

Chapter 4

The Potion

16th September · 11.45am

I racked my brains to think of some mad excuse, or a cunning escape plan, but in the end it didn't matter...

“STOP!” a loud voice barked out from behind. The room hushed and everyone turned. Everyone except Gran, who was

trying to untangle herself from the wool.

It was Stamper. His two goons were at his side, wielding those long silver tubes I'd seen before. Stamper himself was cradling a strange machine. It looked like a cross between a metal detector and a torture device. All red lights and wires, it was beeping furiously.

BEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEEBEE....

And he was aiming it straight at Gran. “We've found our wolf! Show yourself!” demanded Stamper, pointing in our direction. “It's somewhere inside that bundle of wool.”

Behind me tottered a giant, flimsy, advertisement board that read:

CHANNEY'S WOOL – EWE CAN'T
BEAT OUR PRICES.

While Stamper's men stalked towards Gran, I darted behind the board and pushed. The whole thing tipped forwards, then wobbled to the ground, crashing on top of Stamper and his men.

"AAARGH!" Stamper shouted.

The policeman rushed over to help lift the board, leaving Gran all by herself. Now was my chance! I hauled the remains of the wool over her head, snatched her hand

and, together, we legged it.

"Oh, wait, dear," said Gran. "I'd like to apologise to that nice policeman."

"Send him an e-mail," I replied, dragging her into the crowd.

"A what-mail, dear?" I forgot she didn't have a clue what e-mail was.

I glanced over my shoulder to see Stamper's men struggling with the policeman. The policeman pulled out his taser gun.

"TASER! TASER! TASER!" he yelled as he fired a bolt into one of the men's arms.

The man yelped; then started dancing an electric jig, before tumbling to the ground.

Stamper was more worried about his machine, which was broken in half. “My wolf-tracking detector! It’s ruined!”

17th September · 5.30pm

Home again! Sandtown is history. PHEW! I don’t think I’ve ever been so glad to leave a place in my life. I’ve spent the last 24 hours keeping Gran out of trouble, and keeping her out of Stamper’s clutches – not to mention the police. I’m a nervous wreck!

20th September · 4.30pm

Met Jacob in the library after school. “Here it is,” he whispered, and he pushed a piece of paper in my hands. “The ingredients for the potion.”

A cup of water from a moonlit puddle

A river pebble

A teaspoon of hair-removal ointment

A sprinkling of dirt from a rabbit hole

A dash of cod liver oil

A squidge of jam

A hair from the wolf that is to be cured

I'd never read such a ridiculous recipe in my life. "Is this a joke?" I laughed.

"No, it's real. It's taken from that book I told you about."

"Well, at least that last one is easy," I said with a sigh. Gran is shedding so much hair that the shower is completely blocked.

"There's one catch," he murmured. "She has to drink the potion at sunset exactly on the night of the full moon, before she turns."

"Oh great!" I replied.

So we'll be cutting it fine. And between now and then it looks like I'm going to be out in the middle of the night looking for puddles and rabbit holes.

This is going to be fun – NOT! I only hope it works.

22nd September · 4.30pm

Gran is getting worse! We were walking home from school. Part of our route goes along a busy road, so I was holding her hand tight. A delivery van whizzed past, the words REED'S BRITISH SAUSAGES branded across the side.

Gran's nose twitched. She must have caught the meaty scent. She gave a sort of howl then raced after it, taking me with her. I tried to stop her but boy is she getting strong! She started dragging me along by the feet.

Fortunately, the van rounded a bend and was lost from sight, and so was the smell. Gran stopped, then glanced round, surprised.

"Oh dear, we appear to be in the road," she exclaimed, looking puzzled.

In the road? In the MIDDLE of the

road more like, a busy road, with buses and lorries skidding all over the place to avoid us. I gave an apologetic wave to the drivers and then yanked her back on to the pavement.

The full moon can't come quick enough!

24th September · 7.45pm

I'm in the park, waiting for the moon to come out from behind a cloud, all so I can scoop up a cup of water from a dismal-looking puddle. Can my life get any stranger?

