**REAL WITCHES**

*GRANDMOTHER'S table and chair are to one side.*

NARRATOR:

Every evening, Grandmamma tells Boy stories of summer holidays when she was young.

GRANDMOTHER:

[To BOY] We used to row out in a boat and wave to the shrimp boats on their way home. They would stop and offer us a handful of shrimps each, still warm from having just been cooked. We peeled them and gobbled them up.

The head was the best part. [BOY looks interested]

BOY:

The head?

GRANDMOTHER:

You squeeze it between your teeth and suck out the inside. [She demonstrates with relish]

GRANDMOTHER:

It's marvellous.

BOY:

[Enjoying the horror] Ugggggh! It's horrible!

GRANDMOTHER:

[Lighting a thin black cigar] Horrible things can be exciting, Boy. Take .... . witches.

BOY :

Witches? With silly black hats and black cloaks, riding on

GRANDMOTHER:

No. They're for fairy-tales. I'm talking of real witches.

BOY :

Real witches?

GRANDMOTHER:

Real witches.

GRANDMOTHER:

Real witches dress in ordinary clothes and look very much like ordinary women. That's why they're so hard to catch.

BOY:

But why should we want to catch them?

GRANDMOTHER:

Because, my darling Boy, they are evil. They hate children. They get the same pleasure from squelching a child as you get from eating a plateful of strawberries and thick cream.

BOY:

Squelching?

GRANDMOTHER:

She chooses a victim, softly stalks it. Closer and closer, then phwisst! she swoops.

[Building to a climax] Sparks fly. Flames leap. Oil boils. Rats howl. Skin shrivels . . .

And the child disappears.

BOY :

Disappears?

GRANDMOTHER:

My darling Boy, you won't last long in this world if you don't know how to spot a witch when you see one.

BOY:

Then tell me. Please!

*[Slowly GRANDMOTHER takes a large book from the table and opens it to show BOY a picture. ]*

BOY: [looking at the book]

They don't look like witches.

GRANDMOTHER:

Of course not. If witches looked like witches we could round them all up and put them in the meat-grinder. But look, there's a clue. They're wearing gloves.

BOY:

Mama used to wear gloves.

GRANDMOTHER:

Not in the summer, when it's hot. Not in the house. Witches do.

BOY:

Why?

GRANDMOTHER:

Because they don't have fingernails.

*[almost in choreographed slow motion, remove a glove]*

They have thin, curvy claws, like a cat.

*[gesture threateningly with their claws]*

BOY:

Uggggh!

GRANDMOTHER:

Second clue. They wear wigs. Real witches are always bald.

[imitate removing their wigs]

Not a single hair grows on their heads.

BOY:

Horrid.

BOY :

What else, Grandmamma?

GRANDMOTHER:

Big nose-holes.

*[raise your head and flare their nosttils]*

BOY:

What for?

GRANDMOTHER:

To sniff out the sånk-waves of children.

GRANDMOTHER:

So, if you see a woman holding her nose as she passes you in the street, that woman could easily be a witch. Now, look at their feet.

BOY :

Nothing special about them.

GRANDMOTHER:

Wrong. They have no toes.

*BOY:*

*Uggggh!*

GRANDMOTHER:

And last but not least, witches have blue spit.

*[They cackle menacingly]*

GRANDMOTHER: [Closing the book].

So, my darling Boy, now you know… (to audience) now you know.