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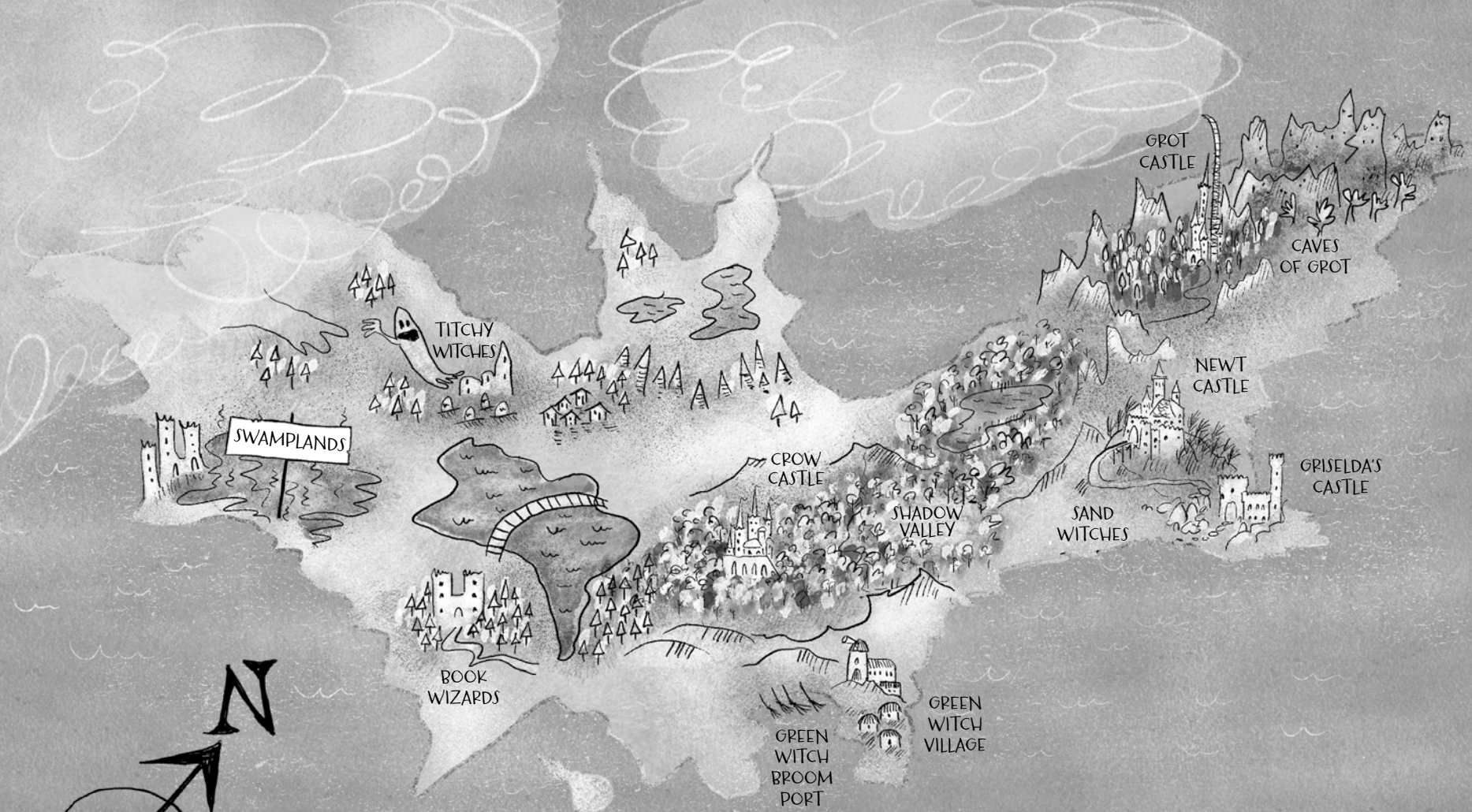
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For my wife, Elaine,
with love

D.K.

To Dulwich Wood
Primary School

M.B.



MIRACULA



FENELLA



GRISELDA



CLAWDELIA



LUCIUS



IVY



TOM



SCURRY



KING OF THE CARPET WIZARDS



KING FINNEGAN



FELIX



BINKY



KING OF THE BOOK WIZARDS



CHAPTER ONE

A Birthday Witch

A loud crack of thunder boomed as Fenella Newt, queen of the Sand Witches, breezed into the great hall of Newt Castle, black cape swirling behind her. She was carrying an enormous birthday cake, topped with goopy green icing and wand-shaped candles that cast spooky shadows up her pale cheeks.



