME A BALLET DANCER.

Oh yes. No less.

And she is so serious about it, she's even planning to begin where actual Otherside ballet dancers begin – at ballet school!



And yes, you may say YIKES on my behalf even if you don't know what ballet school is – because you soon will – and then you'll say TRIPLE YIKES.

This is how we arrived in this particular tricky sticky situation:

As soon as Sherbet left, she claimed to be completely witched-out – "helping you, RB, give your uncle a good impression of me." (Did I ask her to do that? No. The opposite. I wanted Sherbet to see her unwillingness to be a proper practising witch.)



Anyway, next she announced there was only one thing that could revive her: an Otherside shopping spree.



Flopping feebly into her room, she burst out soon after, brimming with spreefulness and wearing anything and everything

NOT BLACK.

She insisted we go in her pink motor, not by broomstick. (At least it does have fly mode so we can get across the Horizon in it.)

As ever, once over there, she spent all she had left to spend on her Shopalot card – and then tried to spend more!! I got her away (before she was REFUSED and told to PUT THINGS BACK) by warning her that our car would soon be vanished by Otherside Parking Guards – if we didn't move it.



Then, as I was leading the way to the motor, I turned and saw she wasn't with me.

She was staring transfixed into a shop window.

Going back, I saw the window was full of frothy skirts – some shaped like toadstool tops, some like white bluebells. There were feathery and gemmy things for wearing on the head. Shiny slipper shoes of white and pink, some with ribbons to criss-cross up a leg.



"Oh, RB," she sighed.
"Such prettiness
as dreams are made of.
We must go in and find out what
all this is FOR!"
So we did — risking
a vanished
motor.



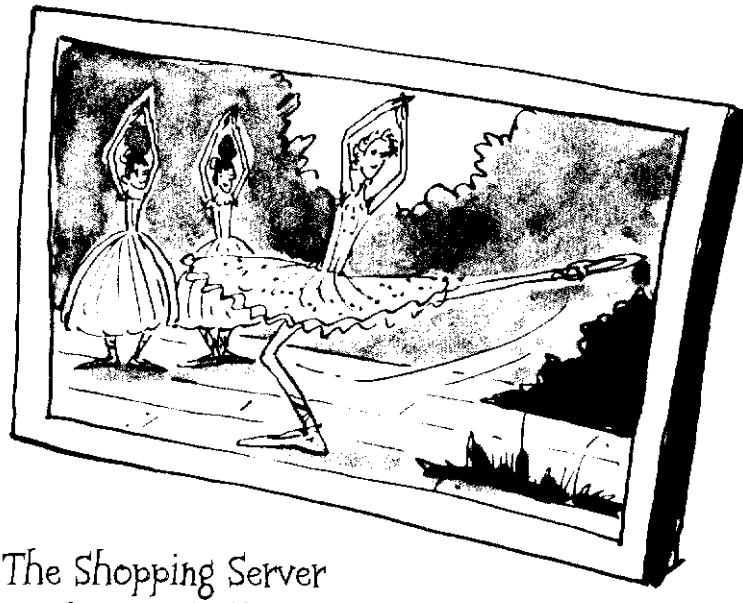
Inside the shop there was a TV screen showing Othersiders dressed in the wear type that was in the window.

They were prancing, leaping, tripping, toetop-of-shoes-tipping, gliding, sliding, twirling and sometimes SWOONING in each others' arms.

Watching, HA nearly SWOONED herself.



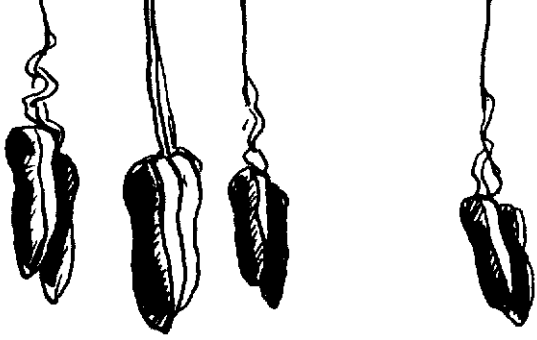
"What is it?" she screeched.



The Shopping Server screeched back (having no idea she was talking to a witch, however unwilling), "SWAN LAKE, of course, my dear!"

"Oh, oh, oh!" HA cried. "How do *I* get to do Swan Lake?"

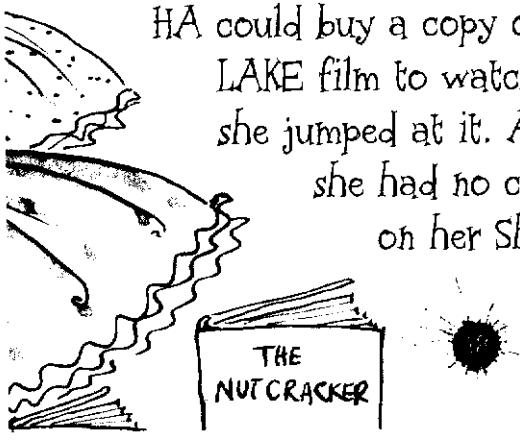
The Shop Server looked surprised but answered softly, "Well, you'd start by going to ballet school, *I* should think."



And that was that. Ballet school it was and ballet school it is.

In a few tads of tell, HA got all the info she needed from that willing Shop Server. She found out where the nearest ballet school is, its telephone number, and how you get to go to it (apparently by being so serious about becoming a Swan Laker you won't take 'no' for an answer.)

Of course, when the Shop Server said HA could buy a copy of the SWAN LAKE film to watch at home, she jumped at it. And because she had no credit left on her Shopalot,



SHE ORDERED ME TO LEAVE SOMETHING IN EXCHANGE!!

(Sadly, all I had was a fold-away broomstick, which I'd brought in case of a vanished motor car situation. So, it was goodbye to that finely-tuned conveyance.)



Anyway, as a result – and in the interests of attending ballet school – she

has watched SWAN LAKE

NON-STOP,

from the moment we got home till she took it to bed with her, a short time ago.

And, worst luck, she made me watch it with her.



If I shut one eye for a split trice,
she jogged me with cries of,

"RB, wake up,
you can't
miss this bit!"

If I suggested making a cup
of comfrey, she cried,



"No, no,
you can't miss
THIS bit!"

I now know every bit of that
SWAN LAKE so well, I'm afraid
to take a nap, even though I'm
frazzled. Why? Because I know
I'll be dancing it in my sleep.

