



A PINCH OF MAGIC  
ADVENTURE

# A TANGLE OF SPELLS

EXTRACTS AND NOTES FOR KS2  
TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS

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## INTRODUCTION

**Suitable for:** Ages 8+

**Explore themes of:** Spells and Curses, Magical Places, The Secret Room, Witches

**Subject Checklist:** Literacy, Art, Design & Technology, PSHE, Citizenship, History

## CONTENTS

### **EXTRACT 1: Spells and Curses (taken from Prologue)**

**Objectives:** Discuss different spells from the Widdershins' adventures; write your own magic spell.

### **EXTRACT 2: Magical Places (taken from Chapter Four – The Hungry Tree)**

**Objectives:** Identify unusual and magical places in Pendlewick; sketch a magical place and write a description of it.

### **EXTRACT 3: The Secret Room (taken from Chapter Seven – Ivy)**

**Objectives:** Explore how the writer creates suspense and intrigue; write a story about finding a hidden room.

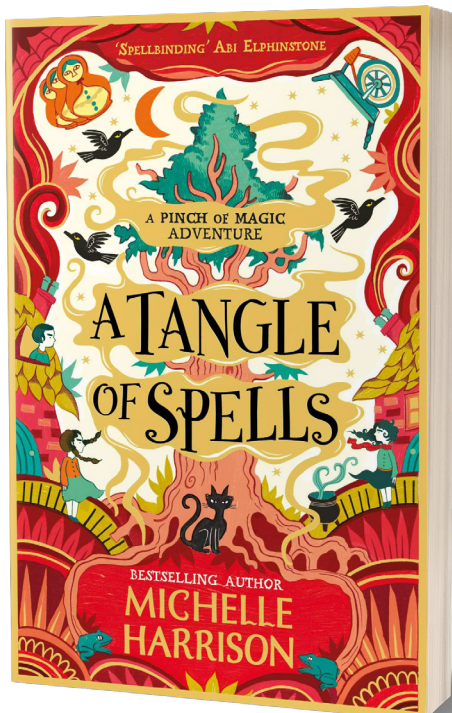
### **EXTRACT 4: Witches (taken from Chapter Twenty-Nine – Dust)**

**Objectives:** Identify the witches of Pendlewick; match-up characters to their symbols and consider their significance.

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Escape into a brand-new Pinch of Magic Adventure from bestselling Michelle Harrison, where everyone knows that magic and trouble go hand in hand . . .

*It should have been a fresh start for the Widdershins sisters, Betty, Fliss and Charlie, who have left the misty gloom of Crowstone for a new life in the pretty village of Pendlewick. But all is not as it seems and as one of their own begins to slip away from them, the sisters find themselves in a race against time to break a dark magic that has cast a spell over the village.*



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## EXTRACT 1: SPELLS AND CURSES (Taken from Prologue)



### Prologue

*Hocus pocus, hubble bubble,  
Magic always leads to trouble.  
Three brave sisters, one fresh start,  
How long till it falls apart?*

*From Crowstone's damp and swirling fogs  
To hidden rooms and hopping frogs.  
A pretty village, so serene,  
But something lurks beneath, unseen.*

*Shuffle-shuffle. What's that sound?  
It's in the air and all around.  
A pinch of magic – use it quick!  
There's danger here in Pendlewick . . .*

