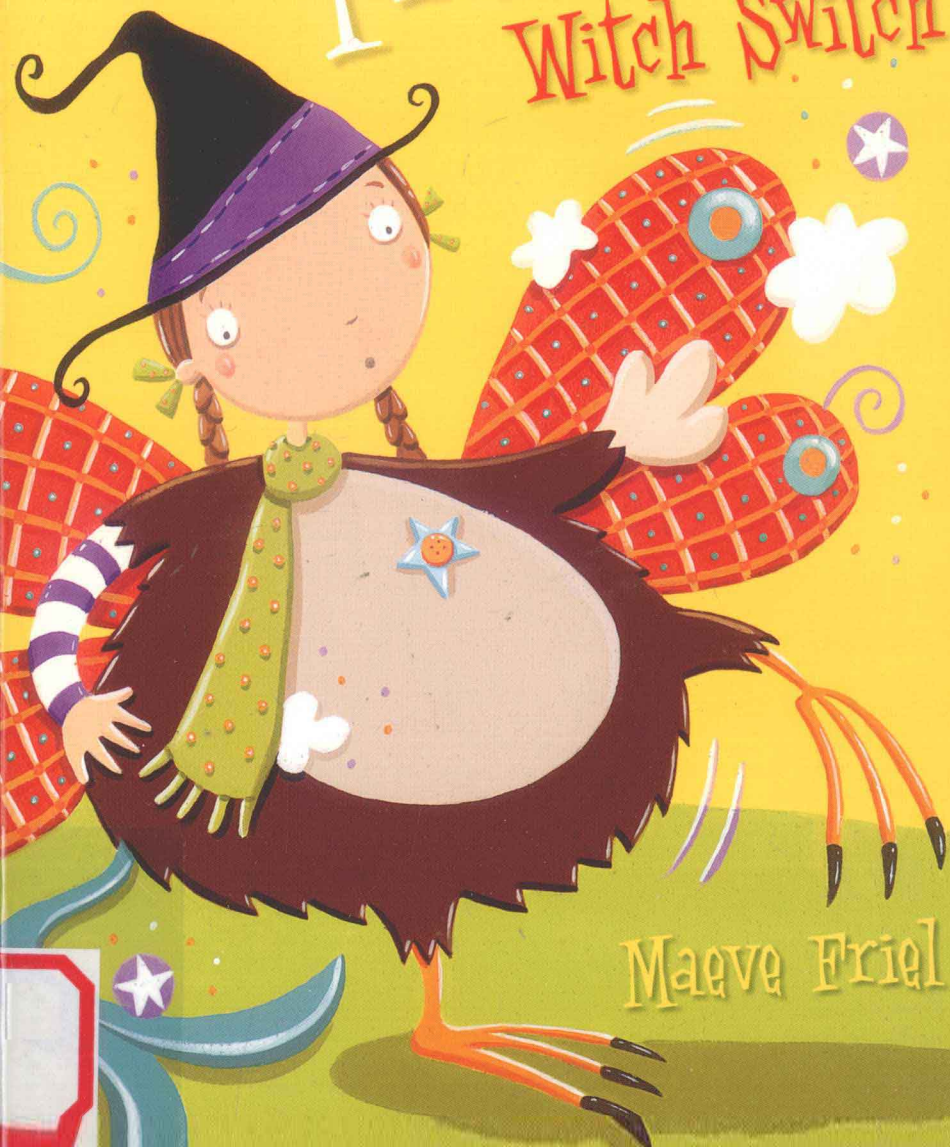


# Witch-in- Training

Witch Switch



Maeve Friel

Witch-in-  
Training

Witch Switch



*Other* **Witch-in-Training** *titles*

Flying Lessons

Spelling Trouble

Charming or What?

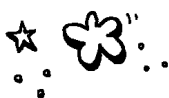
Brewing Up

Broomstick Battles

# Witch-in- Training



Witch Switch



Maeve Friel



Illustrated by Nathan Reed



HarperCollins *Children's Books*



First published in Great Britain by HarperCollins *Children's Books* 2005  
HarperCollins *Children's Books* is a division of HarperCollins Publishers Ltd  
77-85 Fulham Palace Road, Hammersmith, London W6 8JB

The HarperCollins *Children's Books* website address is  
[www.harpercollinschildrensbooks.co.uk](http://www.harpercollinschildrensbooks.co.uk)

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Text © Maeve Friel 2005  
Illustrations © Nathan Reed 2005

ISBN 0 00 718525 1

The author and illustrator assert the moral right  
to be identified as author and illustrator of the work.

Printed and bound in England by  
Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

#### Conditions of Sale

This book is sold subject to the condition  
that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise,  
be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise circulated  
without the publisher's prior consent in any form,  
binding or cover other than that in which it is  
published and without a similar condition  
including this condition being imposed on the  
subsequent purchaser.



