***The Witches***

***Chapter 2***

***How to Recognize a Witch***

***Summary:***

* As the title says (just with funny British spelling), this chapter is about how to recognize a witch. It's in dialogue form: Grandmamma doles out the information and the narrator helps her along with a lot of "why"s, "how"s, and "what"s.
* Grandmamma tells her grandson that you can't always recognize a witch, but that they do have some distinctive features to keep an eye out for:
  1. They always wear gloves because they have claws instead of finger nails. So far, so creepy.
  2. They always wear a wig because they're bald. (Grandmamma's advice here: Don't tug on the hair of every lady you see, or you'll cause some trouble.) This wig gives them wig-rash, which makes their heads really itchy.
  3. Witches have big, pink nostrils, which give them a great sense of smell – all the better for smelling children (big bad wolf, anyone?). To witches, children smell like dog poop. Yep. And the cleaner they are, the more they stink. Our narrator smartly concludes that he "will never have a bath again" (3.41). Good call.
  4. Their eyes change colors and have fire and ice dancing around inside them. Spooky. This is when Grandma starts getting super-serious. She reminds her grandson that witches are not actually human – they are "demons in human shape" (3.60).
  5. Witches don't have toes, just square feet. Unfortunately for them, they still have to wear normal lady-shoes, which are usually pretty pointy, so they might limp a little.
  6. They have blue saliva. This is just plain cool, except it means they can never spit.
* After all this, the narrator is sold. Witches must be real.
* Upon questioning, we learn that Grandmamma herself once encountered a witch (the narrator thinks that may be how she lost her thumb). She refuses to talk about it though, and suddenly becomes very still and quiet, and the narrator has to put himself to bed.

***Brief Synopsis:***

The next night, the boy's grandmother continues telling him about witches; this time she focuses on how one can recognize a witch, though she emphasizes that this can be difficult because they work hard to look just like normal women. The boy's grandmother then informs him of the signs of a witch. Witches wear gloves at all times because instead of regular fingernails they have claws like a cat. Witches are bald, but wear convincing wigs to look like normal women; however, they can often be seen scratching their scalp because wearing a wig on a bald head will give the witches itchy sores. Witches have slightly larger nostrils than normal people because they have a very good sense of smell, especially attuned to smelling clean children.

Grandma pauses to advise the boy not to bathe too often, because dirt can cover up the stink-waves coming off of a child. She also informs him that adults do not make these stink-waves which are so irritating to a witch. The smell, grandma says, is similar to "fresh dogs' droppings" (22).

The boy's grandma continues with her catalog of witches' special traits. Instead of normal, black pupils, a witch's pupil will be continually changing color. Furthermore, witches may walk with a slight limp because they have square feet with no toes but must wear pointed shoes like other women. Finally, witches have blue spit that they can use like ink to write.

The boy asks his grandmother whether she ever saw a witch when she was a child, and she says that she did once. However, she refuses to tell him about it, and when he asks her if it has "something to do with [her] missing thumb" (26), his grandmother goes very stiff and will not say another word to him. Understanding that the conversation is over, the boy kisses his grandmother goodnight and leaves her sitting there.