

THE
CONJUROR'S COOKBOOK
VOLUME 3
GHOSTLY GOULASH



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HATCHLING
BOOKS

SAMPLE CHAPTER

Flash-Bang-Dollop!



The slice flew through the air and there was a blinding flash and a deafening bang as it landed in the saucepan.

‘Blimey!’ gasped Jake. It was as if a bolt of lightning had struck inside the kitchen.

‘Never mind sunglasses,’ said Granny. ‘We need earplugs!’

Jake tossed the rest of the slices into the pan. Each had the same effect. It was like standing at the centre of a thunderstorm, only it wasn’t raining.

‘Wow!’ said Jake when he had finished. ‘That was fantastic.’

‘Pardon?’ said Granny, who was still getting her hearing back.

They stirred in the paprika, set the pan

to simmer and then tidied up while they were waiting.

‘Time’s up!’ said Granny at last.

She fetched two bowls, intending to pour a helping into each. But the goulash was incredibly thick. It rolled into the first bowl in one big dollop. She tried to spoon some of it off into the other bowl, but she couldn’t. It flowed off the spoon as soon as she lifted it.



‘It looks like we’ll have to share,’ said Granny.

‘I’m not sure that we should eat it,’ said Jake. ‘It looks a bit odd.’

‘Please yourself,’ said Granny, ‘but I’m starving.’

She lifted the bowl and sniffed it.

‘Interesting,’ she said and took a sip from the edge. But then her eyes nearly popped out of her head as the goulash squirmed out of the bowl and into her mouth in one great gooey glob.

Granny made a long gulping noise as the goulash slipped straight down into her stomach.

‘Goodness!’ she said catching her breath. ‘I wasn’t expecting that. Now I know what the book means by ‘surprisingly filling’. It feels like I just swallowed an elephant.’

‘What did it taste like?’ asked Jake.

‘A bit peculiar, but nothing special. I don’t know why the recipe said that it

would “raise the spirits”. If anything, I feel a little gassy.’

Granny sat back in her chair and rubbed her tummy, frowning.

‘Oh dear,’ she groaned. ‘It’s getting worse. Excuse me, but I’m going to have to –’

Granny let out a long, loud burp. And as she did so, the most extraordinary thing happened.

A ghost swam out of her mouth!

The ghost wore nothing but a pair of sandals and a long white sheet, draped loosely over one shoulder.

He hung motionless above the kitchen table, his head tilted back and his arms spread at his sides.

Jake and Granny gaped at him for some time before he muttered out of the corner of his mouth.

‘Go on, clap.’

‘Clap?’ repeated Jake.

‘Applaud my entrance!’ said the ghost

throwing his head back further. 'I'm giving you my Julius Caesar.'

'Oh ... thank you very much,' said Jake. He and Granny clapped uncertainly and the ghost dropped his pose and floated down beside them.



'That's more like it,' he said. 'For one ghastly moment, I thought you didn't recognise me.'

'Err ... should we?' asked Granny.

'You mean you don't?' said the ghost. 'I'm

Samuel Poopshank, the famous actor. I've trod the boards of Europe's finest theatres. I've worked with Shakespeare.'

'*With Shakespeare?*' repeated Jake.

'Yes,' said Samuel grandly, 'you must have heard of him.'

'I think so,' admitted Jake. 'He's dead isn't he?'

'For more than four hundred years,' agreed Granny.

'Really?' said Samuel looking downcast. 'What a tragedy. I hadn't realised I'd been resting that long.'

'I'm afraid so,' said Jake, 'but we're very pleased to meet you anyway. I'm Jake and this is Granny.'

Granny nodded, but was looking uncomfortable.

'Pardon me,' she said, 'but I've got to do it again.'

She let out another long burp and a second ghost swam out of her mouth.

'A kitchen - excellent!' exclaimed the

new ghost, looking around him. He was dressed as a chef and holding a large meat cleaver.

‘Is this where you keep all the food?’ he asked floating straight into the larder.

‘Err, usually,’ said Granny running after him, ‘but –’

‘Empty!’ wailed the chef, floating back out.

Granny would like to have said something about not poking your nose into other people’s larders, but all she could manage was another burp.

This time, an enormous ballerina swam out.

‘Hello,’ said the ballerina, straining into a curtsy, ‘I’m Trixibelle. You couldn’t whip up a sandwich for me, could you? I’m absolutely famished.’

‘Me too!’ chorused the other ghosts.