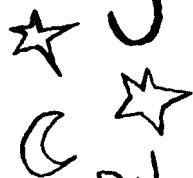


Happy Birthday, Oliver Moon



★ Sue Mongredien ★

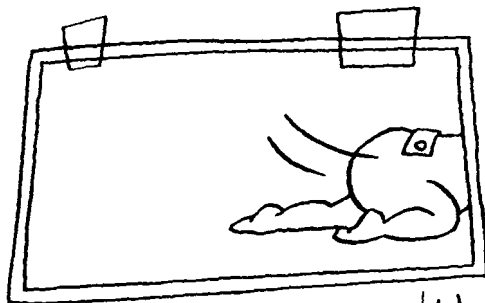
My Family



Dad



Me
Oliver
Moon



Mum

my sister, the Witch Baby

Happy Birthday, Oliver Moon



Sue Mongredien 

 Illustrated by 

Jan McCafferty




**For all the children of Balfour Infant School,
with lots of love**

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“Twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen...”
Oliver Moon said, counting the days on
the calendar that hung on the kitchen
wall. “Sixteen, seventeen, EIGHTEEN!
Only eighteen days until my birthday!”

It was early evening, and Oliver had
just got down from the tea table. Oliver’s
dad was washing up at the sink and his

mum was feeding the Witch Baby the last bit of her mashed slug pudding. Mrs. Moon smiled at Oliver. "Not long to go," she said. "You'll have to write out your party invitations soon."

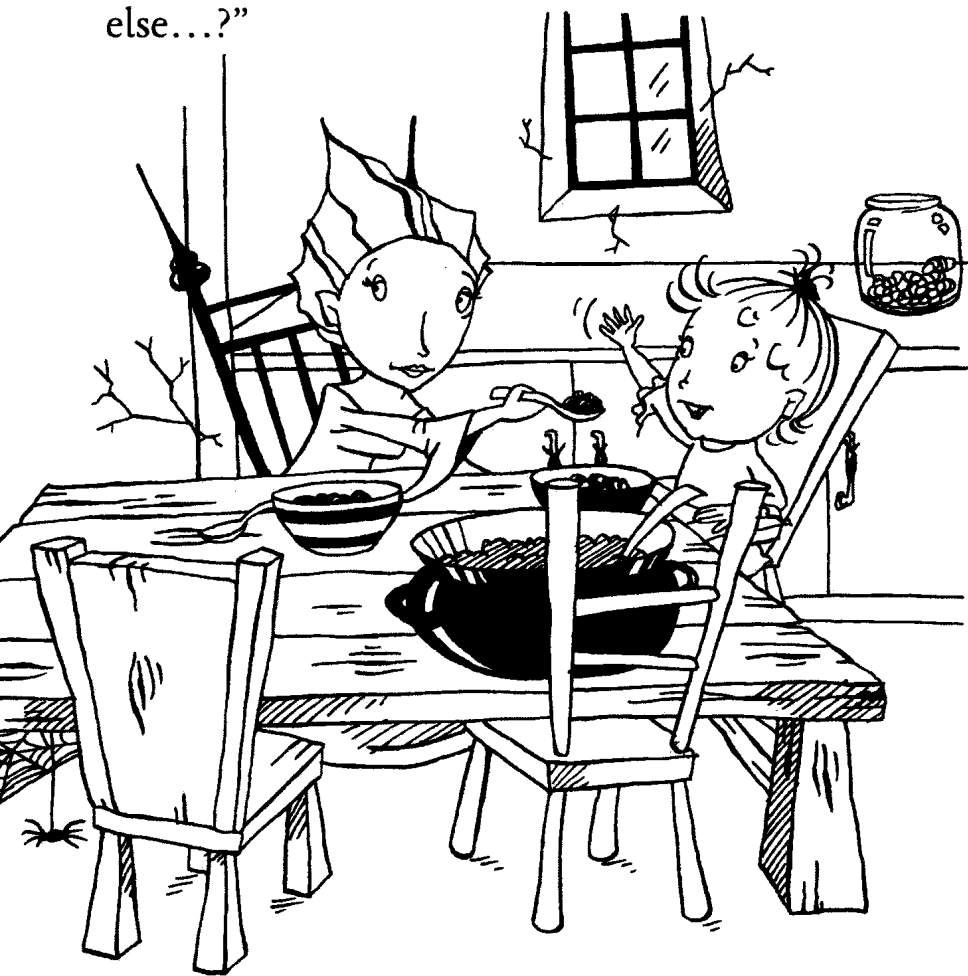
"Ooh yes," Oliver said, thinking quickly. "Well, I'll invite Jake, of course,



