

The Witch's New Broomstick!

Witch Nightshade was flying over Hightop Wood one night when the twigs of her old broomstick suddenly fell apart. Fortunately she was able to land safely.

But there was a problem. How was a witch supposed to get about without a broomstick?

"Bother" she said. "I shall have to buy a new one."

The very next day Witch Nightshade marched in a hardware shop in town, to find herself a new broomstick.

"A broomstick?" Said the shop keeper, shaking his head. "There's not much demand for those nowadays."

"But I'm demanding one," said Witch Nightshade.

"That may be," said the shop keeper. "But I don't have any."

"Well, what am I to do?" Wailed the witch. "I must have a broom! What do people use instead, then?"

"Vacuum cleaners."



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"Really?" Said Witch Nightshade, who had never seen one. "Perhaps I'd better take a look."

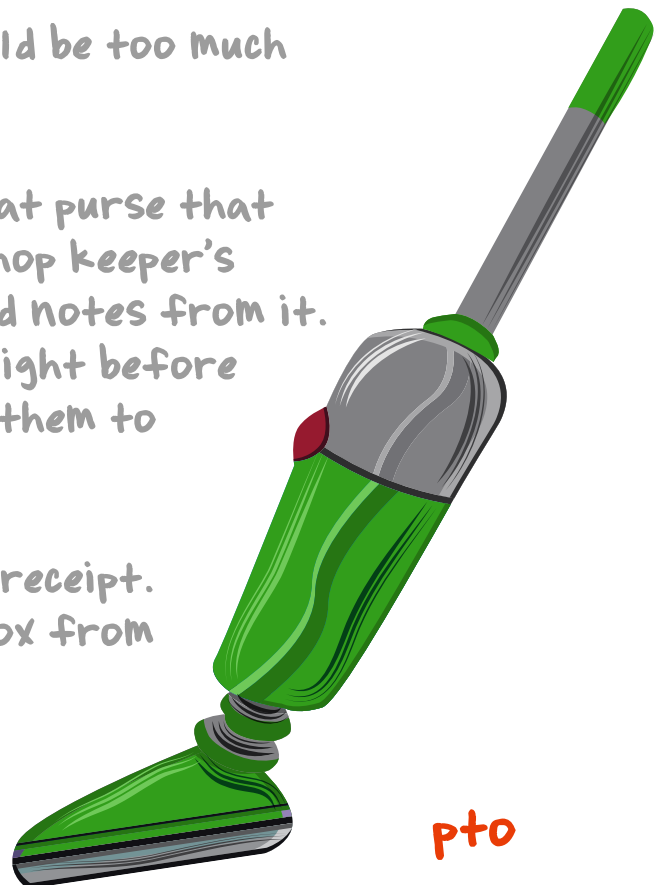
The man looked doubtfully at the witch. She was not the tidiest of people, and really didn't look as if she had two pennies to rub together, let alone enough money to afford a vacuum cleaner. But he took her through into the showroom and showed her the latest models.

"Ooh," said Witch Nightshade. "They're lovely!" She went over to a streamlined green and grey vacuum cleaner and lovingly stroked it. She was thinking what a sensation she would cause in the coven with it. "I'll take it!" She told the shop keeper.

He told her the price, convinced it would be too much for the poor woman.

Witch Nightshade took out a large, flat purse that looked completely empty, and to the shop keeper's astonishment began pulling five-pound notes from it. He took the notes and held up to the light before putting them in his till, not trusting them to be genuine.

Satisfied, the shop keeper gave her a receipt. Then he picked up a large cardboard box from behind the counter.



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"No need to pack it," said Witch Nightshade. "I'll ride it home."

"Ride it?" Exclaimed the bemused shop keeper, who was beginning to feel a bit dazed and wasn't at all sure whether or not he was having a bad dream.

"It shouldn't be too difficult to handle, though I know it's not quite what I'm used to," said the witch, and settling herself on the handle of the cleaner, she immediately zoomed out of the shop - slowly at first, and weaving just a little - leaving the shocked young man staring after her.

Seconds later, Witch Nightshade had vanished from site.

Wiping his hand across his eyes, the shop keeper decided it was just time for a soothing cup of tea. He couldn't believe what he had just seen.

But the poor man was even more amazed later on, when a crowd of very oddly-dressed ladies came into his shop, demanding every last one of his vacuum cleaners.

Witch Nightshade had certainly caused a sensation at her coven: all the witches wanted their own newfangled broomsticks!

