



Enid Blyton Stories

The Bit of Magic Paper



Once Upon a Time

... a bit of paper blew into Gobby's garden. Gobby was a pixie, and he ran to pick up the paper, for he didn't like rubbish in his garden.



But it wasn't rubbish. It was a page of notepaper, with writing on it.

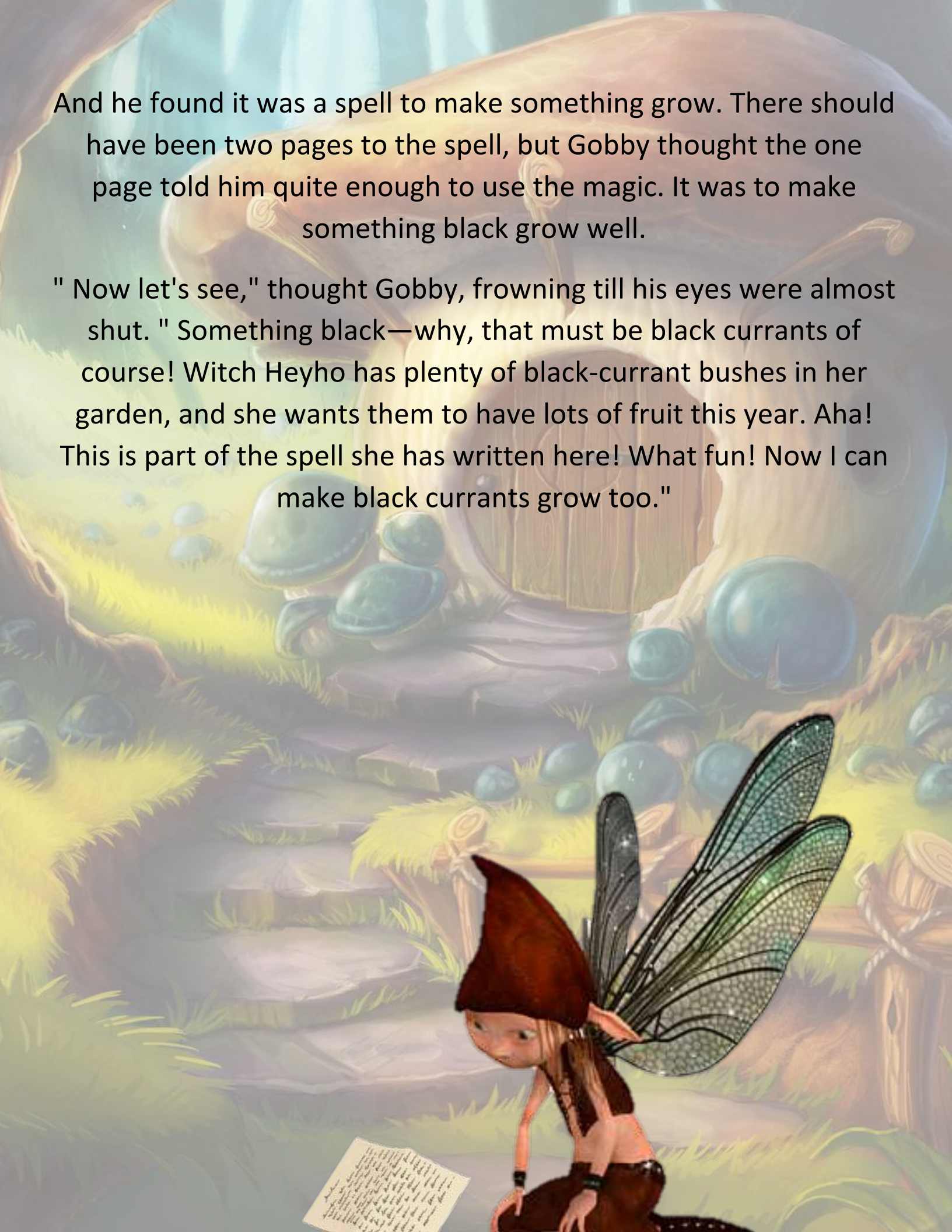
" Good gracious! " said Gobby. " It's Witch Heyho's writing! I'll read it."

Now Gobby should not have read it. He should have taken it straight back to Witch Heyho, who was writing busily in her garden a little way away. But Gobby was very curious to see what was written on the bit of paper, so he read it all.

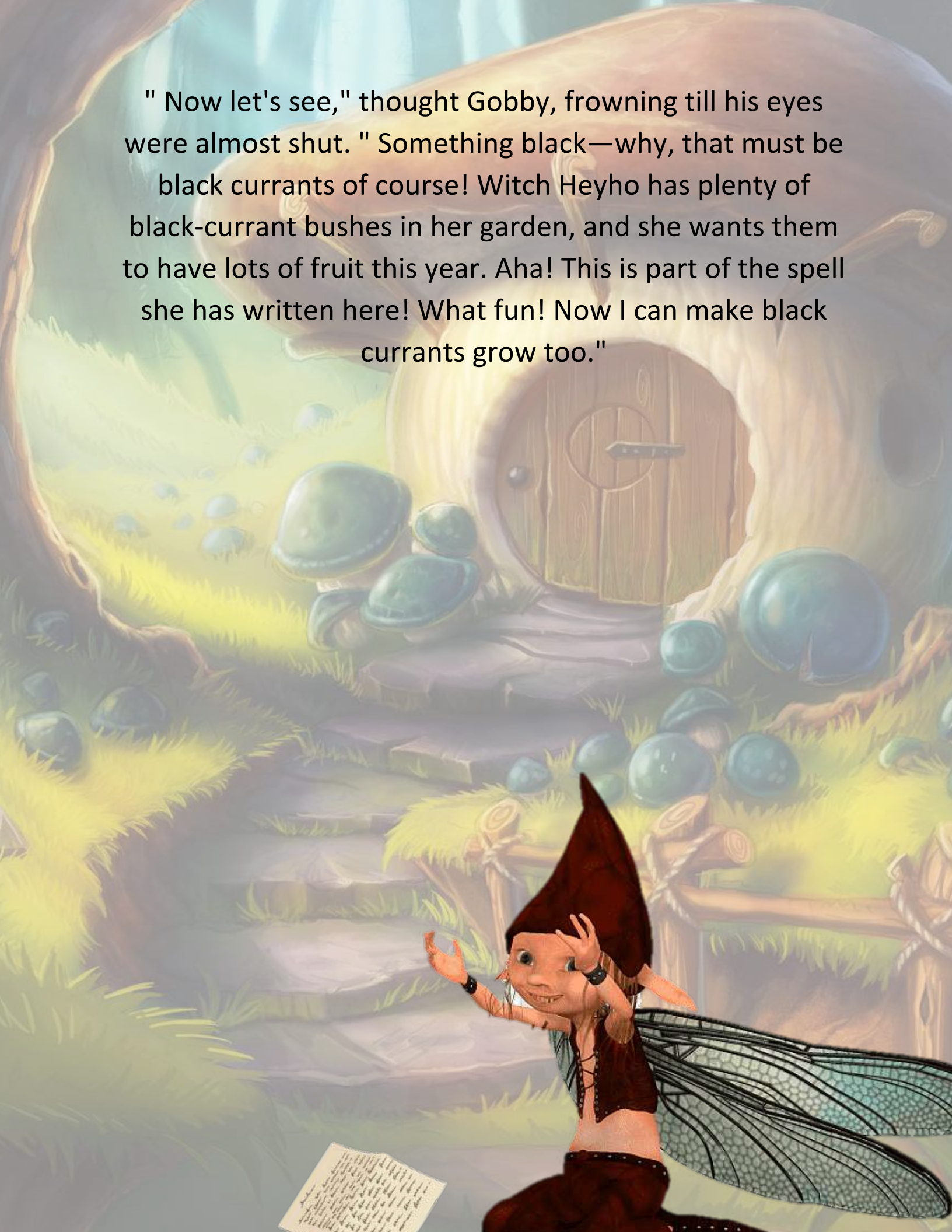


And he found it was a spell to make something grow. There should have been two pages to the spell, but Gobby thought the one page told him quite enough to use the magic. It was to make something black grow well.

" Now let's see," thought Gobby, frowning till his eyes were almost shut. " Something black—why, that must be black currants of course! Witch Heyho has plenty of black-currant bushes in her garden, and she wants them to have lots of fruit this year. Aha! This is part of the spell she has written here! What fun! Now I can make black currants grow too."



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He read the bit of paper again. " To make them grow big and black in crowds, get a pint of soot, a pint of moonlit dew, and stir up together with a peacock's feather," he read. " Add six petals of a wallflower, and the shine off a black stone.

Say the four magic words, 'Quilla, coona, dalla, ho,' as quickly as you can, five times. Now choose the place where you want the magic to grow, and paint it carefully with the mixture."



Gobby rubbed his hands in excitement. Ah, he would make crowds of black currants grow—he would have black-currant pie every day! How lovely!