“Happy birthday, Ivy!” she beamed.

A young fair-haired girl, dressed in a white tunic and witch’s hat, dropped the book she was reading by the fire and leaped to her feet.

“Wow!” she gasped.

“That’s the most spellicious birthday cake I’ve ever seen, Mum.”

The queen’s portly husband King Lucius followed closely behind her, levitating plates of party snacks.



“What gruesome ingredients have you stirred into the cake this year, my conjuring cuisine queen?”

“Scream cheese, and lemon and slime – oh, and some toasted marsh maggots, my most wizardly king,” Fenella proudly announced, and as she did, her puffy chef’s cap turned into a pointy black witch’s hat. She looked at the king. “I see you’ve changed the tablecloth.”

He nodded. “Of course. I changed it into a frog.”





With a loud ribbit, a slippery amphibian jumped around the table as the king shot Ivy a wink. “Hoppy birthday, Ivy,” he chuckled.

Queen Fenella sighed, rolling her eyes with a half grin before muttering a new spell, changing the frog into what looked like a stringy spider’s web.

“There, that’s a proper party tablecloth. It’s much more cobwebby.”

Setting down the cake, the queen noticed Ivy stare forlornly at the long table and empty chairs.

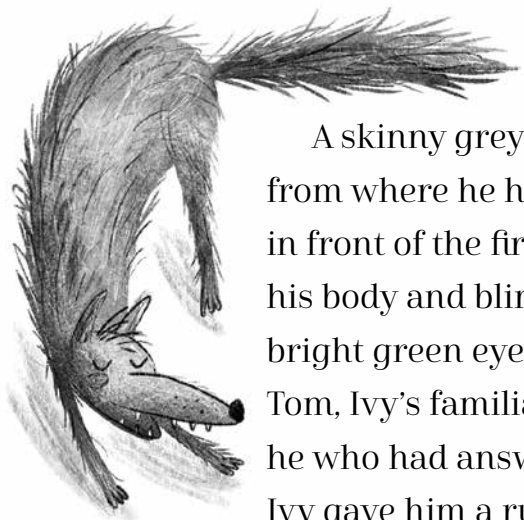
“Oh, Ivy dear,” she sighed. “I’m sorry

the storm has stopped your friends from flying over for your birthday. Are you OK?”

Ivy smiled. “It’s fine. And it’s not your fault the worst storm in the history of Miracula decided to brew up on my birthday. We can always save them some cake.”

“Good idea, we’ll never devour all this,” the king added cheerily. “Anyway, let’s be positive. Not only is it your birthday, Ivy, it’s the start of the school holidays, and we’ve all got a delightful, dark, dingy winter stretching ahead of us. Just think of all those lovely short, gloomy days, when sometimes the sun hardly bothers coming up at all.”

“Sounds perfect,” came a young boy’s voice from the fireplace.



A skinny grey wolf got up from where he had been curled in front of the fire, stretching his body and blinking his bright green eyes. The wolf was Tom, Ivy's familiar, and it was he who had answered the king. Ivy gave him a rub between the ears as he arched his back. Then suddenly, with a loud howl, he was no longer a grey wolf but a boy about Ivy's age, with a fur tunic and an untidy mop of dark hair.

"Tom Wolf," said the king, "I thought all this food might wake you up."

"Tom Boy," the queen corrected, as the king didn't seem to have noticed Tom had shifted shape.

The king glanced at Tom and laughed.

"Aha, of course, because hands are much better than paws for grabbing a piece of cake – eh, Tom?"

Tom nodded, pulling out a wooden chair to sit next to Ivy at the party table.

Queen Fenella cut the cake and soon everyone was tucking in.

Afterwards, Ivy flopped back in front of the fire with Tom. The storm still raged outside with loud booms of thunder.

"I'm completely stuffed," Ivy sighed contentedly. "Mum and Dad, thanks for a great birthday!"

"You're welcome, Ivy," said the king, "but it's not over yet."

Ivy glanced at her mum, who raised her eyebrows.

"Isn't it?" Ivy asked.



“I have something extra special planned.” The king took out his wand, twirling it in the air. “Time for a bit of birthday magic. And to make up for your friends not coming this year, I thought I’d really push the boat out!”

