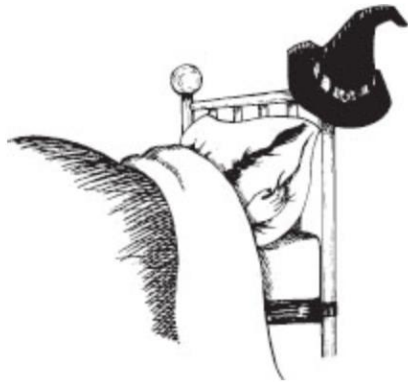


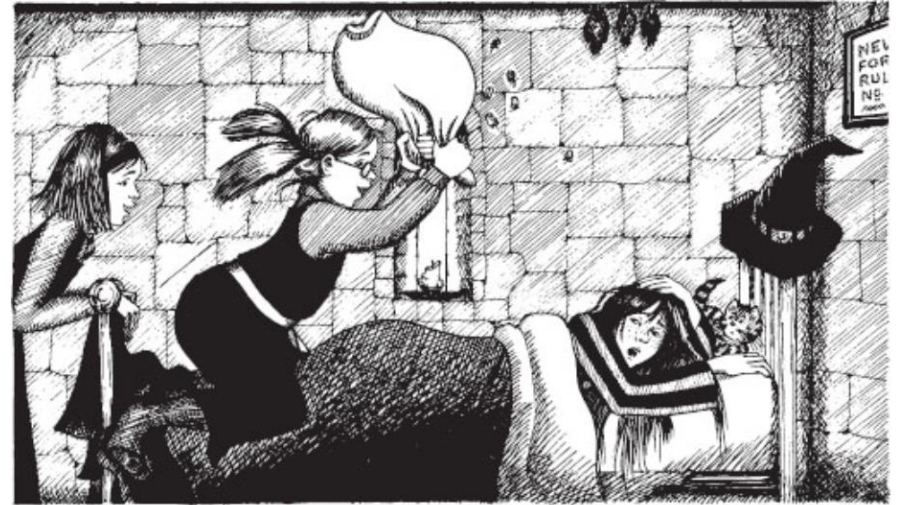
## CHAPTER TEN



**A**t noon the rising bell clanged through the corridors but Mildred pulled the pillow over her head and went back to sleep. It wasn't long before the door of her room burst open.

'Wake up, Mildred!' shrieked Maud, seizing the pillow and hitting her friend over the head with it.

Mildred screwed up her eyes against the daylight and saw what seemed to be hundreds of people around the bed all talking and shouting. Maud was actually *on* the bed, bouncing up and down.



'What's the matter?' asked Mildred, sleepily.

'As if you didn't know!' replied Maud, breathless from bouncing. 'The whole school's talking about it.'

'About what?' said Mildred, who was still half-asleep.

'*Will* you wake up?' shrieked Maud, pulling the bedclothes back. 'You saved the whole school from

Miss Cackle's wicked sister, that's all!

Mildred sat bolt upright.

'So I did!' she exclaimed, and everyone laughed.

'Miss Cackle's called a meeting in the Great Hall,' said Dawn and Gloria, two other members of Form One. 'You'd better hurry and dress, she'll expect you to be there.'

Mildred jumped out of bed and her friends went off to the hall. She was soon ready and ran to join them, shoelaces trailing along the floor as usual.

Maud had saved a place for her, and Mildred was embarrassed to notice that everyone stared as she came into the hall. While they waited for the teachers to arrive, Mildred decided to tell her friend about Ethel.

'Listen,' she whispered, leaning towards Maud so that no one could hear. 'It wasn't my fault about the display. Ethel cast a spell on the broomstick that she lent me, and I know because she told me. Don't tell anyone else, will you? But I wanted you to know because I don't want you thinking that I was just being clumsy.'

'But everyone already knows,' said Maud.

'Do they?' exclaimed Mildred. 'Who told them?'

