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FOR ALISA AND ALARA H, LOVE HONOR XX

FOR ARCHIE AND OLIVE, LOVE MUM - KS

LITTLE TIGER

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Diary of an ACCIDENTAL WITCH

MAGIC EVER AFTER



PERDITA & HONOR CARGILL
ILLUSTRATED BY KATIE SAUNDERS

LITTLE TIGER

LONDON

LITTLE SPELLSHIRE

TO THE SPELLSHIRE SCHOOL
OF EXTRAORDINARY ARTS

THE FOREST

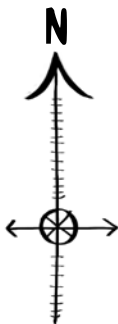
THE MOON
& BROOMSTICK
PUB

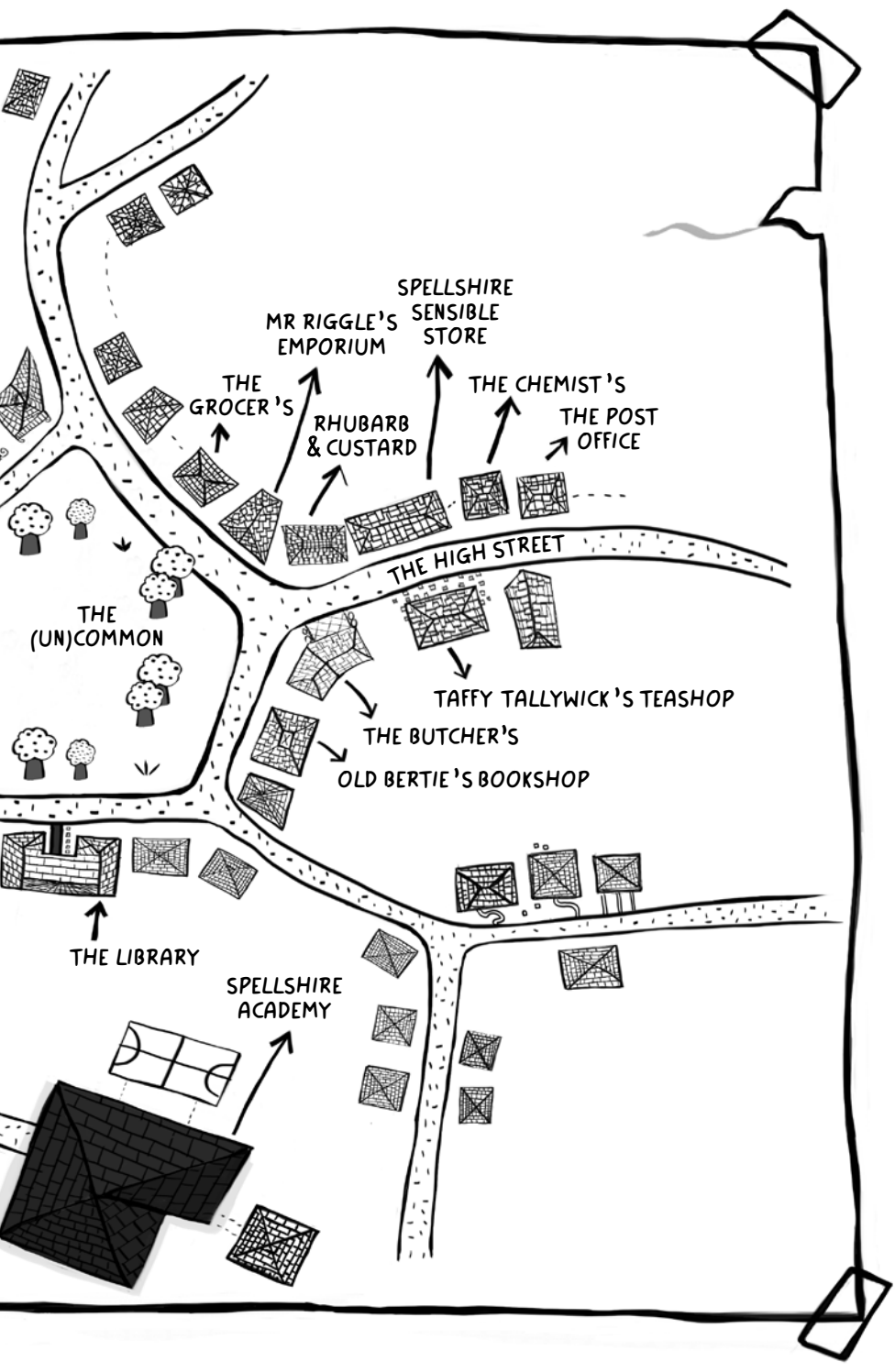
OUR HOUSE

ASHKAN'S
HOUSE

PIGGOTY LANE

NEW STREET





MR RIGGLE'S
EMPORIUM

SPELLSHIRE
SENSIBLE
STORE

THE
GRO CER 'S

RHubARB
& CUSTARD

THE CHEMIST'S

THE POST
OFFICE

THE HIGH STREET

THE
(UN)COMMON

TAFFY TALLYWICK'S TEASHOP

THE BUTCHER'S

OLD BERTIE'S BOOKSHOP

THE LIBRARY

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ACADEMY

THIS DIARY IS
VERY, VERY, VERY
TOP SECRET

PROPERTY OF BEA BLACK

*1 Piggoty Lane,
Little Spellshire,
Spellshire*



Do NOT read it, or else...!
(Seriously, DON'T DO IT!)



MONDAY 28TH MARCH
(FULL MOON!)

8:05am Home

I'm trying to explain **GO with Cats** to Dad and it's not going well.

"I can't be hearing you right," he says, wagging his ears. "Tell me one more time."

I start again. "It's just like a normal **GO** match except the teams are twice as big, the players wear blindfolds and the brooms are piloted by cats—"

"I keep thinking I hear you say *cats*," Dad interrupts me.





"That's right. CATS."

"Hahahaha! You're joking."

"I'm not joking. Cats.

Blindfolds. Moonlight.

Tonight," I summarize.

(It's very traditional.)

Dad has gone pale. "I'm not sure I can let you do this."

"Dad!!!"

"But think of the health-and-safety issues!"

"It'll be *fine*." Nobody bothers too much about health and safety at Extraordinary. "It's not a lot more dangerous than an ordinary **GO** match and Ms Celery has lots of Back-on-the-pitch potion in case of accidents. Plus, it's far less dangerous than flying-firework displays or volcanoes in the **Great Hall**. Hahaha!"

Ribbity-ribbity-ribbit! Pretty sure Stan's laughing.