On the other side of the great hall stood a tall object covered by a sheet. Ivy had seen it earlier but mistaken it for a new, rather large piece of furniture. The king strode over and whipped the sheet off theatrically,

revealing a wooden replica of a castle tower. It looked just like the tower of Newt Castle, though with



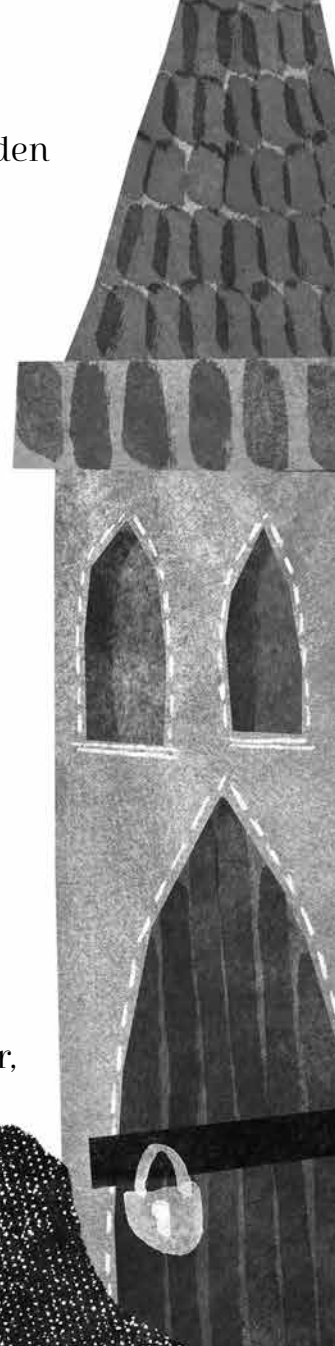
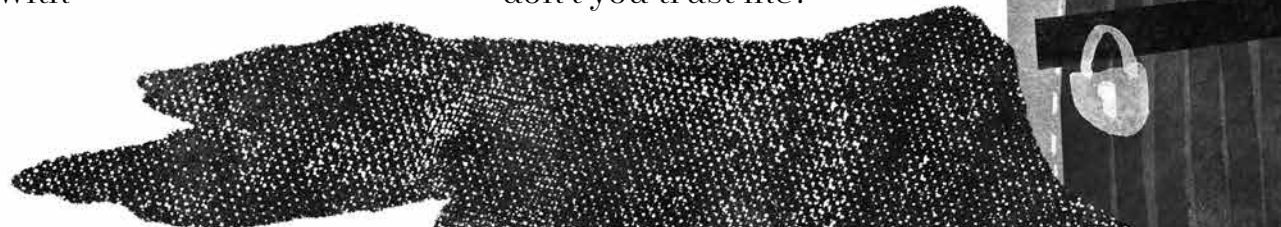
arched windows and a wooden door almost as tall as the tower itself.

“Behold, the Tower of Toil and Trouble!” the king announced, looking pleased with himself. He turned to his wife.

“My dearest Fenella, will you queen-dly assist me?”

“Oh, must I, my bizzy wizzyness?” Fenella protested. “I thought I might just help myself to another slice of cake.”

The king pretended to look hurt. “That sounds like an excuse. What’s the matter, don’t you trust me?”