# Chapter One

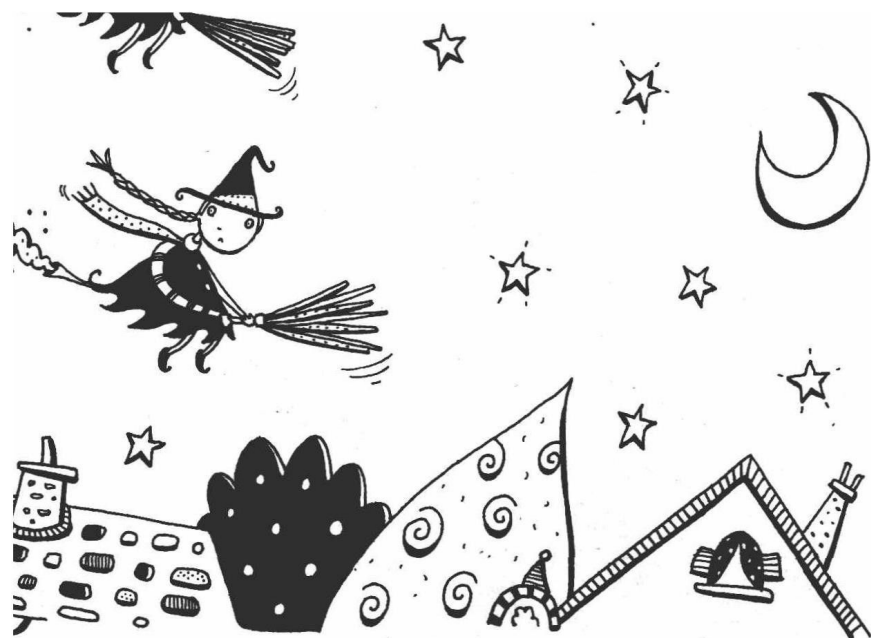
The sky was black with witches on brooms, all flying in the same direction as Jessica. They turned left when she turned left. They turned right when she turned right. When she began to descend to the High Street, the



broom riders started to descend too.

“Are they following me?” Jessica wondered. “Or are they just going shopping in Miss Strega’s?”

Miss Strega’s hardware shop, where Jessica was doing her witch training lessons, was the most popular witches’ shop in the whole world. It always had the most up-to-date Brewing ingredients, Spell Books, Charms and brooms, but it was still unusual to see so many customers arriving all at once.



Of course, Jessica was the only one who saw the witches and their brooms. Ordinary People never noticed Miss Strega's customers flying hither and thither. They didn't even see the old hardware shop, for it was a secret "In Between" place, protected by a "For Witches' Eyes Only" Spell. Miss Strega didn't want nosy parkers snooping around, making trouble for Witches World Wide.

As Jessica came nearer the shop, she saw that there was a long queue outside the





door, so she flew on to the roof, climbed through the dormer window, Zoomed through the attic trapdoor and landed with a thump on the shop counter.

Miss Strega peered over her glasses.

“I expect you have a reason for coming in through the roof, Jessica?”

“I was avoiding the crowds, Miss Strega. There are hundreds of witches outside.”

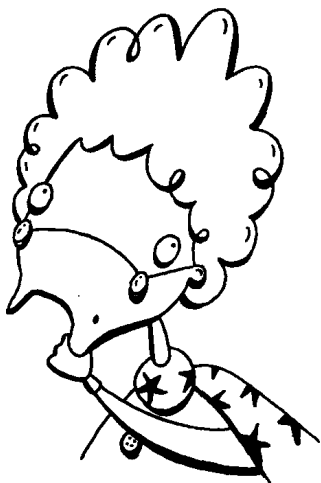
Miss Strega clapped her hands. “Tickety-boo. I’m offering free potion this evening so I hoped lots of customers would turn up.”

“You’re having a free potion evening? What about my class?”

“Doing the Witch Switch? Yes, we will have a class later. But I thought it might be interesting to have some old friends drop in first” – she gave a little giggle – “for a change.”

“Doing the Witch Switch? What’s that?”

Miss Strega cupped her long chin in her hand as if she were considering Jessica’s question carefully. “It’s a bit like shape changing, I suppose, but more extreme.”





Jessica groaned. She had never been any good at changing the shapes of things, with or without a wand. Once she had sort-of-accidentally transformed Miss Strega into a wasp, but then Miss Strega had got her own back and turned Jessica into a large pumpkin. It was scary being a pumpkin, thinking that someone might come along and carve you up for a Halloween lantern or turn you into a pie.

“Is that a good idea, Miss Strega?” she asked. “I’m quite happy with the shape I am. And I’d rather not have people eating bits of me when I’m not myself. Remember Felicity?”

