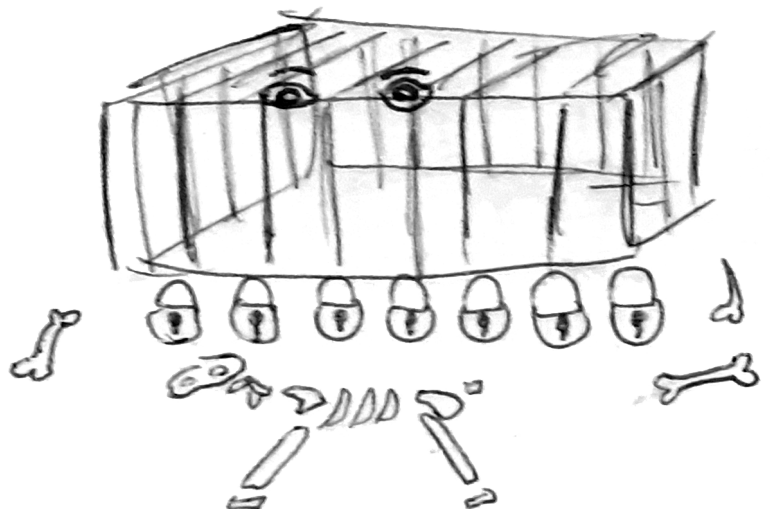
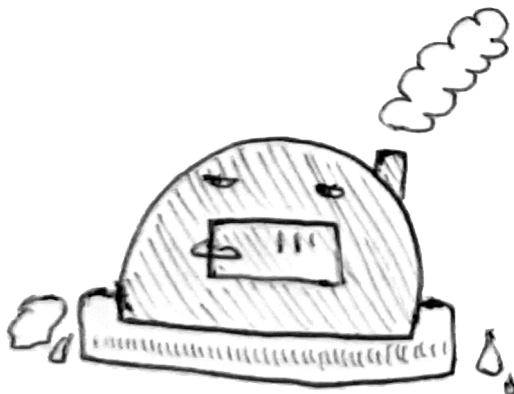


A GINGERLY ESCAPE

Hänsel, Gretel & the witch's menagerie



So you want to host this game? Thank you, here is everything you need to know:

Content:

Intro

Maps

Object descriptions

Riddles

Me bragging about stuff

INTRO

It is summer 2020. School is still severely restricted due to the corona pandemic.

Contact restrictions and protective measures are still in place to limit the spread of the virus and protect risk groups. You are at home.

And because your father works as a caregiver in a nursing home, he is hardly at home these days. There is a lot of work to be done there and the residents of the home should be protected from the disease as much as possible - after all, they belong to the risk group.

It can't get any worse, you think? But then your stepmother loses her job on top of all that. Money in your family is running short, very short.

One day, your stepmother suggests to you to go for a nice walk in the neighbouring forest. „You should be getting some fresh air!“ she adds happily. So you go with her.

But when you're in the middle of the forest and you notice she has been „just checking where to go“ for a little too long. Hansel and Gretel, you are alone and lost. Now it's dark and freezing. Full of desperation, you find a little house made of gingerbread. But before you can ask yourselves who the owner of this little house might be, it is too late:

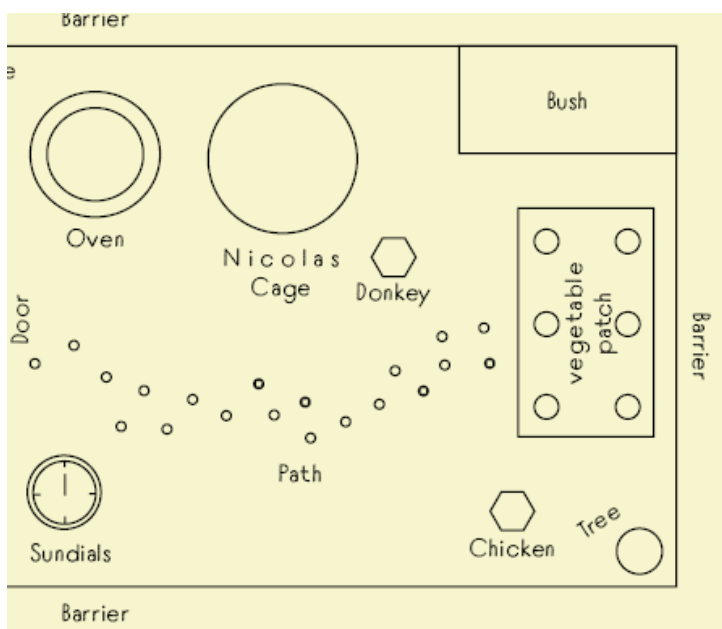
You are trapped in a cage. Normally the witch only locks you, Hänsel, up, while you have to help Gretel, her in the household. But now she has gone out to hunt children and has locked you both in a small metal cage in her garden. And not only that: She has even conjured up a magic Barrier, which surrounds the garden with blue and shining light as long as she is gone. Y