Dad's definitely not.



8:55am School

There are cats everywhere. They're slinking up the school drive and so many have crowded on to the wide steps leading up to the front door that it's hard to avoid stepping on them.

"Excited, Bea?" asks Puck, apologizing to a large tabby as he gently shoos it out of the way so we can pass.

"As a dragon at a barbecue!"

"I'd be **TERRIFIED**." Winnie runs up to join us. "Aren't you scared at all?"

"Nope," says Puck happily. He is a very brave witch.*

"A bit," I say honestly.

This is only the second time I've ever

played the game and my first-

ever proper match. Only forty witches

in the whole school have been

picked to play, and just four witches

from Year Seven, and *I'm one of them!*

It's a **BIG DEAL**.



*Dr Pellicano says he is **RECKLESS** and **FOOLHARDY**, which I think means almost the same?

9:03am

The entrance hall looks like it has been decorated with kittens. They're perched on Mrs Slater's desk, meowing at the class frogs still waiting to be collected from their cubbyholes.* There are kittens curled like garlands round the banisters of the staircase and hanging from the lights like Christmas baubles. We all think it's *lovely* but Mrs Slater is even grumpier than usual.

*Stan lives with me full time at No. 1 Piggoty Lane now!



“As if I didn’t have enough to do without all this malarkey. There’s lost property everywhere.”

She waves her wand at a mislaid cloak and a second later it disappears to be replaced by a nervous-looking beetle that scuttles out of the



door. “And I’ll never get the spiders settled.”

(It’s true that they’re all very overexcited.)



“Off to registration with you or it won’t just be lost property I’ll be turning into beetles!”



9:04am

Mrs Slater might not be having a good morning but Mr Muddy – a sleek black cat perched on each shoulder – is nearly as happy as we are.

“What a night it shall be!” He ticks off all our names in the register so quickly that his pen is a blur. “It’s been years since I last saw a proper **GO with Cats** match.”

