

Ana Alonso

The Steam Castle

Illustrated
by Mercè Canals

ANAYA

Includes
audio CD



PINCH OF SALT
A LITTLE BIT



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CHAPTER 1



‘Don’t make me laugh, Enid,’ says Bert. ‘Do you really believe in science? Only fools and little kids believe in science. And you are so clever...’

Enid looks at her best friend with an angry expression on her face. Maybe Bert does not deserve the title of best friend, after all.

‘I have reasons to believe in science,’ she answers proudly. ‘But you can’t understand them, you’re too young.’

‘Too young? Enid, I’m exactly two weeks and three days younger than you!’

‘Precisely. You’re too young, that’s what I say.’

Enid and Bert look at each other in silence. They are old friends, but they are very different. Enid is the only daughter of King Tristan of Occam, and Bert is just a prince of a small kingdom of three hundred inhabitants. He has four older brothers, and that means

that he will never be a king. By contrast, Enid will be the queen of Occam when her father dies.



Bert lives in Enid's palace as a guest. He is there to learn magic with the best teacher in the world, the great Lucius. He only goes home in the summer holidays.

However, he dares to disagree with Enid again and again. It is frustrating!

But he does not do it consciously. The thing is, Bert cannot keep his opinions to himself. And he has opinions about almost everything; unusual opinions, very different from those of other people. He has a creative mind. His teacher Lucius says that about him all the time.

Maybe that explains why he is such a bad student of magic. He likes to alter the spells with some invention of his own. And of course, it never works.

On the other hand, Enid is not much better in her magic classes. Lucius says that she has too much critical spirit. Learning the old formulas is not enough for her. She wants to understand them. She wants to know why a spell is done in a particular way, and what happens if she tries something different.

Lucius is not very happy with them.

'The magic of Occam is on the ancient books,' he always says. 'Everything is in the books: the spells,

the formulas, the charms... We don't know how they work, but they do. And thanks to them, Occam is a rich and prosperous kingdom.'

'Yes. And thanks to them, we have to suffer Malena,' says Enid.



Malena is the Great Royal Magician, the most important person in Occam after the king. But that is not enough for her. She is perpetually angry because people don't always do what she asks them to do. And she always says it's poor king Tristan's fault.

'When Marc the Magician was here, things were different,' complains Malena fixing her beautiful blue eyes on the king. 'People respected magic. It was the most important thing for you, Your Majesty, and also for your subjects. Marc the Magician had breakfast, lunch and dinner at your table.'

'But, Malena, Marc and I were very good friends,' says the king. 'I appreciate you, Malena, you know I do, but it's not the same. Anyway, if you want to have breakfast, lunch and dinner at my table, you are welcome. Come whenever you wish.'

'Thank you, Your Majesty, but your diet isn't exactly healthy for a magician like me. Do you ever eat snake eyes? Or cakes made with dragon scale flour?'

‘My dear, dragons are hard to get these days.’

‘Excuses!’ says Malena. ‘You are not interested in magic, you neglect your magic talents. And what about your daughter’s education? Do you really think old Lucius is a good choice to teach her magic? Why don’t you make me her teacher?’

But King Tristan is firm about Enid’s education. He doesn’t want Malena to make his daughter’s life unhappy.







Maybe King Tristan is not the best ruler in the world, but he is a good father.

Enid talks frequently with Bert about him, about how sad he is and how much he misses his friend Marc.

They were talking about that this morning. And for the first time, Enid told Bert about Marc's secret.

Marc the Magician did not disappear in the middle of a magic spell. It was not an accident, as everybody believes. Nobody killed him, as Malena often suggests. No. Marc the Magician went to live somewhere else. He went to a place where there is no magic, but science. That place does not appear in the ancient books. Enid found its name handwritten in one of Marc's old spell books. That place where magic does not exist is called 'Earth'.

The Steam Castle

Enid, the princess of the magical kingdom of Occam, wants to find a way of converting the royal castle into a «mobile palace». To achieve this, she has to travel with her friend Bert to the world of humans, to visit a former wizard of Occam who is now a scientist. There they discover the secrets of science related to energy sources.

With «The Steam Castle» you will learn...

To become familiar with energy sources and their applications.

Science



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