ou are afraid, but that doesn't help: You know exactly that you have to escape and fast! After all, the witch could come back at any moment.

Hänsel and Gretel, break out of the cage, destroy the barrier and escape the witch's clutches.

So ... you are in a cage.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIRST ROOM FOR YOUR PLAYERS:



WHAT YOU SEE You look around first: The witch's old donkey, grey and dishevelled, is chewing demotivated on a dry piece of grass in front of you. To your right is the heavy, old oven, whose bloody secrets you would rather not explore too closely, and behind it is the gingerbread house. It still looks simply delicious. Next to the house there's an old sundial, but it's lying there uselessly, as it's cloudy. A white pebble path leads from the house to the rather sad vegetable patch of the witch. She ... appears to be more of a lover for meat cuisine. Apart from a single chicken next to a tree and the donkey, the garden is deserted.

STARTING POINT - THE CAGE

Your players are stuck in a metal cage, resembling a bird's cage that has metal bars and seven locks (if you want to shorten the room, you can thin this riddle out by removing some of the locks by adjusting the number of animals hidden in the text below and the number of locks corresponding to them).

You can describe the metal cage in whatever way you want. Make sure to **include the following**:

Trapped in the cage, the other objects are out of the player's reach.

They can **look** at the other objects from a distance, though to get a rough description of them.

Furthermore, they can see that the **bottom of the cage** is littered in **bones** of various shapes and forms. They belong to different animals. The **bones can be used to pick the locks, if the players chose the correct ones**. Which bones are to be picked is determined by a riddle that the donkey prompts. To receive that prompt, the players have to try to **talk to the donkey** or get the donkey's attention by other means.

SPEAK TO THE DONKEY:

The donkey talks to the players. Some animals are hidden in its words. If they find all of the animals, they can use the corresponding bones to pick the locks. The donkey says:

„You want to get out of the cage? Well, I guess you have to pare this problem down to the bone, then. Unfortunately I can't tell you how you get out of it, the old witch has put a spell on me which prevents this. But, uh, well, I can give you some advice: First of all, don't rat me out to the witch, that would really get my goat, promise?“ (wait for response) „Fine, I'll tell you how to weasel out of that cage. You have to be brave, this is not a game, you can't simply chicken out of this task, alright, kids? Fine, I'll tell you now, because I don't want your life to go to the dogs like mine did when she captured me. You know, I was formerly a great musician and had a band, sorry I'm just rambling, anyway. Ah, yeah, just, ah, you know, pick the locks, I guess. That's all.“ He smiles broadly and finally adds: „Best of luck to you. I believe in you. Okay, I'll let you ..do ..the thing now, bye.“

Solution: Rat, goat, weasel, game, chicken, dogs, ram

They can use any any bone that relates to an animal of game.

If you want to shorten it or make it easier, cross out the game and the ram.

ONCE YOU ARE FREE THE OLD DONKEY TROTTS UP TO YOU ONCE AGAIN:

„Oh hey, you did it. I'm so sorry I could not simply tell you which bones to pick. Guess the witch has one to pick with all of us, haha. I'm really happy that you're free. Well, partially, of course. There is still this great blue barrier surrounding all of us. Now, if only I could jam with my band again. We used to rock so hard that the walls would crumble around us, if you get what I mean. But alas, I'm not powerful enough to do it on my own. We'd need all four of us, Princess, Shaggy, Henrietta and I. Like in the old days. But they are not what they used to be. Henrietta is starving, Princess is always sleepy and Shaggy? Well, that witch transformed him and he does not even talk to me anymore.“ The poor old donkey starts to tear up.

