

"The mother and her children twain
Within the pot shall meet again."

Doris shrieked, the cat arched her back, while her eyes glowed like the eyes of a tigress when its cubs are threatened.

But clever Poppie, bright and quick as ever, sprang to the door, banged it shut, and locked it with the magical key.

To the grating came the Witch, and oh, how she yelled and how uselessly she shook the door! And safe behind the bars stood Poppie on one leg, and laughed and sang:

"Spare, oh Beldame, spare your ire;
Better go and mend your fire!"

The words seemed to suggest a horrid thought to the Witch, and she laughed a laugh that made the blood run cold.

"Fire and flame with blood-red glow
May enter where I cannot go,
In deepest vaults of Downbolo."

And when she had uttered these dark words, she turned and took her way back as she had come.

For an instant Poppie considered, then as the full meaning of the Witch's song became plain to her, she screamed. It seemed to Doris very awful to see Poppie, who was usually so brave and skilful, thus quite overcome with fright, and she clasped her own little hands and shivered.

"Doris, Doris," shrieked Poppie, "she has gone for fire to thrust in here upon us!"

"Let us unlock the door and run," exclaimed Doris. And this they would have done had it not been for the Jewelled Cat, who thrust herself between them and the door, and standing up on her