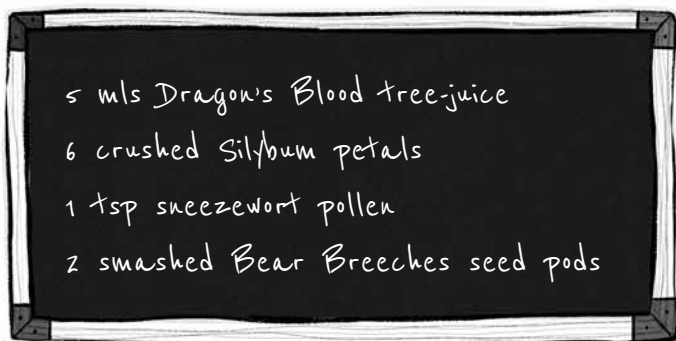
“Who will you be supporting, sir?” Blair flies in late through the open window. “**The Clawfuls**, right?” She lands perfectly and high-fives Puck.

“NO!” Fabi and I chorus. “**The Furmidables!**”

“As your form teacher, I will be supporting all the Year Seven players *equally*.” He grins at us.

9:22am

“We’d better brew up some Don’t-panic potion, just in case. **GO with Cats** is not a game for the faint-hearted.” Miss Lupo starts writing the ingredients up on the board.



“There are bottles of Dragon’s Blood tree-juice in the big cupboard and you’ll find the proper method for smashing the Bear Breeches on page seventy-five of *Basic Potion Methods Volume 3*.”

For once, I’ve got the right textbook on my desk. The only problem is there’s an elderly grey cat snoozing on it and I really don’t want to disturb him.

9:25am

“Please, miss.” Amara waves her arm in the air. “I’ve lost my Silybum petals! I had them right here, and now—” She breaks off and stares at a small kitten that was once black all over and is now quite quickly turning bright purple from whiskers to paws.



9:33am

The good news is that Silybum is not poisonous to cats. The bad news (unless you really like purple) is that its effect will take NINETY-NINE days to wear off.

9:40am

It is very hard to concentrate and even Miss Lupu has given up and started magicking up saucers of milk for all our visitors.

“Never mind, it’s not like there’s a **GO with Cats**

match every day," she says, scooping up the tiny kitten that was trying to climb her stripey tights and tickling it under the chin.

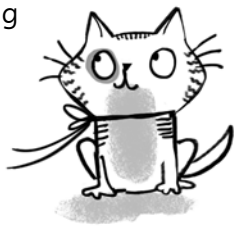
11:23am

Mr Smith says cats can be very useful for learning Maths. This isn't surprising because Mr Smith says *everything* is very useful for Maths, and Maths is useful for everything. What is surprising is that, instead of sitting in the classroom doing sums, he's sending us on a cat-counting expedition to the **Great Hall**.

"You'll need to have excellent observation skills," he warns. "It's hard to count things that can't be relied on to stay in one place. I'll be impressed if you all come back with the same number!"

11:55am

My total cat count was 131 but Winnie (who is better at asking cats to stay still than me) counted 206.



Puck only counted 13 because he got distracted by a teeny stripey kitten that wanted to play.

2:10pm

We've managed to get Professor Crisp (who is as easy to distract as Puck) off the topic of the Witchy Corn Laws and on to the history of **GO with Cats**.

"MY DAD SAYS THAT QUEEN CLEOPATRA PLAYED **GO WITH CATS** WITH PANTHERS, AND THE LOSING TEAM ALL GOT EATEN!" bellows Hunter.



"Is-is that t-true, s-sir?" Polly looks as if she expects a hundred hungry panthers to crash into the classroom at any second.*

"I think not." The professor uncoils Herbie, his python, from his tummy and sends him slithering over to comfort Polly. "After all, **GO with Cats** was invented at **Cadabra Castle**."

*Sadly, we don't even have ONE school panther.

5:00pm Home

Just time to run home before the match. Taffy is here!

“I’ve been teaching your dad the basics,” she says.

“Levitation?” I ask hopefully.

“Nope, how to boil an egg.”

5:46pm

I couldn’t eat my boiled eggs for nerves.