OBJECTS IN THE GARDEN

After this, the players are free to investigate the first room, the garden, consisting of:

BARRIER

BUSH

CAGE

CHICKEN

DONKEY

DOOR

OVEN

PATH

SUNDIALS

TREE

VEGETABLE PATCH

BARRIER

Player info: A blue, shiny barrier, like a force field. It won't budge or break. There is the forrest which you came from behind.

GM info: Breaking the barrier is the end goal of the room. In order to do so, the players have to get the band back together. The band consists of the musicians of Bremen, a fairy tale troupe of bards. They are a donkey, a dog, a cat and a chicken, jamming together, stacked on top of each other. The four of them are in the witch's house and garden and have to be reunited.

BUSH

Player info: A thorny bush. Wait? What are those eyes twinkling in the depth of the thorns? It is a wolf! Oh no!

GM: The dog of the band has been enchanted. It is now a wolf and has lost all abilities of speech. It is hostile and howls at the players and will not move out of the bush. In order to turn it back, it will have to eat an disenchantment cake, which can be baked by following the recipe that is found on the witches table. This is most likely to be the last puzzle piece, as most other tasks will have to be fulfilled before that.

CAGE

After the players got out, the cage is not used in the game anymore.

CHICKEN

GM: The chicken is called Henrietta. That is not important, but fun! Anyway, the chicken is in a grumpy mood as it is really hungry. It wants the apples from the tree.

After they give it some apples, the chicken is calm and thankful. It is motivated to play in the band again! Hooray! It hands the players an egg that it laid because it was just so excited about the apple tree. The egg can then be used for the recipe. The gamemaster can roleplay the chicken however they please. So please, make it fun, ha!

DONKEY

The donkey can be used by the GM to give hints, if you want to. It is wise, old and a little forgetful. It wants the band to get back together. After it helps your players to solve the bone riddle and gives you some more info (written above), it is not actively used in the game again, just for flavour or roleplay, if you want to!

DOOR

The door is made out of really hard gingerbread like the rest of the witch's gingerbread house. Ouch! Don't try to bite out your teeth, players. It does have a shiny, brass door knob though, that might be interesting to look further into.

If the players decide to inspect the door knob further:

Player Info: You investigate the brass door knob. It is crafted really magnificantly in the shape of frog with a tiny golden crown on the tippeditop of its froggy head. Oh, poor froggy, it is missing one arm! But wait. Did that frog ... dig that frog just move its eyes? Indeed it did. It looks at you and begins to speak:

„What torture! Eversince that witch turned me into a door knob, I am forced to (ribbit) at this ugly chicken, that stupid donkey and that terribly unkempt so-called garden of that hag. Day in, day out. And all this, this pain, when freedom is just (ribbit) arm's length. (ribbit) key to my freedom, dear kids, are you. Don't let the (ribbit) go down on me. Please, just please, (ribbit) back the pain of being stuck here, incased in a new skin made of brass. But I'll stop moaning. I don't want to (ribbit) my luck with the two of you. Just this: I will be forever thankful for your - not help - wait what ist the word -(ribbit)?“

Solution: Find the missing words, the words missing are: Look/stare/glance, at, the, sun, dial, press/push, aid

The code instructs the players to look at the sundial and press the number eight.

If you want to make it easier or speed up the process, you can switch out „I will be forever thankful for your - not help - wait, what is the word ... aid“ with the easier version: „I’m so thankful for the _ of you“ (insert number of players playing.) or any other variation that ends up with a number, that you see fit.

After solving the riddle and pressing down the number you chose to be the solution, the hand of the sundials gets loose and you can remove the golden brass hand. Which coincidentally matches the frogs arm. You attach the arm to the frog and the frog changes form:

It is not a brass door knob anymore, but a healthy, grass green frog that jumps happily away from the mould of the door knob. The door is now open, which gives the players access to the second half of the game, the second room. It is the inside of the witches hut.

Flavour: If one of the players decides to kiss the frog, allow it to change form back to the snooty or overly polite prince it used to be, just for fun.

OVEN

The oven is made out of black, cast-iron. It is big, chunky and old-timey. It approximatley fits two children or one old hag, but that is just a rough measurement. The oven has a round door with which you can open it. It is not locked. The oven is standing on a platform made of stone that has markings in it. It is furthermore stained with sprinkles of old blood and rust and you do not want to think about this particular detail too closely.

If the players decide to look into the oven:

It is dark. Way too dark. You cannot see a single thing.

If the players feel around in the dark oven (or if they lit the oven)

You find a baking form in the shape of a cartoony bone. (Thee cake batter of the recipe can be poured into it)

If the players investigate the platform of the oven:

There are markings of the numbers 1 up to 360, carved into stone.

If the players try to rotate the plattform:

They can. It has 360 degrees of being turned. Part of the recipe is to rotate the oven by 180 degrees. The oven can be rotated by using the plattform. In that way you can bake the cake.

If the cake batter is in the spring form in the oven and the players rotated the oven by 180 degrees, they receive the complete cake

If the players use the white pebbles in the oven:

They successfully shine light into the oven! They unlock the following image:



A writing is above the illustration:

**„TO SUMMON THE ESSENCE
OF EACH CREATURE,
FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS
OF YOUR TEACHER.“**

The players can use this incantation to invoke milk, pig slurry and water by mimicking the hand gestures while wearing the pointy witch’s hat that can be found atop of the book shelf in the second room.

PATH

The players can pick up pebbles from the path, besides that it is just a simple path leading to the vegetable patch. The pebbles are white and faintly glowing. They can be used to shine light into the oven.

SUNDIAL

The sundial is made of clay and brass. There is a brass hand and brass roman numbers. If the players push the number eight, the clock hand comes loose. The loose clock hand can be used to mend the arm of the door knobby frog.

There's no time displayed, as it is cloudy.

TREE

A big, barky old tree filled with golden and silver ripe apples. The branches are out of reach.

The players can fetch apples by shaking the tree and making it say „Shake and quiver, little tree, throw gold and silver down to me“

This incantation is found in the book of fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm in the bookshelf of the witch in room 2.

If the apples fall down, the chicken will happily eat them and give you an egg.

VEGETABLE PATCH

The vegetable patch is sad and dry. It lacks water and nutrients. There is a single pea stock, rotten and shriveled on the ground.