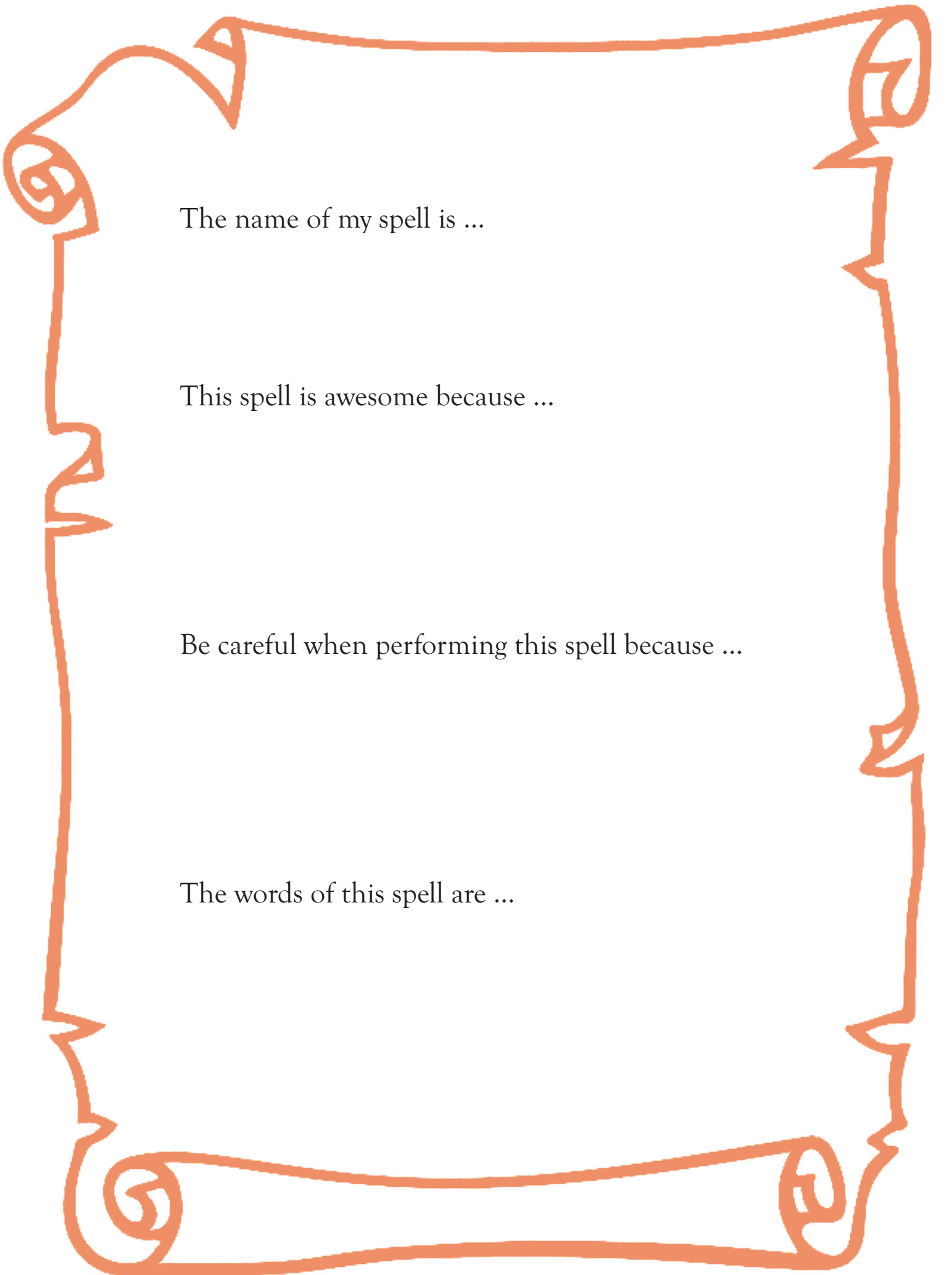
### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Have you read the previous stories about the Widdershins sisters? Which is your favourite so far?
- What do the words, spells, curses, and enchantments mean?
- Have you read any other stories that involve spells of any kind? Give examples.
- How does the prologue make you excited to read the story?
- Can you make any predictions about what will happen in the story based on the prologue?

## ACTIVITY: CREATING MY OWN MAGIC SPELL!

- Throughout their adventures, the Widdershins sisters encounter their fair share of magical spells! Think about the different ways magic gets the girls both in and out of trouble! What magical spell would you like to perform if you could? What might be the words of this spell? What would happen as soon as the words of the spell are uttered?
- Note down your ideas, then have a go at drafting the lines for your spell. Look back at the Prologue to help you; notice how the writer uses rhyme and lines of the same length to create rhythm. Share your spell and discuss what might go wrong if the spell isn't performed correctly!
- You could even write more spells and create your own book of spells and magic at home!

## NOTES:



The name of my spell is ...

This spell is awesome because ...

Be careful when performing this spell because ...

The words of this spell are ...

## EXTRACT 2: MAGICAL PLACES

(Taken from Chapter Four – The Hungry Tree)

Charlie's eyes widened at this, and Betty felt a tingle of excitement. Pendlewick was turning out to be even more intriguing than she could have hoped for.

“But ... *how* can a tree be hungry?” Betty asked. ‘Trees don't eat.’

‘Everything eats.’ Miss Pilliwinks smiled, showing her crooked teeth again. ‘Or feeds, at least. There's a story behind it, of course.’

Betty could tell Miss Pilliwinks was itching to tell it, too.

‘It's said that many years ago, a witch with a wooden leg was buried on that spot,’ said Miss Pilliwinks. ‘She was a bad sort when she was alive, and that didn't stop even after she died. The Hungry Tree grew from her bones, and to this day it's slowly devouring the rest of Pendlewick, so they say.’

‘How peculiar,’ said Fliss, looking bemused. ‘It seems as though there are stories of witches everywhere.’

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is unusual about ‘The Hungry Tree’ in Pendlewick? How is it described?
- How do Charlie, Betty, and Fliss each react to what Miss Pilliwinks tells them?
- How does Pendlewick compare to the girls' old home of Crowstone?
- Which other magical places do you come across in the story? Give examples.
- How can these magical places sometimes get characters into trouble?

