

The Witch's Daughter



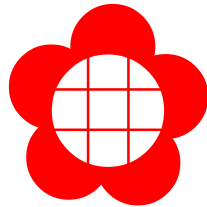
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INNER COVER

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First Edition - 2006

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ISBN: 955-1090-19-5

Book Ref: T/06/125

**This book is dedicated to
my beloved friend Lasantha Ariyaratne**

The Witch's Daughter

Once upon a time, there lived a witch who was very mean and ugly. She was as ugly as a burnt plum pudding. She had only one daughter, who was named Broccolina, and she was no nicer than her mother. The witch wanted to train her daughter in witch-craft, to follow in her footsteps.

But, no matter how much the mother tried, Broccolina was not the least bit interested. She never wanted to be bothered with witchcraft or housework, either. She was only interested in becoming beautiful.

Broccolina was very worried about her ugly looks and she spent most of her time in front of the mirror, putting on make-up. She painted her face in colors and polished her claw-like nails until they shone. She did her hair up, every morning, evening and night, in every style she could think of. She wanted to look as pretty as possible, but she never realized that all she did only made her look worse.





One day, her mother had to go on a journey to a far-off land. She ordered Broccolina to keep stirring a magic potion, which was on the fire, until she returned.

“Why should I have to do it?” Broccolina complained.

“You know how much I hate to stir potions.

The big spoon spoils my nail polish, and the steam makes my make-up run.”

“It has to be done!” said her mother, heading out the door.

“I’ll be back as soon as I can. In the meantime, keep stirring that pot!”

“It’s not fair!” Broccolina muttered.

She picked up the big spoon and started to stir.





After a while, she heard an unfamiliar sound.
It was like a swarm of bees droning, overhead.
She looked up to see what it was.
“Oh!” she cried. It was a lovely angel,
flying above her.
Broccolina’s eyes widened at the sight.
“What a beautiful creature!
If I could just be as beautiful as that!”
she said to herself enviously, gazing at the angel.





“How did she become so beautiful? There may be some secret to it,” she thought.

“If I could catch her, maybe I could get the secret out of her. Yes, I must hurry up and catch her.” She left the pot boiling on the fire, and ran into the house to get the magic carpet. But her mother had already gone away on it.

“Oh, no!” she muttered. She was very disappointed that she would not be able to catch the angel. She sat in front of the cauldron, sulking.

“Oh, how can I ever become as pretty as that?” She thought and thought and thought, but nothing came to her mind.





Suddenly, she got an idea.

“Maybe my mother has a formula in her magic books, to make me pretty, like an angel. Surely, she must have one.”

Then she ran back into the house, and straight to her mother’s closet.

She rummaged about in the closet, looking for a recipe, turning over all of her mother’s magic recipe books, one by one. But she couldn’t find any recipe to become pretty, like an angel.

She was very disappointed.

She couldn’t stop thinking about the pretty angel.

She paced up and down angrily, not wanting to give up.

“Well,” she thought,

“I’ll just have to come up with a recipe of my own, to make me beautiful.”





She went back to the simmering cauldron and went on stirring it, still trying to think up a recipe. She became nervous and angry, because she couldn't think of anything. "What ingredients should I use to make that magic potion?" she asked herself. She thought and thought, but she just couldn't think of anything that would make her beautiful.

After a while, Broccolina felt something rubbing against her ankle. It was her mother's grey cat. "Get away," she said. The cat wrapped herself around Broccolina's leg, meowing. It seemed to be lonely. Broccolina, who was already angry, became even angrier at that. "I said get away!" she yelled.

When the cat didn't leave, Broccolina grabbed it by the tail and flung it out of the door.

'Yeow!' The poor cat howled and ran away with her tail in the air.

Just then, a long tail popped out from Broccolina's back. But, she was so absorbed in thoughts of becoming as beautiful as an angel, that she didn't feel it. She stirred the potion faster, thinking of the ingredients she should put in.



Then her mother's black crow saw something strange hanging from Broccolina's back and flew to her. Thinking it was a snake, he pecked at it and pulled on it.

Broccolina was angry about being disturbed again. She hit the crow with the stirring spoon. The crow's scrawny leg was scratched by the spoon and some of the potion spilled on the ground, as well.

The poor crow shrieked in pain and quickly limped away. Broccolina was so mean, she didn't care that she had wounded the poor crow. She didn't even feel sorry for him. She continued to stir the potion in the cauldron. Soon, small sores popped out all over her body. But, she was so absorbed in thoughts of becoming beautiful, that she didn't notice them.