Add water to the vegetable patch

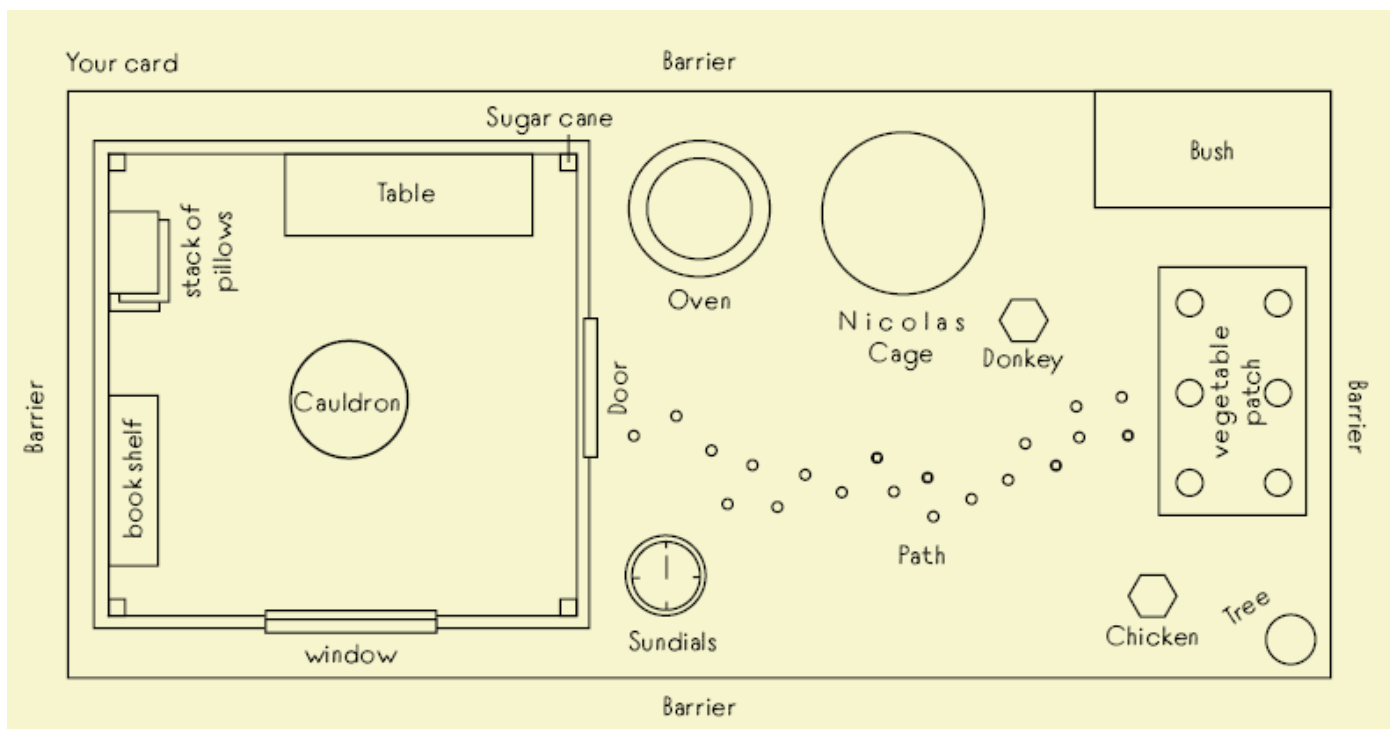
The pea sprout grows and regains health. It is no longer thirsty, but still really hungry. The players now need to add pig slurry in order to make the pea grow again. After that the pea stock grows a single pea pod and gives you a single pea!

The pea can be put under the pillow of the cat to awaken her, according to the fairy tale found in the Brother Grimm's book in the bookshelf of the witch.

Add pig slurry to the vegetable patch

See „Add water to the vegetable patch“ but reverse the substances.

SECOND ROOM: INSIDE THE WITCH'S HUT



OBJECTS IN THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE

These are the objects in witch's house.

BOOK SHELF

An old book shelf, that is made of gingerbread and glued together with caramel. The books are heavy, old toms. Too many to peruse in such a short amount of time without knowing what to look for! You can also spot a pointy black witch's hat that is not historically accurate on top of the book shelf!

If they search for Wilhelm and Jacob:

They find a fairy tale collection by the Brother's Grimm. Within, there are a few highlighted passages: Short versions of the fairy tales „Table Cover Thyself“, „Mother Hulda“, „The Musicians of Bremen“ and „The Princess and the Pea“

Table Cover Thyself:

Three brothers inherit from their father. The two older sons get a mill and a house. The youngest one feels mistreated as he „only“ receives an old donkey, a worn-out table and a simple linnen sack. The story then goes on to describe how each of the three comes with a twist: The donkey sheds gold, the sack reveals a stick that beats feinds away autonomously and the table covers itself in a gluttony feast when given the command „Table cover thyself“.

They can try to use this on the table.

Mother Hulda:

A tale of two stepsisters, both named Marie. The first Marie is really diligent. One day she falls down a well and lands in a fantastic world - The realm of Mother Hulda. Marie bakes bread, shakes apple trees by saying „Shake and quiver, little tree, throw gold and silver down to me!“ and helps Mother Hulda, a kind old woman with menial work by shaking out beddings that make it snow. She then return home covered in gold for her diligence and humbleness. The second sister basically goes there only to receive gold and is lazy. She does not work. Wow, what a complex moral. She then goes home only to be covered in hot, black tarre. Not so nice.

They can try to use this on the tree.

The Musicians of Bremen

An old donkey, dog, cat and chicken form a band and make music in the German city of Bremen instead of being slaughtered. Basically the end. Oh, their music is so beautiful, that they touched every heart. And maybe it also breaks barriers?