## ACTIVITY: MY MAGICAL PLACE

- The Hungry Tree is just one of many magical places described in *A Tangle of Spells*. In pairs, see how many other magical places you can name from other stories you have read or heard. What do these places have in common? What makes them special or scary?
- Now it's time to come up with your own magical place. It could be somewhere or something that has had a spell or curse placed on it, or it could have some sort of mysterious magic of its own! Write a short description of your magical place including interesting adjectives to bring it to life. Then sketch it, using colour and shading to add as much detail to it as possible.
- You could use your magical place to inspire a short story or a piece of creative writing in another lesson!

### NOTES:

# MY MAGICAL PLACE

A description of my magical place:

A sketch of my magical place:



## EXTRACT 3: THE SECRET ROOM (Taken from Chapter Seven – Ivy)



### Chapter Seven Ivy

**T**HAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH FOR ME,' SAID FLISS, stepping back. 'You found it, congratulations. Now let's get out of here.'

'Featherbrain,' Charlie said scornfully. 'Of *course* we're going in.'

The air caught in Betty's throat as she peered into the musty room. Not much more than a cupboard-sized space, it held a small wooden table and a chair. The floorboards were bare, the walls faded and peeling. Cobwebs hung like old lace from the ceiling. The whole place had clearly been untouched for years. And it made the painting seem even stranger.

A thin beam of light reached through the gaps in the ivy, but the plant was still so thick across the window that the room was bathed in a shimmering green light. It had the feel of somewhere underwater, or perhaps in a forgotten forest overgrown with moss. There were even strands of ivy growing up along the ceiling. They stretched across the room like veins.

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### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How does Fliss react to finding the secret room and why?
- Which adjectives has the writer used to describe the room? Highlight them. What is their effect?
- What else do the girls find in there? How does this create suspense?
- Can you think of anything else that is strange about the cottage and the girls' new home?
- How would you react if you found a secret room in your home?

## ACTIVITY: FINDING A HIDDEN ROOM

- Imagine that you have found a hidden secret room tucked away somewhere in your home! Before you start writing a description of this room, plan your ideas by coming up with some interesting vocabulary. This will help you to create suspense and intrigue, just like the writer does in *A Tangle of Spells!*

<b>Verbs</b> (to create suspense and excitement)	<b>Nouns</b> (objects and things that you find on entering the room)	<b>Adjectives</b> (to describe these objects that you find in the room)	<b>Senses</b> (what else can you see, touch, hear, taste, smell)

- Write 3 paragraphs about your hidden room. Your paragraphs might follow the plan below:
  - Paragraph 1 = *How you came across the room and the build-up to going inside*
  - Paragraph 2 = *What you find once you enter the room and how you are feeling*
  - Paragraph 3 = *Questions you have about what you have found and what you plan to do next*
- Share your stories and reflect on how you have created suspense to intrigue the reader. Consider what might happen next in your story and any spells or magical places that could be connected to the hidden room!

**EXTRACT 4: WITCHES**  
(Taken from Chapter Twenty-Nine – Dust)

‘I’m not scared of you!’ Lightwing shrieked. ‘Little fool, you’re *nothing!*’

‘Not scared of me,’ Betty finished. ‘Scared of death. That’s what all this is about, isn’t it? You’re afraid to die!’

Lightwing’s face contorted like a mask stretched too tightly.

‘Not any more,’ she hissed, her eyes flickering to Pilliwinks’ remains and then down at her own withered hand. ‘What else is left for me, thanks to you?’ She grinned frighteningly. ‘But, if I’m going to die, I’m taking you with me!’

With a terrifying scream, Lightwing flew at the tower, the nettle rope pulled as tight as a wire between her hands, arms outstretched, reaching for Betty’s throat. For a heartbeat, Betty felt hands on her, clawing. But only for a second. No matter how much power Lightwing had once wielded, it was crushed by the weight of Crowstone Tower.

Her mouth opened in a silent cry of surprise before she, like her sister, fell away to dust and nothingness. Just a pile of tattered rags and bones in a heap on the cobbled floor. The Pendlewick witches’ reign had finally ended.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- How does the writer make Lightwing sound dangerous in this extract? Highlight any key words.
- What has Betty realised about the identities of Lightwing and Pilliwinks?
- What do you know about myths surrounding witches and the history of the Witch Trials?
- How do Betty and her sisters work together to defeat the witches?
- How has Pendlewick changed by the end of the story? Who do the Widdershins help?

## ACTIVITY: WHICH CHARACTERS ARE WITCH?

- By working together and showing great bravery, the Widdershins sisters manage to unravel the mysteries of Pendlewick and find out the real identity of its witches.
  - Start off by looking over the names of the characters below and the five symbols. Which character do you think can be matched to each symbol and why? Note that two symbols are the same; why do you think this is? Discuss these ideas together.
  - Then, label each symbol with the correct character name and write a few lines explaining how this character and their symbol are connected to the themes of witches and spells. Are there any other important objects or symbols from the story? Draw them and note down their significance.
- ELIZA BIRD
  - MISS PILLIWINKS
  - IVY BELL
  - MRS LIGHTWING
  - ROSA RIPPLES

## NOTES:

