

The Grand High Witch from The Witches by Roald Dahl – Krishay Vora (St Martin's School, Northwood)

It was a bitter cold mid-winter's night and a storm was brewing. Above the Grand High Witch's forest, miserable mournful clouds scudded frantically across the sky as if racing. The moon cut through them casting wreath-like shadows on the ground below; it was as anaemic and drained of colour as the Grand High Witch's gaunt face. The clouds unleashed rain drops the size of marbles that pounded the ground like bullets. Fizzing down, the lightning was soon followed by the noisy rumble of thunder. The only other sound was the wind that howled tempestuously like the enraged witch.

Trees tossed around powerfully in the frenzied lashing of the turbulent savage winds. Shrouded and enveloped in a thick mist they appeared like ghostly stooping figures clawing at the dark night sky with their bony skeletal fingers: this fully resembled the witch's gnarled knotted fingers. The forest was an unending labyrinth sprung with the impenetrable foliage of bushes as traps. Perched upon a high branch, was the Grand High Witch's loyal owl, Spook. Staring into the deep depths of the forest, the owl's eyes that were as red as burning coal harboured a look of loathesome and bore into any unwelcomed visitors to he forest.



In the midst of the forest's wrath stood the Grand High Witch's Mystic Manor. From the vantage point of the forest, the manor looked derelict decrepit dilapidated, dead and devoid of all life. On the tumbledown wooden gate of the house, a metal rusty padlock hung heavily, clinging with all its power. Overgrown creepers clung their thorny tendrils on the walls and spread them into every crack and crevice in the wall. It was as if Mother Nature had reclaimed the house back into her possession. However, a doorway led to the witch's Herb Garden which was surprisingly immaculate and pristine – not a plant out of place. A fresh delightful smell filled the air with the lovely scent of magical plants. Leading to the house was a cobbled pathway that meandered like a ribbon, and that clicked and clacked under feet. In front of the main entrance, a thick wall of ivy that cascaded to the floor like a waterfall impeded the way. Suddenly, a gust of wind blew, and the ivy parted like a curtain revealing the front porch. A strong heavy door stood prominently, as tall and towering as the Grand High Witch herself.

On the walls of the interior of the manor, there were no bright pictures to cheer the dismal despondent melancholy place. Lighting up the corridors, were the flaring flames of torches that threw ghost like shadows that danced eerily on the walls. At the end of the corridor, there was a long spiral staircase that reached the top floor of the manor. The staircase groaned and moaned as if weeping when stepped upon. On the top floor, lay four strange and unfamiliar rooms, their doors swinging open with full obedience whenever the Grand High Witch walked past. The first of these rooms was the Broom Room; majestic broomsticks that were comfortable under seat hovered around the room – airborne doing acrobatic skills as if competing against each other. Second came the Enchanted Library, full of mystical books on spells and potions that the Grand High Witch had so carefully and laboriously crafted and concocted. The library was unnerving as sticky spiderwebs covered the bookshelves to protect the witch's precious books.

The third room was the Potion Lab. It was full of jars with fizzing green liquids and beguiling blue enchantments that gave off a pungent pong and bottles full of horrifying objects – an oozing eye of a frog, a slithery tongue of a snake and most disgusting of all a stinky toe of a child. On the far end of the floor, was the final and the witch's most cherished room, The Cauldron Chamber. Inside, a sudden chill could be felt immediately. On the table, a book lay open, accompanied with a skull of a poor child. Next to it a large cauldron. Its contents a gooey liquid that squished and squelched as it bubbled away. The effluvium of repulsive cauldron concoction drifted through the room and it was asphyxiating. Bent over the cauldron was The Grand High Witch, slowly stirring with her large ladle. A malevolent malicious smile playing on her lips as she cackled menacingly as she created yet another of her potent potions.