and Colin, and Hattie, and Pippi,
and—”

“And ME!” the Witch Baby
interrupted, through a sluggish mouthful.

Oliver grinned at his sister. “Yes, you
can come too,” he said. “Let’s see, who
else...?”



“If you write me a list, I can send out some invitations by a Delivery spell tonight,” Mrs. Moon said, scooping up the last spoonful of slug pudding and popping it into the Witch Baby’s mouth. “Then we can start thinking about party games, and food, and—”

“Cake!” the Witch Baby prompted.

“Me like cake.”

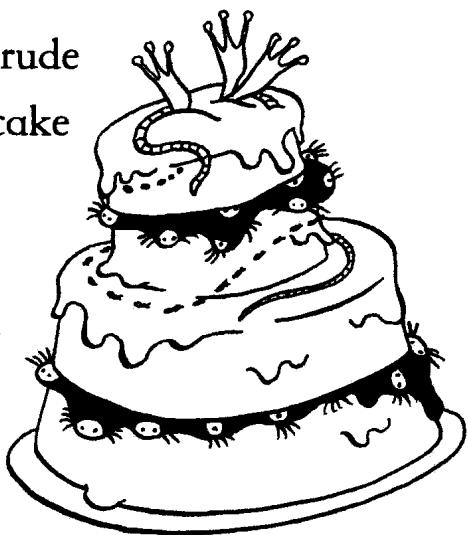
“Me like cake too,” Mr. Moon said.

“What sort do you fancy this year, Ol?”

Oliver thought for a moment. He’d asked for a cockroach cake last year, but his dad had overcooked it, so that it had been more like a charcoal cake. Maybe a rat-tail gateau decorated with fire-ants? Or a frog-foot tart, with spider jam?

“Umm...” he said, trying to decide.

Would it be very rude
if he asked for a cake
from the Magic
Bakery on
Cacklewick High
Street? They
always had the
most amazing



creations in the shop window. “Well, I
was wondering—” he began, but his dad
interrupted, looking excited.

“How about a big squishy worm cake
with snake-juice icing?” Mr. Moon
suggested. “I’ve always fancied having a
go at one of those.”

Oliver hesitated, then nodded. “Sounds
great, Dad,” he agreed. It was really
nice of his dad to offer to make him a

birthday cake in the first place, he reminded himself. And, besides, the Magic Bakery was quite expensive – he would feel a bit guilty asking his parents to pay for a cake from there. “Thanks,” he said. “Now to make my list for the invitations!”

