***The Witches***

***Chapter 14***

***The Mouse Burglar***

***Summary:***

The boy's grandmother lowers him down in the sock and soon he bumps against the balcony below. He hurries into the bedroom and can smell that it is the right room. The room looks normal except for a frog hopping around the floor. The boy looks around for bottles, but it's difficult to investigate since he can't open any drawers or doors. However, he thinks that she might have hidden the bottles under her mattress and, burrowing beneath it, realizes that she had actually slit the mattress open and stuffed the bottles inside. He tears at the cloth with his sharp teeth and grabs one of the bottles, pulling it along as he backs out from under the mattress. He drops it down onto the floor and it doesn't break. Down on the floor, he now sees three frogs , staring sadly at him with huge eyes, and he realizes that they are likely other children from the hotel.

Just when he asks the frogs who they are, he hears [The Grand High Witch](https://www.gradesaver.com/the-witches/study-guide/character-list#the-grand-high-witch)unlocking the door. He runs under the bed and squeezes against the wall, while the frogs hop around in fear and then cluster together under the bed. The Grand High Witch looks under the bed at the frogs, but she doesn't see the mouse-boy. Just at this moment, the boy's grandmother calls, "Hurry up, my darling...Do hurry up! You'd better come out quickly!" (135). The Grand High Witch snaps back at her, asking why her knitting wool is hanging down onto her balcony and who she was calling to. The grandmother thinks quickly and says that she was talking to her grandson who has been in the bathroom too long reading. The Grand High Witch accepts this in a huff and slams the balcony doors, trapping the boy in the room with her again.

There are knocks on the door and the ancient ones call that they are here for their bottles of the formula. As The Grand High Witch opens the door to let them in, the boy scampers out without them seeing him, bottle clutched to his chest. He runs up the stairs and to his grandmother's door, tapping the bottle against the door to be let in. When she doesn't hear him, he takes a risk and yells for her. She lets him in and they hug excitedly and discuss how foul and yet beautiful The Grand High Witch is.

***Brief Synopsis:***

* Their plan works, and Grandmamma successfully lowers our narrator onto the GHW's balcony. Into her room he goes.
* Other than a nasty smell, there isn't anything unusual about the room. Oh, except for the three frogs jumping around.
* After a few minutes of rushed thinking, our narrator-mouse concludes that the bottle he's looking for must be hidden somewhere unusual – under the mattress, perhaps?
* Sure enough, he's right – almost. The bottles are hidden *inside* the mattress, so he tears away at it (good thing he's a mouse) and out a bottle comes, the FORMULA 86 DELAYED ACTION MOUSE-MAKER.
* As he's about the leave the room with it, though, the door opens and he has to hide. He scurries behind a bedpost while the frogs, who aren't as quick or agile, just hide under the bed.
* In walks the GHW who basically tells the frogs that she's going to kill them later. Great.
* Not knowing what's going on below, Grandmamma begins to worry and shouts down to her grandson. Hearing this, the GHW goes to the balcony to see who's calling.
* Luckily, Grandmamma is quick with her thoughts. She claims that she just dropped her knitting and that she had been shouting to her grandson who was in the bathroom.
* Not so luckily, the GHW shuts the balcony door behind her, and our narrator-mouse's escape route is blocked.
* Just then, there's a knock on the door – it's the older witches coming to get their bottles of Mouse-Maker. As the door is opened, our narrator manages to shuffle out unseen and back up to the fifth floor. Phew.
* He calls to his grandma, who lets him in, and together they rejoice that he successfully got the Mouse-Maker potion and that he came out of it alive. Of course, they talk once again about the creepiness that is the GHW.