The Princess and the Pea

There once was a prince trying to find out if a woman that has arrived at his castle was a princess. Instead of simply asking her or checking on some paper work, the court came up with an obnoxious method to test this: Put a pea under her huge stack of mattresses. If she wakes up, she is a princess.

The player can use this information in order to wake up the cat on the pillows by placing a pea under her cushions.

If they try to reach the hat

It is way too high. They cannot quite reach it.

If they try to use the candy cane/sugar cane to reach the hat

They manage to fetch the hat! Huzzah!

GM: They can use the hat in combination with the spell found in the oven in order to summon water, pig slurry or milk.

Also, it looks pretty snazzy.

CAULDRON

The cauldron can be used to prepare the first portion of the „Spell of Undoing“ that is found in the Book of spells on the witches table.

If the players add water, tell the cauldron „Go bubble!“, add a Turquoise stone and wait till the colour of the water changes, they can use this for the recipe.

STACK OF PILLOWS

There's a heavy, fluffy looking persian cat sitting on top of a pile of nine pillows. It's asleep right now. Its fur is of a warm grey hue and it is wearing a collar with a golden mark on it. It is embossed with a tiny crown and a name tag: Princess.

If the players put a pea under the pillows:

The cat awakes, snoozily. It does not really feel like getting up yet and making music, though. She yawns and looks at her paws, lazily. Instead she wants you to earn each of her cozy pillows before getting up by solving her riddles. She is clearly just stalling for time.

She prompts different small word riddles that demand for one letter as a solution each. The solution will spell out „TURQUOISE“. This information is to be used by the players to determine which stone to add to the cauldron.

Riddles:

**I'M SITTING ON SOMETHING HOT. SO LISTEN,
I WANT SOME GOSSIP, COME ON, WHAT DO YOU SPILL?**

Solution: Tea -> T

WHO IS SITTING ON THIS PILLOW, MEOW?

Solution: You -> U

**MAKE ME LAUGH, COME ON. PRETEND TO BE A BRAVE PIRATE KING, QUEEN OR ROYAL.
IF YOU DO, I'LL GIVE YOU THIS ONE.**

Solution: Arrr -> R

**ALRIGHT, I'M LOOKING FOR AN INDICATION OR PROMPT ON THIS ONE.
WHY DON'T YOU GIVE ME THE ...**

Solution: Cue -> Q

**I'M SITTING ON A RASH DECISION, SO TO SPEAK. OR AT LEAST A RAPID MOVEMENT.
OF TURNING, THAT IS. TURNING BACK.**

Solution: U-Turn -> U

**HOLY MOTHER OF ALL CATS THIS ONE IS ACTUALLY A CACTUS. I'M BLEEDING! QUICK!
... JUST KIDDING.**

BUT I DID SURPRISE YOU, RIGHT?

AND WHAT DO YOU SAY, WHEN YOU'RE SURPRISED OR SHOCKED?

Solution: OH! -> O

THE ORGAN TO TAKE IN THE COLOURS OF THE WORLD.

Solution: Eye -> I

**LOOK, THE WITCH IS OFTEN VERY RUDE TO ME. MEOW. I SIMPLY LIE ON HER FAVOURITE SPELL
BOOK OR HAVE A NAP IN THAT COZY HAT OF HERS. BUT EVERYTIME SHE SHOOS ME AWAY. WHAT
DOES SHE TELL ME TO MOVE?**

Solution: Ass -> S

If you want to make this one child friendly, here is a version to do so:

ONE OF MY BAND MATES IS OLD AND BIG, SOME CALL HIM A DONKEY, SOME CALL HIM AN:

Solution: Ass -> S

THE POWER THAT RUNS THROUGH THE GOLEMS OF OUR TIME.

Solution: Electricity (E-Mail, E-GUITAR, etc) -> E

There is a letter embroidered on each pillow. If you solve each little riddle, the cat rolls her eyes and decides to give into your ideas of „not sleeping“. She moves outside to snooze just a little bit more, until you manage to „Turn Shaggy back somehow.“ and afterwards she is ready to join the band again!