The goat, her mother had brought home to slaughter for dinner, smelled the potion that had been spilt on the ground. He got up from his bed of hay and came to lick it up, because he was so thirsty. This angered Broccolina even more and she kicked the goat. The poor, thirsty goat staggered away, in fear and pain.

And, in no time, she got a grey beard just like that of the goat, sprouted from her chin and her hair became coarse and stiff, like hay. But Broccolina didn't notice it, because she was too busy, thinking about the ingredients she should put in her beauty potion.





The cow in the barn, saw Broccolina's new beard and bristly hair. She was very hungry and thought that it was a stack of hay, so came to eat it.

Broccolina, without realizing why the cow came to her, angrily threw a stick of firewood at her. It hit her on the horns and the poor hungry cow ran away, mooing in fear. Within seconds, two bumps emerged from the sides of Broccolina's head and grew into two big horns. But, still she didn't notice!





When her mother's watchdog saw this strange creature, he didn't know it was Broccolina. He sprang at her, barking and growling. Broccolina was very annoyed at him for barking at her and hit the dog with the cauldron's lid. It hit the dog on the mouth and the poor, stricken dog ran away, howling.

Suddenly, half of Broccolina's teeth fell into the cauldron, as she stirred the potion. But Broccolina didn't notice it, because she was too deep in thoughts of how to become pretty, like an angel.





little parrot woke up,
hearing the clamour.
When he saw Broccolina,
he became frightened
and flew about in his cage.

“Oh! Broccolina,” the parrot cried,
“what happened to you? You’ve become uglier
than ever. You are the ugliest being
I’ve ever seen,” the little parrot screeched,
in terror. Broccolina was furious.
She shook his cage and shouted
ugly words at him. As she shouted,
her voice cracked and became hoarse,
more like a croak, than a voice.



“Oh! What’s wrong?” Broccolina was very
confused and felt that something
was not right. She ran to the mirror.

When she saw herself in the mirror she was horrified.
“Oh, no! No, nooooooooooo...” she screamed.
“Oh no, I wanted to be pretty like an angel.”
She ran out of the house, screaming wildly. She was angrier than ever.
She howled madly and crawled on the ground, cursing the angel.





Hearing Broccolina's howling, the angel,
who was on her way back to heaven,
came to see what was wrong.
When Broccolina saw the angel,
she boiled with anger and jealousy.

"You horrible angel! You horrible angel!"
Broccolina shouted indignantly, throwing up her hands.
"All this happened to me, because of you," she shouted.
"Why did you fly above me? Ever since then,
I wanted to become an angel like you."
The angel listened quietly.
Broccolina went on complaining.
"See, what has happened to me?
I've ended up looking horrible.
You're responsible for all of this.
Now, you must tell me, the secret
of how to be pretty, like an angel.
Otherwise I'll teach you a lesson
when I get my hands on you,"
Broccolina shouted angrily.



The angel listened to her calmly and spoke to her with kindness.

“Broccolina, no magic potion can make anyone pretty like an angel.

It’s not a secret. If you love and care for others, be kind and patient and do only good deeds, then you will look pretty, like an angel.

The love in your heart for others is what really makes you beautiful.”

Mouth agape, Broccolina listened intently to the angel.

“A little while ago, you treated those poor creatures with meanness. That’s how you became ugly. The more your heart is filled with cruelty and anger, the uglier you become,” said the angel.

“Broccolina, now you must go to those you harmed, and care for them, until they get well. You should love them and talk to them with affection. You should never use harsh words on anyone. Then your voice will be sweeter.” The angel went away, fluttering her golden wings.

Broccolina ran around in a panic, looking for the cat, the crow, the goat, cow, dog and parrot. They were all hiding from her, behind the barn, bruised and stricken with fear and pain. When they saw her, they became even more scared. But when she talked to them sweetly, they were so surprised, they forgot how frightened and hurt they had felt. Broccolina treated them lovingly and cared for their injuries with kindness.



They were all very happy and amazed to hear kind words from her. Little by little, as she spoke to them nicely, her voice became sweeter and sweeter. As she treated the animals' wounds with tenderness, her skin cleared and began to glow.

When she nursed them with affection, her hair became soft and lustrous. When she looked at them with love in her eyes, her eyes became brighter and clearer. Little by little, she became pretty, just like the angel.

Eventually, two little bumps appeared on her back and turned into lovely wings.

"Oh!" She cried, as happy as she could be.

She rose up into the air, fluttering her wings.

Broccolina finally became an angel and flew to heaven.

After that she was never unkind to anyone and was loved by all.





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