He wondered where to grow them. " I'd better not grow them in the garden," he thought. " If I do, Witch Heyho will see me. I'd better grow them indoors.

I can easily pick some sprays of black-currant bush, and paint them with the magic indoors. Then the black currants will grow on the sprays, and I can pick them and make them into beautiful pies! "



Gobby thought he would tell his friend Peterkin about the spell he had found. Peterkin would help him to make the pastry for the pies.

So he took the paper to Peterkin, and told him all about how he had found it flying into his garden.

" But how do you know this spell will make black currants? " said Peterkin, in surprise. " It doesn't say so. It just says, " To make them grow big and black in crowds' but it doesn't say *what I*"



"Ah, but I happen to know that Witch Heyho is very fond of blackcurrant pie," said Gobby impatiently. " And I'm sure she was writing out this spell to make the fruit grow well on her bushes.

Will you come along and help me to make the pastry for our pies now? Then we'll grow the black currants, and use them whilst they are nice and fresh and juicy. A good black-currant tart is a perfectly delicious meal to have."



Without wasting any time, Peterkin went back with Gobby to his house. Gobby picked twenty sprays of black-currant bush from his garden. He set them in twenty little jars of water in the kitchen. Then he began to make the spell.



"There's some soot we can have out of the kitchen chimney," he said, " and I've plenty of moonlit dew. Now for the six wallflower petals. Go and see if you can find some on that late wallflower at the bottom of the garden, Peterkin. And you might bring in a nice shiny black stone with you too."



Peterkin went out and soon came back with some velvety wallflower petals and a large black stone. Very solemnly and carefully the two made the magic mixture, and stirred it with the peacock's feather that Gobby always kept handy for the making of spells. He scraped the shine off the black stone and it fell into the black mixture and made it fizz like sherbert. It was very queer.



"Quilla, coona, dalla, ho! " chanted Gobby, as he stirred and stirred. " Quilla, coona, dalla, ho! "



When the spell was finished, Gobby and Peterkin painted the blackcurrant sprays with it in great glee. " The currants will take a little time to grow," said Gobby. " We will make the pastry for the pies whilst we are waiting."



But, you know, that spell wasn't meant to make black currants, but black beetles! Fancy that! So it wasn't long before nice large shiny black beetles began to grow on the black-currant sprays. They didn't stay there very long though—they ran down the stalks and harried about the kitchen floor, looking for something to eat.



Suddenly Gobby saw them. Now Gobby, like a great many people, was afraid of black beetles, though they could do him no harm. So he gave a loud yell, and almost scared Peterkin out of his skin.

" Ooooh! Ow! Look! What are all these beetles in here for? "

Peterkin wasn't afraid of beetles, and he looked at them in astonishment. " How queer! " he said. " I didn't know you had beetles in your kitchen, Gobby."



"I *haven't* I " squealed Gobby. " Where are they coming from—oh, where are they coming from? "

Peterkin looked—and saw that they were streaming down the stalks of the black-currant sprays in dozens. He began to look - scared.

" Gobby! Look! They are growing on those sprays! I don't believe that was a spell for black currants after all—I believe it was for black beetles. Oh, goodness, whatever shall we do? "



Gobby stared in horror, and saw that what Peterkin had said was right. He had grown black beetles instead of black currants! How dreadful!

" Oh, take those sprays into the garden, quick, and burn them!" he begged Peterkin.



But Peterkin wouldn't touch them. He suddenly opened the door and ran home. He didn't like being mixed up with strange spells that went wrong. You never knew what might happen next.



Gobby began to cry. He rushed out and went to Witch Heyho's. He told her what had happened, and begged her to make a spell to get rid of all the black beetles.



At first Witch Heyho looked stern when she heard how Gobby had picked up her bit of magic paper and had read it and used it—but then, as she caught sight of the black beetles wandering out of Gobby's kitchen door into the garden, she began to laugh.



"Oh dear, dear me! " she laughed; " what a shock for you to get black beetles instead of black currants! Never mind, Gobby, I won't punish you—but I really don't in the least know how to stop the spell. You'll just have to put up with the beetles."



And that was all the comfort poor Gobby got from the witch. But she told him that hedgehogs love a good meal of beetles, so he is going to buy one from the pet-shop, and keep him in the kitchen. Then perhaps he won't have them eating the food out of the larder, and sleeping in his bed, and crawling into his shoes. Poor Gobby!



It's always best to make sure of a spell before you use it—
so do be careful of magic, won't you, just in case you make
a mistake like Gobby!

The End