SUGAR CANE/ CANDY CANE

The candy canes function as support beams of the gingerbread house. However, one of the candy canes seems loose. Your players can pry them out. They now have a hook in order to obtain the hat on the bookshelf!

TABLE

The table is made out of gingerbread, unsurprisingly. But why is it empty? Gretels knows that it usually is covered in herbs, skulls, stones, baking utensils, little sugar cubes, spices and plenty of other stuff that the witch

uses to cook and bake and cast spells. Weird.

If the players look under the table

The players find an inscription in a child's handwriting: It says: „Wilhelm and Jacob have the answers“
-> This is a hint for the players to peruse the book shelf for these names.

If the players exclaim: „Table, cover thyself!“

The table will blush and say: „Oh, alright!“ Then it kind of tries to summon a feast, but it will not work. „I tried to provide more, but the stores are currently understocked due to the covid-19 pandemic. Oh well, but I did muster to get witch's herbs, skulls and stone collection for you! And h-h-half a package of flour. I hope that is enough. I'm so so sorry that it is unsufficient.“ It king of blushes more and says: „Oh! Wait, I also found this!“ and a small Book of spells appears on the table.

Content of the book:

The book of spells, Volume 3. Enchantments and transformations“

Recipe: Spell of Undoing

*„If you want to undo a spell.
That can be quite an ordeal.
So go down to a lake or well,
and fetch some water; that'd be ideal.
You take the water and boil it.
By telling the cauldron: „Go bubble!“,
add a gem, and use your wit
to pick the right one and avoid any trouble.*

*Let the potion heat up and change hue.
Add flour and milk to the mix
Then sugar and an egg, only one thing left to do:
Let it bake at 180 degrees for the perfect fix.“*

The players have to simply follow the directions of the poem:

Add water to the cauldron, boil it by telling the cauldron „go bubble“, add a gem (turquoise) (from the collection of stones), wait for the potion to change hue, add flour and milk, add sugar and an egg, bake it 180 degrees in the oven

WINDOW

The window is made out of glassy caramel. The window sill is made of gingerbread. There is a thick layer of weird white dust on the window sill.

If they taste it

Yup, it sure is powdered sugar.
They can use that as an ingredient for the spell.

Run down: 1. Escape the cage, 2. examine garden, 3. solve the frog's riddle and enter the witch's hut, 4. unlock cat and chicken and collect ingredients for the undo-spell, 5. bake it, 6. feed it to the wolf, 7. wolf turns back to dog, 8. all animals unite, 9. animals make musik, 10. barriers breaks, 11. everyone is free.

Ending

Once all the animals have been freed and the wolf has been turned back into a dog:

The dog climbs atop the donkey, the cat on top of the dog, the chicken on top of the cat and they all start to jam. Make sure to let them conjure absurd instruments out of nowhere like a kazoo, a banjo and a keytar along with vocals. Or don't. The point being: They are jamming. And their music breaks down the barrier.

Free from the witch's clutches, you can go home to meet your Dad!

If the players at some point shook or investigated the pillows:

The stepmother has been caught in a blizzard and is gone.

If not:

Your Dad tells you, that he divorced her after finding out that she abandoned you in the forest.

He gives you a tight embrace and then curiously asks who your new friends are:

The frog/prince, the donkey, dog, cat and chicken, even the speaking table, Nicolas the speaking cage and any other talking objects you might have included in your journey have followed you home to your Dad. You start a new life together. Maybe as a band, maybe as a bakery? Who knows? Make up a sappy happy ending!

Also: Check out www.instagram.com/zeichenelster and https://twitter.com/jan_buehlbecker

Or if you want to learn German or speak German already: How about a funny book that reinterpretes classic fairy tales: How would they change during covid-19? Rapunzel is always social distancing, fair enough, but little red riding hood has to be careful when visiting her grandmother. Instead she just brings a basket full of supplies to her Gran-Gran. Well, lots of fun parodies with a bitter twist of corona. Tis the season.

Check it out at: www.comics-fuer-den-weltfrieden.com/shop

Thank you for playing! And if you did play it and enjoyed it or if you have ideas how to improve, let us know via: **postfach@comics-fuer-den-weltfrieden.de**

Have a fun time!