'Well, you know what Ethel's like,' replied Maud. 'She just had to tell someone how clever she'd been so she told Harriet, and Harriet thought it was a dreadful thing to do so *she* told everyone else. No one's talking to Ethel now and Miss Hardbroom found out too and was furious with her.'

'Shhhhhh!' said someone. 'They're coming.'

Everyone stood up as Miss Cackle came in, followed by Miss Hardbroom and all the other teachers.

'You may sit down, girls,' said the headmistress. 'As you all know, the school narrowly escaped invasion this morning. Had it not been for a certain young member of the school we should not be here but would be hopping about turned into frogs.'

The girls laughed.

'No, no, girls! Do not laugh! It would not be at all funny had it happened. However, as it did *not* happen, I proclaim the rest of today a half holiday in honour of Mildred Hubble. Mildred, would you come up here for a moment?'

Mildred went bright red and was pushed to her feet. She stumbled through the rows of chairs, tripping over feet as she went, and clumped across

the platform to Miss Cackle's table.

'Now don't be shy, my dear,' said Miss Cackle beaming. She turned to the school. 'Come along, school! Three cheers for our heroine Mildred.'



Mildred blushed and twisted her fingers behind her back as the cheers rang out.

It was a relief to 'the heroine' when it was all over. As they filed out of the hall, she was thumped on the back and congratulated by everyone – except for Ethel who gave Mildred the nastiest look you've ever seen.

'Good old Mil!' yelled someone.

'We'll get out of our chanting test, thanks to you,' said someone else.

'Thanks for the holiday!'

'Thanks, Mil!' And so on.

Maud flung an arm around her friend.

'You did look embarrassed,' she said. 'You went ever so red, I could see you from the back of the hall!'

'Oh, *don't*,' said Mildred. 'Let's go and fetch the kittens and make the most of our holiday.'

'One moment,' said a chilling voice that they knew so well. The two girls turned to find their form-mistress standing behind them. They jumped to attention at once, wondering what they had done which was a natural reaction whenever Miss Hardbroom spoke.

This time, however, to their amazement, she smiled, a friendly smile not like the usual curl at the corner of the lips.

'I just wanted to say thank you, Mildred,' she said. 'Run along now, girls, and enjoy your holiday before it's over.'

She smiled again and vanished.

The girls just stared at each other.



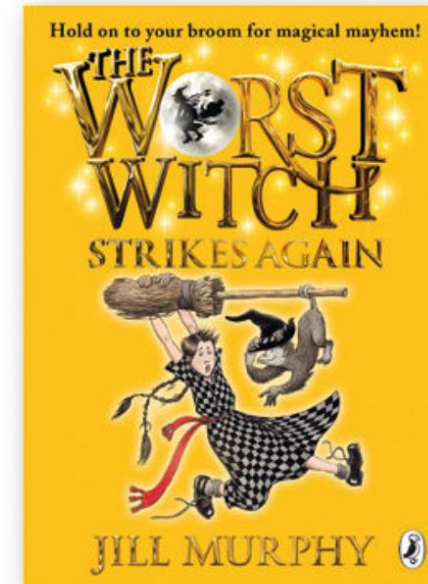
‘Sometimes,’ said Mildred, ‘I think she probably isn’t as mean as we think she is.’

‘Perhaps you are right, Mildred,’ said Miss Hardbroom’s voice from behind Mildred’s ear, and the two girls jumped in horror!

Mildred grabbed her friend’s hand and they hurried away down the corridor out into the misty playground, leaving Miss Hardbroom’s laughter echoing from nowhere along the empty passage.



What happens when disaster-prone  
Mildred Hubble meets new girl Enid Nightshade?



*She may be the worst witch at Miss Cackle’s Academy  
for Witches, but she’s the best friend you could ever have!*



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I hope you enjoyed reading The Worst Witch by Jill  
Murphy.

Your task today is to write a book review, which can  
be used to encourage other children to read The  
Worst Witch 😊

There is a book review writing frame attached to  
our class page if you would like to use it to help  
you.