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Opening extract from

The Wickedest Witch in the World

Written by

Kaye Umansky

Illustrated by

Gerald Kelley

Published by

Barrington Stoke Ltd

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The Wickedest Witch in the World

Kaye Umansky

with illustrations by
Gerald Kelley

Barrington Stoke

For Hannah

First published in 2013 in Great Britain by
Barrington Stoke Ltd
18 Walker Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7LP

www.barringtonstoke.co.uk

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ISBN: 978-1-78112-201-3

Printed in China by Leo

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Chapter 1
Well Done Me

HAH! Well done me!

I am The Wickedest Witch in the World!.

Yes, it's official.

I've just won the 'Wickedest Witch' Contest!

I got big silver cup with my name on the side.

Old Maggit

The Wickedest Witch in the World

That's what it said. I also got a black balloon, a baddy bag and a year's free supply of mint caterpillars from Yuckies, the sweet makers. Mind you, I've given Yuckies plenty of custom in the past. It takes a LOT of sweets to cover a whole house.

The other witches were a bit miffed. The Sea Witch turned green with envy – well, greener. Baba Yaga stormed out in a huff and wouldn't even stay for the party. She reckons she's famous back in Russia, or wherever she comes from. I say she's a bad loser, like the rest of them.

They all stood around giving me the evil eye and grumbling about the lack of comfy seats. We witches tend to be old. Chairs mean a lot to us. But not as much as giving little kiddies nightmares and winning contests.

The 13th Fairy took it worse than the others. She's called Grimbleshanks. She scuttled up to me at the supper table, where I was

heaping my plate with yummy crispy spiders. The food is always good at these events. They know what witches like. As well as the plate, I was holding my winner's cup, a glass of fizzy wine, the black balloon and the baddy bag, so I had my hands full. It wasn't a good time, but I was up to it.

"Hello, Grimbleshanks," I said. "Well done on coming last."

"Shut up, Maggit," she said. "This is so unfair. You can't even spin. You never ride your broomstick. And I bet you've never ever put a whole palace of people to sleep for a hundred years."

"Hang on," I said. "I push little children into ovens. That's a lot more wicked than a daft little sleep spell."

She said, "Well, I think it's a scandal. I would like to remind you that you got pushed

into the oven yourself in the end. By rights, you shouldn't even be here."

I said, "Ah, but I used a spell to put the fire out, didn't I? That took quick thinking. And look who's talking! This is the Wickedest *Witch* contest. You're not a witch, you're a fairy."

"A *bad* fairy," she snapped. "That's the same as a witch."

"Tell that to the judges," I said, with a sneer. "I won and you lost. Get over it." And I strolled off to have my picture taken.

The party didn't last long. Witches don't get on with each other at the best of times, never mind when they have just lost a contest. They all stayed just long enough to eat all the food, then the fighting began. There were the usual thunderbolts and flashes of green lightning and shouted curses. A number of people got turned into frogs and someone set fire to the curtains. It was quite a free-for-all.



I didn't join in. I had nothing to prove. I just stood there with a smug smile, drinking the fizzy wine and hugging my cup.

At last, everyone went home and I got the chance to inspect my baddy bag. There was a fake rubber worm, some cheap sparklers and a set of plastic fingernails. All around me, the staff were stacking up chairs, sweeping the filthy floor and chasing out the frogs. They made it very clear that I was in their way.

So I went home. I fed my cat, Wilson, and made myself a cup of tea. I set the silver cup in pride of place over the fire and sat down to look at it.

The Wickedest Witch in the World.

That was me.

It was a dream come true.