“I’ll make you a sandwich to have after,” says Taffy, whisking away my untouched plate. “It’s probably wise not to have too much food swishing around in your tummy when you’re turning somersaults in the sky.”

5:55pm

I’ve persuaded Taffy to come and watch the

match. That way, if Dad

starts panicking or faints

or does anything else

EMBARRASSING, she can

look after him. I’m very glad

his girlfriend is a witch.



"I survived!" she tells Dad cheerfully. "I'm sure Bea will be fine."

6:03pm

Ash is coming too because, as an official friend to witches, he's always welcome at *Extraordinary*. He's promised to look after Stan for me because I don't think frogs should risk **GO with Cats**.

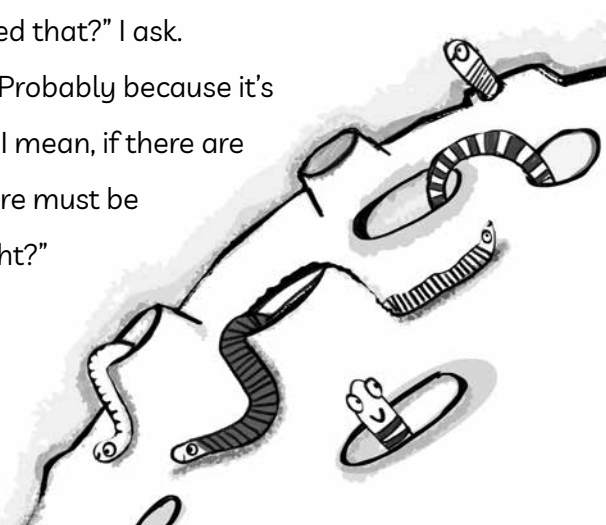
7:35pm School (again)

It feels funny heading out to the pitches this late. The full moon is so round and fat and bright, it's nearly as light as daytime.

"It's a WORM MOON," says Puck, pulling on his red **Clawfuls** socks.

"Why is it called that?" I ask.

Puck shrugs. "Probably because it's got worms on it. I mean, if there are earthworms, there must be *moonworms*, right?"



7:50pm

It's nearly time for broom-off. The rest of the players are gathering in the middle of the pitches ready to meet their cats. I see Fabi carefully slip his lucky sock into his hoodie pocket. I wish I had a lucky sock too.

7:55pm

"Right," says Ms Celery, hovering in front of us on her broom. "Let's get you paired up with your cats and then we'll get your blindfolds on."

My cat is much smaller than the others. It's black all over except for its front legs, which look like a tiger's. I'm going to call it Elvis because I think that's a nice name for a flying cat.

"BEA BLACK, WOULD YOU PUT THAT DIARY AWAY!!!" yells Ms Celery.

Got to go...



8:30pm

Half-time and the **Furmidables** and the **Clawfuls** are tied at seventy goals each. Two players have been stretchered off*, three have been sick** and two have been benched for fouls that they're blaming on the cats. The good news is that none of those players were me. The BAD news is that I haven't scored a goal. Yet.

9:05pm

Final score:

FURMIDABLES: 99

CLAWFULS: 101

I hate losing but tonight I had way too much fun to be sad. Everyone is crowding round the players like we're ALL heroes!

"You were *amazing*," I tell Puck because he scored TWENTY-THREE goals for the **Clawfuls** before he fell down the Great Chimney.

"You were good too," he says, even though I only scored seven. I would have scored eight except that

*They'll be fine!

**Very glad I didn't eat my tea.

Elvis spotted a mouse and
got distracted at the critical
moment.




Blair is being smug,
which is fair because she
scored fifteen goals *and*
performed a perfect
loop-the-loop in the
final moments of the game.

9:45pm

Still at school celebrating. Everyone is honouring
the spirit of the worm moon with original songs and
dances.





10:13pm

“That,” says Dad, as we walk home, “was BRILLIANT. YOU were BRILLIANT.” He stops and does a little full-moon jig in the middle of the path. “One day, I want to be able to fly like that.”

“I’ll teach you!” I say because right now I feel like I could do anything. “But maybe we should start without the cats and the blindfolds.”

“And you’ll teach me the magic that makes stuff go up in the air?”

“*Levitation*, yes. I’ll teach you ALL the magic, Dad!”

“Promise?” (He looks serious!)

“*Promise.*”