

THE
CONJUROR'S COOKBOOK
VOLUME 1
GOBLIN STEW



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HATCHLING
BOOKS

SAMPLE CHAPTER

Unexpected Guests



The visitor was small — much smaller than Jake — but his head, hands and feet seemed to be far too big for the rest of his body. A shock of unruly ginger hair spilled out of a grubby chef's hat onto an unusually wide face.

'You're a GOBLIN!' gasped Jake.

'And you is a-GAPING' snapped the little man. 'What of it?'

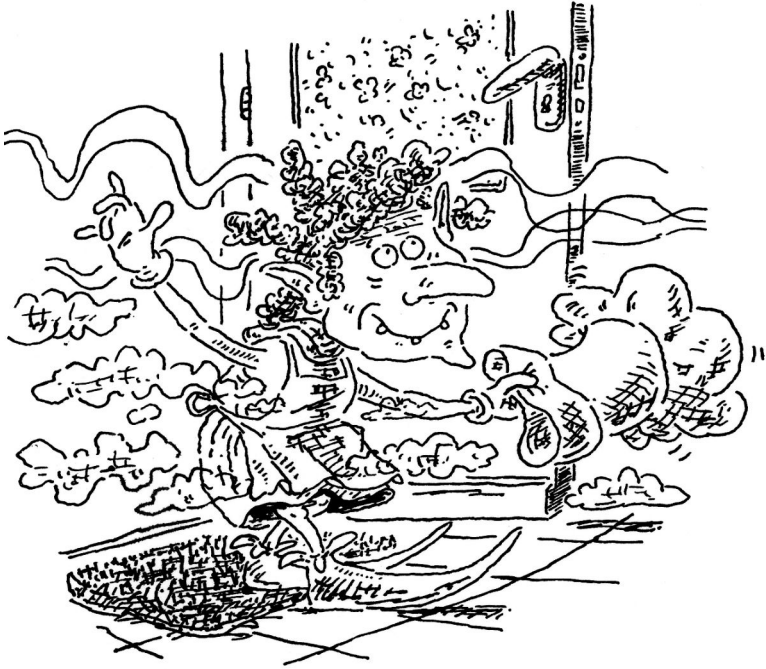
Granny pinched herself. She couldn't believe what she was seeing.

'What — what — what do you want?' she stammered.

'Oh that's nice that is,' huffed the goblin. 'Very polite! No 'Hello' or "How-dee-doo-dee", just a pair of dangly-drop-jaws and

“What does you want!”

‘Please excuse us,’ said Jake, remembering his manners. ‘It’s just that we’re not used to meeting goblins. I’m Jake and this is Granny.’



‘I is pleased to be greeting you,’ said the goblin, taking off his hat and sweeping a low bow. ‘Frogbottle, Master Chef at your service. My nosebuds couldn’t help but be snuffling that you is making *Goblin Stew*,

which happens to be my speciality. Do you mind if I be coming in?’

The goblin didn’t wait for an answer, by the time he’d finished speaking he had skipped across the kitchen and up onto the hob.

‘Spoon!’ he demanded, peering into the pot.

Granny wasn’t sure that she wanted the goblin anywhere near her cooking. His hands didn’t look very clean and the smock he was wearing was covered in smears and stains.

‘The recipe says that you’re not supposed to touch it for another three quarters of an hour,’ she told him.

‘Wrong!’ snapped Frogbottle. ‘It says YOU is not supposed to be touching it! And you is pea-poles. It doesn’t say nothing about goblins. Now, be bringing me a spoon.’

Granny handed the goblin a spoon and he scooped out a mouthful of liquid.

‘Not bad,’ he said, smacking his lips. ‘But

it be needing more salt.'

Jake passed the salt cellar and Frogbottle unscrewed the top and emptied all of the salt into the pan.



'Better,' he said, taking another big sip. 'But it still be needing flour.'

'Now wait a minute,' said Granny. 'The recipe doesn't say anything about adding flour!'

'Ah,' said Frogbottle, 'but the recipe

doesn't say nothing about NOT to be adding flour — does it?'

'That's not how recipes work,' said Granny.

'How-things-is-working and how-things-is-being is two different plates of potatoes,' said Frogbottle.

'Besides,' he added, drawing himself up to his full height, which — even though he was standing on the hob — was still a few centimetres shorter than Granny, 'recipes is for beginners and I is a Master Chef. So you be waddling off and fetching me the flour.'

Granny glared at the goblin. She didn't like being ordered about in her own kitchen, especially by someone so rude.

'A little bit of flour can't hurt — can it?' pleaded Jake. 'And Mr Frogbottle does seem to know what he's doing.'

'Oh, all right then,' muttered Granny, 'but don't blame me if it ends up as stodge!'

And she stomped off into the larder.

Frogbottle had decided to do without the



spoon and was now leaning into the pot and taking a mouthful straight from the bottom.

He didn't seem to mind that the pot was scorching hot and the liquid was almost boiling.

'How can you stand the heat?' asked Jake.

'I is used to it,' said Frogbottle. 'Hobs is

my natural habitat. I is not just an ordinary goblin. I is a *Hobgoblin!*'

Granny came back with a bag of flour and Frogbottle tore it open and dumped the whole lot into the stew.

'It be getting there,' he said, taking another mouthful. 'Do you be having any onions?'

Before Granny could answer, there was another knock at the door. Jake opened it and found a second ginger-haired goblin standing on the doorstep.

'Allow me to be introducing myself,' said the second goblin, who was also dressed as a chef. 'My name is Shrewbasher. I is something of an expert in *Goblin Stew* and I couldn't help but be snuffling that —'

The goblin broke off as he caught sight of Frogbottle.

'WHAT'S HE DOING HERE?' he demanded, bounding up onto the hob.

'I got here first!' said Frogbottle fiercely.

'More's the pity!' said Shrewbasher,

plunging his head into the pot and taking a mouthful of stew.

‘Just as I thought!’ he exclaimed, spitting the stew onto the floor. ‘It be too salty!’

‘Codswhiffle!’ shouted Frogbottle. ‘It just be needing a few onions.’

‘It’ll be taking more than a few onions to be fixing this,’ scoffed Shrewbasher, jumping down and scuttling into the larder.

‘There’s nothing to be fixing!’ insisted Frogbottle, running after him.

Granny was about to follow them when there was more hammering at the door.