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opening extract from

Oliver Moon and the Troll Trouble

written by

Sue Mongredien

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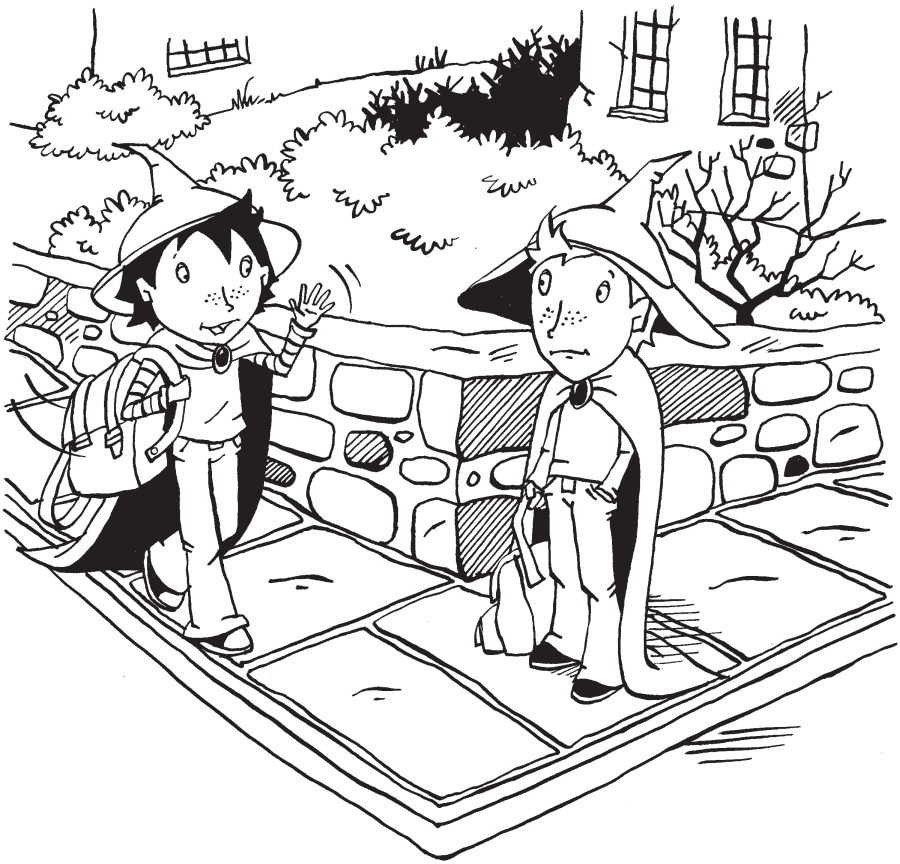
"Have a nice day at Magic School, Oliver," Mrs. Moon called, waving him off from the front doorstep. "And good luck in the audition!"

"Good 'uck!" Oliver's little sister, the Witch Baby, echoed, beaming at him.

"Thanks," Oliver said. His school was putting on a play, *Monstrous Magic*, in a

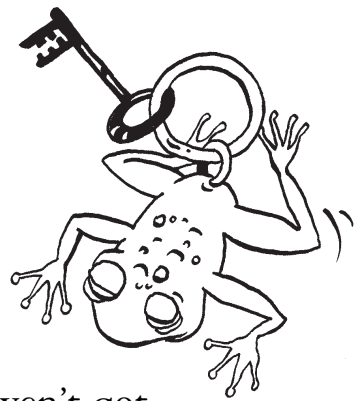
few weeks' time, and today was the day that all the students got to try out for various roles. "See you later!"

Jake Frogfreckle, Oliver's best friend, was waiting at the corner of the road. "Hi, Oliver," he said with a nervous grin. "All ready for the audition?"



"I think so," Oliver said, a fluttering feeling starting up in his tummy. "I hope I get picked for a part – especially as one of the heroes. How about you?"

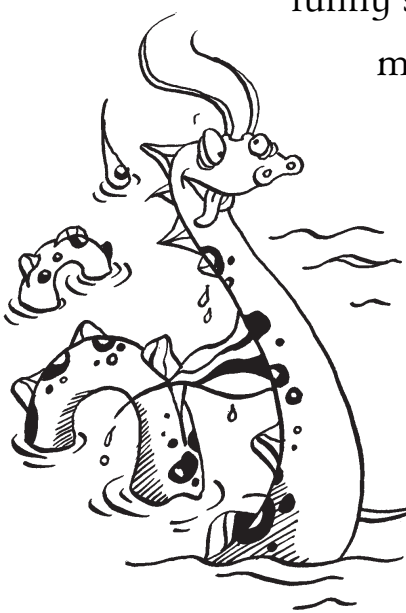
Jake nodded. "Me too," he said. "I'm wearing my lucky socks, my lucky vest *and* I've got a lucky charm with me." He opened his bag to show Oliver a dried toad on a key ring.



"Oh," Oliver said. "I didn't think of that. I haven't got any lucky stuff with me today." He bit his lip. It was too late to turn back for home and grab something now.

The two young wizards walked along together, both thinking about the play.

In a school assembly last week, their head teacher, Mrs. MacLizard, had told them all about it. She'd said it was about two brave wizards, Mortimer and Oswald, who entered a world of monsters in an attempt to find a lost spell book. On their journey, the heroes met friendly firework sprites, naughty goblins, funny sea monsters, a tribe of warrior wizards and even a scary troll. "So there really is something for everyone," she had finished by saying.



"We'll have costumes, magic, dancing and drama. It's going to be a wonderful show!"

Oliver couldn't help daydreaming of himself and Jake being Mortimer and Oswald, the heroes of the show, taking their bows onstage to thunderous applause and cheers from the audience. Lucky charm or no lucky charm, he couldn't wait for the auditions to begin!

When it was time for Oliver's class to audition for the play, they trooped into the main hall. Mrs. MacLizard was waiting for them there, along with Ms. Darling, the drama teacher. Ms. Darling had tumbling red curls which she liked tossing over her shoulders in a dramatic

fashion, and wore a long green velvet cloak and bright purple high heels.

"Welcome, welcome!" she gushed. "Come in, come in. I'm thrilled to see so many budding actors and actresses here today! Thrilled!"

Some of the girls, like Hattie Toadtrumper and Pippi Prowlcat, smiled shyly at Ms. Darling, but Oliver saw Bully Bogeywort rolling his eyes and pretending to be sick at the back of the room.

"Now, I'll give you all a page or two from the script," she said, and waved her wand. A pile of papers flew up into the air and separated gracefully, like a flock of birds, before flying down, one each, to everyone. "And then we'll do some group readings to see how you get on.