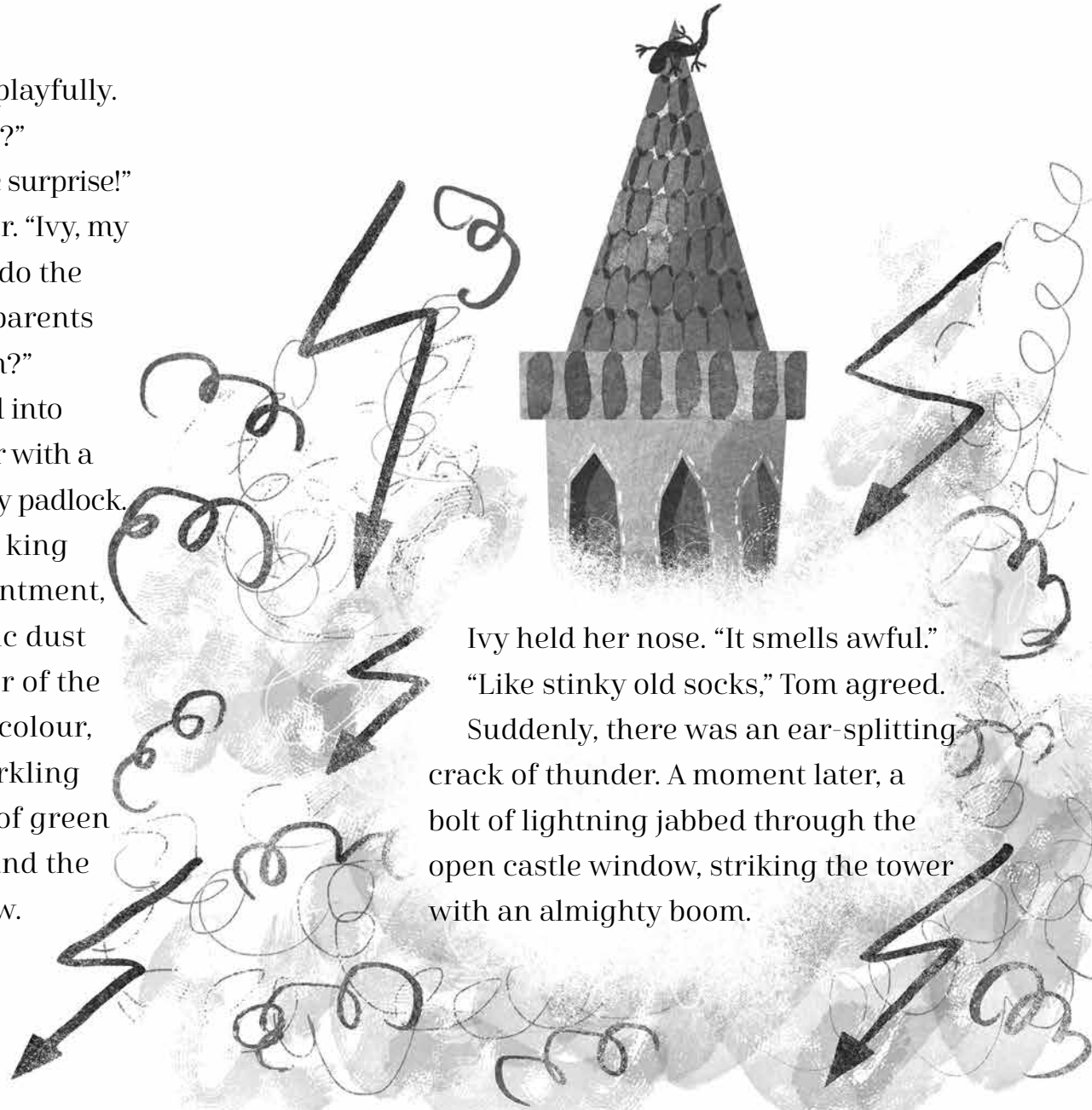


“I suppose so,” she replied playfully.
“But what are you going to do?”

“Ah, now that would spoil the surprise!”
The king turned to his daughter. “Ivy, my birthday princess, would you do the honours and lock your royal parents inside this crafty construction?”

The king and queen stepped into the tower and Ivy shut the door with a giggle, securing it with a sturdy padlock.

From inside the tower, the king uttered some words of enchantment, then threw a handful of magic dust out of a window onto the floor of the great hall. The dust changed colour, fizzing and jumping and sparkling like fireworks. Thick plumes of green smoke snaked their way around the tower, concealing it from view.



Ivy held her nose. “It smells awful.”
“Like stinky old socks,” Tom agreed.
Suddenly, there was an ear-splitting crack of thunder. A moment later, a bolt of lightning jabbed through the open castle window, striking the tower with an almighty boom.

“Woooooaaaaaaah!”

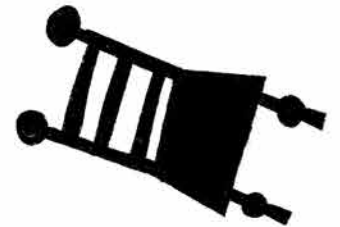
The force of the firebolt sent Tom and Ivy hurtling backwards across the great hall, to land with a crash under the table. Chairs toppled, goblets clattered, leftover cake flew off the table.



Groaning, Ivy pushed herself up on her elbows and rubbed her head. She looked around to see Tom sprawled out beside her.

“You OK, Tom?”

“I think so. You?”



“Yeah, I’m OK. Wow! That was powerful magic.”

The smoke began to disappear, spiralling out of an open window and rising up through the night sky towards a full moon. The Tower of Toil and Trouble stood smouldering – its battered door was flung open, and the severed padlock lay on the floor.



The tower was completely empty.

“Well, they disappeared alright,” Ivy said with a nervous chuckle.

“But where did they go?”

Crawling out from under the table, Ivy and Tom got to their feet, and dusted themselves down. They waited for the king and queen to reappear in a showy display of magic. Ivy kept a close eye on the door of the great hall, expecting them to burst in at any moment.

But they didn’t.

They waited.

And waited.

And waited.

Nothing . . .

