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An extract from

Lily's Shimmering Spell

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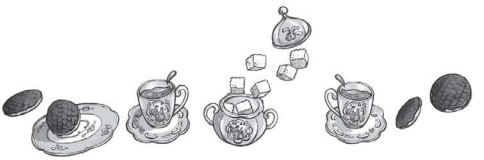
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Chapter Two



I managed to get the second cup of tea to Great-aunt Acidity without dropping it. I didn't expect her to say thank you, and she didn't. Instead she sipped it as if it was poison.

"It's too hot."

I didn't say anything. If it hadn't been too hot, it would have been too cold. I never ever got it right.

"Go and get me a biscuit," my great-aunt ordered. "I want a chocolate one. And so does Sweetypie. And don't nibble the edges!"

I tried not to look guilty. I'd had a peek in the tin after breakfast because I was still





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hungry (the bones left over from Great-aunt's kipper didn't fill me up one little bit). There'd been two biscuits left – and I'd eaten them both.

"I'm ever so sorry," I said as bravely as I could, "but there aren't any."

"You've eaten them all, you greedy little worm!" Great-aunt Acidity raised her stick. "Run to the shop! Get more biscuits! NOW!"

"But..." I jumped out of reach. "I haven't any money..."

"Stupid girl!" Polly danced up and down her perch. "Stupid girl!"

Great-aunt scowled, and fished in her old leather bag for some money. "Here! I want the BEST chocolate biscuits, mind. And you'd better be back before this tea gets cold, or there'll be trouble. Take Sweetypie with you. He'd like a walkies... Wouldn't





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you, my precious ickle pickle fluffykins?"

"Trouble trouble trouble! Stupid girl, stupid girl!"

I made a face at Polly and went to fetch Sweetypie's lead. He growled, and snapped at my fingers as I clipped it onto his collar. He always does that, and I sighed.

"Sighing? What have YOU got to sigh about, Lily Hawkins?" Great-aunt snapped. "I took you in when nobody else would have you. I fed you, clothed and educated you! What more could you ask for?"

I didn't say anything. What was the point? All I wanted was for her to smile at me sometimes. Or give me a hug. Or even call me her ickle pickle fluffykins.

I hauled Sweetypie out through the battered old front door and across the road to Mrs Shah's shop. I bought the chocolate





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biscuits, and when Mrs Shah asked me how I was, I said, "Fine, thank you," the same as I always did.

"And how's Miss Acidity?" she said. "We never see her outside the house. She's lucky to have a pretty young girl like you to look after her."

"Erm ..." I said. "She doesn't get out much. Not at all, really."

Mrs Shah gave me a lovely smile, and tucked a toffee into my pocket. "There. And give your auntie my best wishes."

She was so kind I got a lump in my throat, and only just managed to thank her. "Come on, Sweetypie," I said gruffly, and we went outside...

...and the road was filled with fog. Thick fog. Very thick fog.

I couldn't even see our house. I took a





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deep breath and dived into the thick swirls of white. A moment later, I saw steps in front of me, and I stared at them.

What was happening? Where had they come from? I'd only just that minute stepped off the pavement...

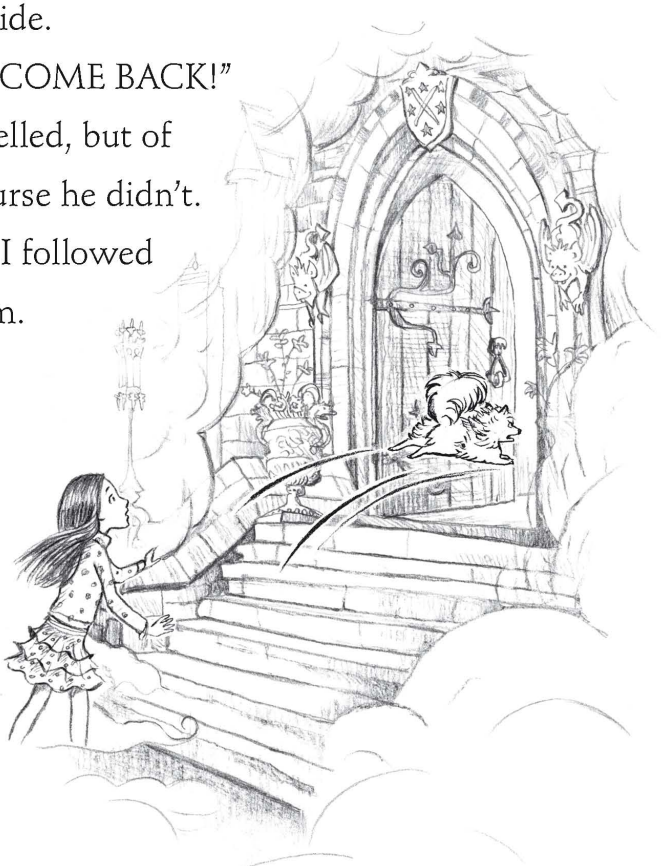
"WOOF!" Sweetypie gave a sharp bark and dashed away as if he had seen his dinner. I was so surprised I let go of his lead, and he bounded up the steps and into

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the nothingness of the mist.

"Sweetypie! NO!" I shouted, but he took no notice. I had to run after him. What else could I do? I jumped up the steps and there was a door and it was wide open – and I was just in time to see Sweetypie vanish inside.

"COME BACK!" I yelled, but of course he didn't. So I followed him.



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