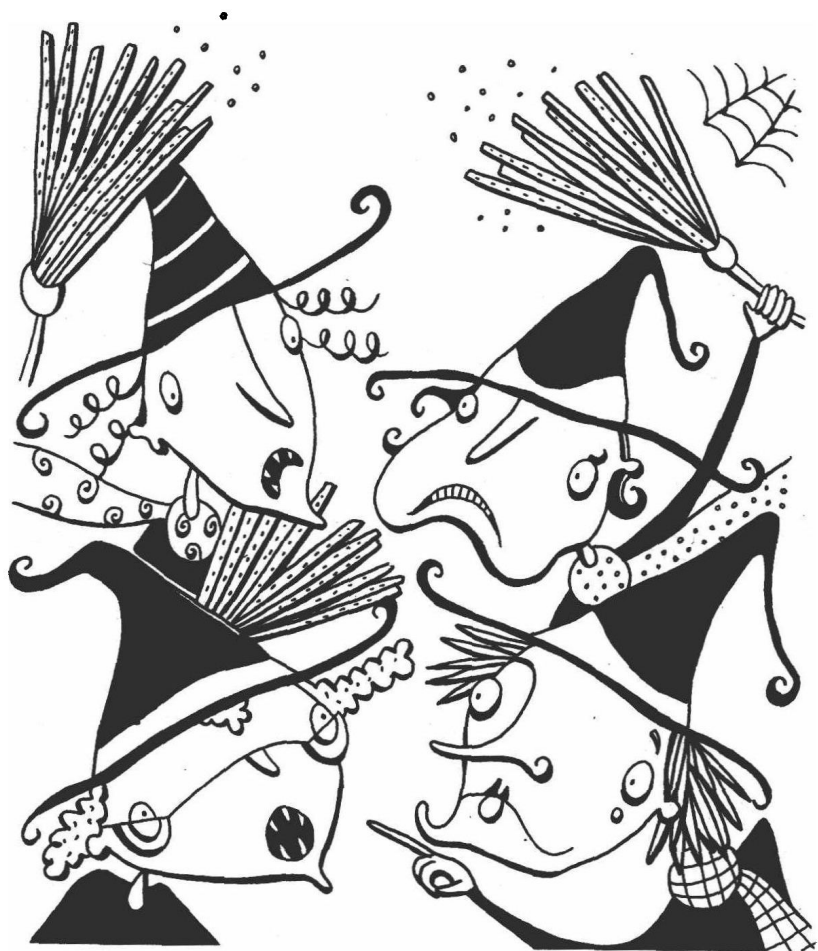
Felicity, Miss Strega’s cat, had once turned into a ginger cat-shaped biscuit. She had

been snoozing on a Spell Book and a Transformation Spell had slipped into her dreams. Unfortunately, before she was changed back into a cat, both Miss Strega and Berkeley, Jessica's nightingale mascot, had nibbled little bits of her. Poor Felicity still looked a bit ragged around the ears.

“Fiddlesticks!” Miss Strega snorted. “The Witch Switch is something all witches do: it’s as traditional as Brewing or Flying – it’s useful in emergencies, it’s handy if you’re on a spying mission and it can be good fun. Now, open the door, poppet.”

As soon as Jessica turned the Closed notice on the door to Open, witches and hags of every shape and size began to elbow their way in.

“Four packets of troll squeals,” one shouted. “Two pokes of rompedenti biscuits.”



“I want one of those dragons’ teeth that you can plant to grow your own hero.”

Jessica was just about to whizz off to the ingredient drawers when she felt a sharp tug on the back of her cape.

“I think you’ll find I’m first in line, young lady,” snarled a very pushy hag. “I would like a large tub of gnats’ spittle and a carton of dry goats’ poo.”

“No!” screeched another. “I was definitely in front of you.”

“No way,” howled another. “I got here first!”

Fortunately, at that very moment, Miss Strega began to pass around glasses of colourful potions.

“Drinks, anyone?” she asked sweetly. “Mint Royale? Or would you prefer White Gold?”

After that, no one seemed to care about their turn in the queue any more. Jessica suspected that Miss Strega had been up to her old tricks, adding a spell to her potions so that all the witches wanted to do was spend, spend, spend and cackle, cackle,

cackle. Even Berkeley, who was awfully shy about singing in public, had fallen under a spell. She perched prettily on the handle of the Brewing cauldron and bewitched the customers with her lovely silvery songs.

Jessica, as the witch-in-training, was left to do all the hard work. She fetched ingredients, filled bottles with Walpurga's magic well water, parcelled up new capes and helped load cauldrons full of shopping



on to the backs of brooms.

More and more customers arrived. They stood around, yakking and drinking and cackling their heads off at Miss Strega's old jokes.

The noise was so deafening that Jessica didn't hear the door click.

She was on her knees behind the counter, searching for a Cover of Darkness blanket, when she realised that the shop had gone very, very quiet.





She stood up slowly and peered over the counter.

All the witches had disappeared. There was not a single hag trying on a cape or enjoying a natter with Miss Strega.

On the other hand, an awful lot of cats had appeared from nowhere. They padded across the floor and sprawled on the windowsills. Several were lying on the counter. One or two were even attempting