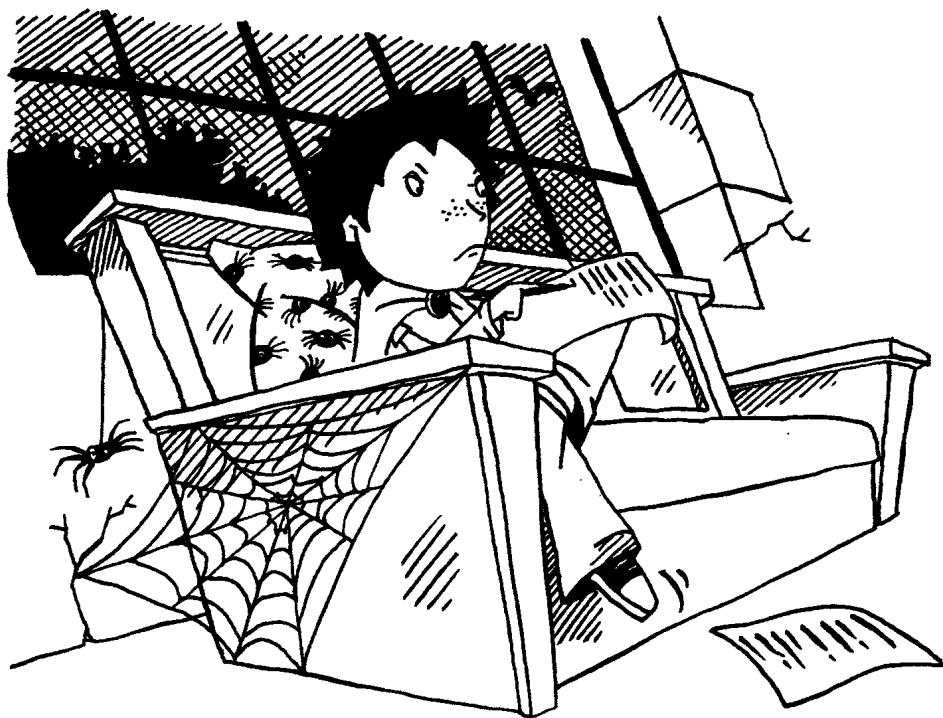
Oliver went into the living room, and got some parchment and a quill from the cupboard. He sat down on the sofa, feeling excited at the thought of his birthday. He couldn’t wait! After Christmas, it was definitely the best day of the year. His parents always brought him a special birthday breakfast in bed, then he got to open presents and cards with them, and then, at the party, he and his friends would play party games and

eat lots of yummy party food. Even better, Oliver's birthday fell on a Saturday this year, too, so there would be no school. What luck!

Oliver started to make his list of who he wanted to invite: Jake, Hattie, Colin, Pippi, Mitch, Harvey, Lucy, Carly and Eric – they were all friends from his class at Magic School. Oh, and Granny Moon, of course. He definitely wanted her to come – she was always such fun at parties, as well as being one of Oliver's favourite people in the whole world.

He smiled to himself as he thought about what a great time they would all have together, away from the not-so-nice witches and wizards of Magic School. He certainly wasn't going to invite Bully

Bogeywort, his arch-enemy. Not likely!
Nor would he invite snobby Sukie
Swishcloak, sly Scott Shuffleslick or...
well, there were quite a few people Oliver
wasn't keen on, actually. On a separate
piece of parchment, he wrote down the
names of all the people *not* to invite:



Bully, Sukie, Scott, mean Marcus
Mudbreath and greedy George Gullet.
No way, Oliver thought to himself with
a shudder.

Then he jumped as a shout from his
mum came through from the kitchen.
“Oliver, I’ve just seen the clock! Get your
pyjamas on, please, it’s past your
bedtime!”

Oliver left his lists on the sofa and went
upstairs to get changed. *Eighteen days and
counting*, he thought to himself cheerfully.
Oh, his birthday was going to be a good
one this year, he knew it already!

“Have a lovely day at Magic School,
dear,” his mum said the next morning as
Oliver put his cloak on, ready to go. “Oh,

and I cast a spell to send out your invitations last night. Everyone should have got them first thing this morning.”

“Thanks, Mum,” Oliver said, opening the front door. He waved at his best friend Jake Frogfreckle, who was coming up the path. “Hi, Jake!” he called. “Did you get your invitation?”

Jake looked blank. “What?” he said.

Oliver walked down to meet him. “The invitation for my birthday party. Mum sent it last night.”

Jake shook his head. “No,” he replied.

“Oh,” Oliver said. “That’s weird. Well, it’ll probably be waiting for you when you get home. Mum only said a minute ago that she’d sent them all out.”