Three and a Witch

Clemmy, Mabel and Eva are three sisters who live with an evil witch, Aunt Spyte. That is until one of Aunt Spyte's spells goes wrong and she vanishes. Poof! Can Clemmy, Mabel and Eva find a new, better way to live that doesn't involve bad magic? Or will they resort to using Aunt Spyte's old potions to get them through?



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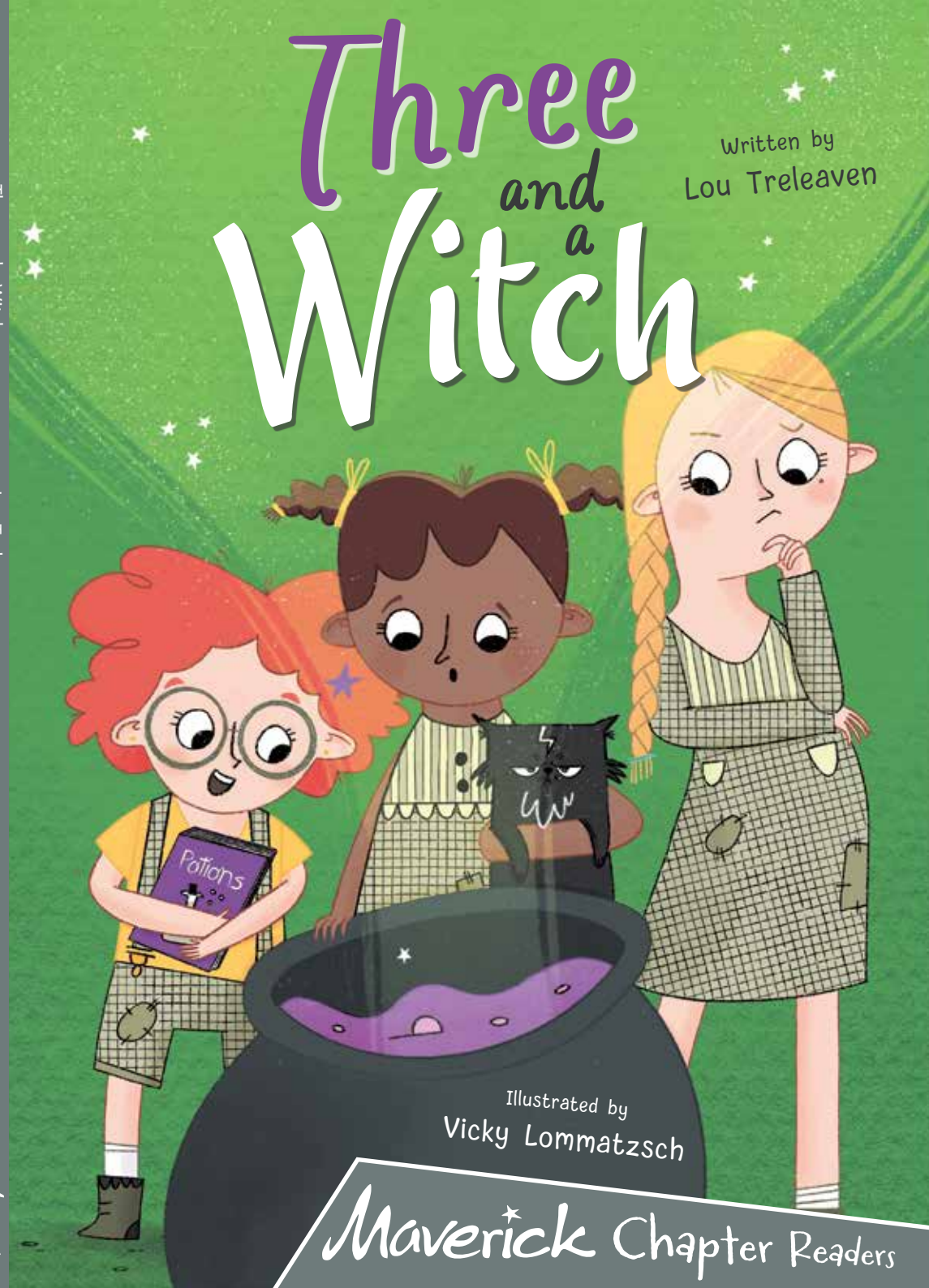
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Written by Lou Treleaven



Illustrated by Vicky Lommatzsch

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Chapter 1

Aunt Spyte had vanished. There was no doubt about that. With a great big bang, she had fizzled away in a puff of purple smoke. Only her stripy socks were left, hanging out of her cauldron. The three of us stood there, staring in disbelief.

"I suppose that's what comes of doing too much bad magic," said Mabel. Mabel was my oldest sister. She knew things.

"Maybe it was because I didn't clean the cauldron properly?" asked Eva, my next oldest sister. She worries about things.

"Of course it wasn't," said Mabel, but she looked a bit thoughtful after that. Bits of old potions were stuck to the inside of the cauldron,

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splattered over the big spell book and slopped all over the floor. "We should clean up."

"Not me," I said, sitting on a three-legged stool and folding my arms. As the youngest I'm sometimes stroppy—it's part of the job. "Aunt Spyte isn't here to boss us around anymore."

"Do you want eye-of-newt and toe-of-frog all over the floor while you're having breakfast, Clemmy?" Mabel asked.

I didn't, so I picked up a broom and helped. As usual, the broom did a little quiver when I touched it as though it wanted to take off. I expect sweeping up is very boring for a witch's broom.

"What about *those*?" Eva asked with a quavering voice.

Aunt Spyte's stripy socks were still in view. As we watched, the cauldron gave a shudder and there was a final purple fizzle. The last bit of Aunt Spyte was gone.

Aunt Spyte's cat, Shadowcurse, rose from his windowsill bed, jumped down and hissed fiercely at the cauldron. We jumped back and he scowled round at us as though this was all our fault.

"That's the end of her," said Mabel.

"But what are we going to do?" wailed Eva.

"We're free," I told her, putting down the broom. "And we're three. Not three and a witch anymore. Just three."

Eva looked doubtful. We had been ruled by Aunt Spyte for so long, it was hard to imagine anything else.

"We'll have to do things properly," said Mabel. "The housework, the cooking. I'll make a chart."

"What about money?" That was Eva of course.

"We don't need to worry about that—look!" I pointed up at the shelves where rows of Aunt Spyte's potions sat, all different sizes and colours with labels written in Aunt Spyte's scratchy hand. All waiting for her customers from the village to come and buy them. "And when they're finished, we can make some more."

"No, Clemmy!" Mabel cried. "We're not having anything to do with magic. It's dangerous. Look what

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happened to Aunt Spyte."

There was a pause as we all remembered.

"Shadowcurse is good at catching rats," Eva suggested. "We could rent him out."

Shadowcurse looked even more furious than usual.

"Maybe not," Eva added.

Just then there was a knock at the door. "Witch Spyte? Witch Spyte? Are you at home?" called a deep voice.

We looked at each other. Aunt Spyte had always made us hide from customers. Mabel shook her head warningly. I jumped up and opened the door.





Chapter 2

A large man with a floury white apron came into the kitchen. "Is the witch at home?" he asked.

We looked at the cauldron and back at each other.

"She's... out," said Mabel, which I thought was rich as she had always told us not to tell lies.

"Can we help instead?" I asked eagerly.

"Maybe you can. I'm here to collect a potion."

"Which one?" I asked before Mabel could stop me.

"Can't remember. The witch said it would help my business. I'm a baker, you see."

I dragged a stool up to the high shelves where the prepared potions were kept and began to read the labels.

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