25th September · 10.30pm

Tonight I found Gran on all fours in the hall, sniffing round the front door.

“Gran!” I yelled, but she wasn’t listening. She was using her wolf senses to search for something. I soon found out what it was, as she narrowed her sniffing down to my schoolbag. She snarled, grabbed it between her teeth and shook it violently. All my stuff came flying out, including a half-eaten sausage roll I had left over from lunch. Gran gave a satisfied grunt, then gobbled it up in one gulp. So

that’s what she was after!

REVOLTING!

30th September · 8.00pm

Another dark, cold evening spent outdoors. This time I’m searching for a rabbit hole to scoop dirt out of. Oh, and I also collected her hair from the shower. URGH! This potion better be worth it!

2nd October · 5.00pm

Stamper and his men are back! They must have fixed the wolf-tracker and

tracked Gran again! I caught a glimpse of them through my bedroom window, wandering up the street looking around. I ducked out of sight before they could spot me. Even if they did, I don't think they got a good look at either of us back in Sandtown. If they turn up on the night of the full moon then we're in trouble. I'm going to have to phone Jacob.

7.30pm

Phoned Jacob. He says he has a plan to keep Stamper out of the way. He won't tell me what it is, but he sounds confident. He'll be here on the night of

the full moon.

5th October · 5.00pm

At last! Here I am on the night of the full moon. I'm ready, I hope! Mum has just left for work, and Gran is having a lie down. She's been acting strangely normal all day, except for being a bit tired. Why does it feel like the calm before the storm?

5.30pm

Jacob arrived, carrying a rucksack. "Sunset's in an hour," he muttered, looking at his watch. "We'd better get to

work.”

In the kitchen, we poured, squidged, dashed and dripped all the ingredients for the potion into Gran’s favourite china cup. Jacob sloshed it around. “There, it’s ready.”

“What about Stamper?” I asked.

Jacob winked at me. Then, he picked up his rucksack and disappeared into the spare room. He reappeared a few moments later, wearing a wolf onesie costume.

“Ta-DAAHH!” he exclaimed.

It’s not a very good wolf costume, it

has to be said. He looks like a cheap and nasty cuddly toy, the kind that you win at a funfair. His big plan is to lead Stamper away from Gran. I can only hope Stamper doesn’t notice his prey is wearing sandshoes.

6.28pm

Ten minutes before sunset, Gran yawned and woke up. “Hmm, I think I will go out for some fresh air,” she said. I followed her.

Outside in the garden, the minutes ticked by and the sun began to dip below the horizon. It was time. I wondered how I

was going to get her to drink this awful potion? Then I had an idea.

“Gran, you know that tonic they’ve been advertising on TV?” I asked. “Would you like to try it?” It was a tiny lie, there was no such thing on TV but it was worth it. She loved trying anything that was on the TV. I knew she wouldn’t resist.

“Hmm? Okay dear.” Gran grasped the cup, gave it a sniff and drank it down.

Suddenly, I heard a howl. Jacob must be trying to distract Stamper and his men. Only... the howl was getting louder and louder.

Without warning, the garden gate slammed open and Jacob flew in, minus his wolf’s head from his costume. And when I say flew I mean FLEW.

“Help!” he pleaded. Jacob collided with the bins and fell to the ground in a heap.

Stamper and his men strutted in behind him, smirking and waving their weapons high.

“Well, what have we here?” Stamper grinned. “One fake wolf and one REAL wolf. My machine always finds them in the end.”

“Sorry, Jess, I failed!” whimpered Jacob. “Stamper pointed his machine at me and I panicked!”

“It’s OK, Jacob,” I replied, helping him to his feet.

“Just in the nick of time, boss,” said one of Stamper’s men, looking up at the sky. As the sun disappeared, a blood-curdling howl rang out through the garden.

And now you decide...

Who is howling?

A) Gran

B) Mum

C) Jacob Galleon

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