From *Sophie and the shadow woods – The Spider Gnomes*

Mrs B was in the kitchen. “Hello, you two! Come and meet Nigel. I’ve just collected him.”

Sophie smiled as she remembered. “Nigel’s the parrot Mrs B is looking after for a few weeks,” she explained as she and Sam kicked off their trainers. “She’s keeping him here. Let’s go and see!”

They hurried into the kitchen. On the table was a large birdcage with a grey parrot inside. He had a curved black beak and white feathers round his eyes. Seeing Sam and Sophie, he walked sideways along his perch. “Isn’t he beautiful?” cooed Mrs B. “Say hello, Nigel.”

The parrot put his head coyly to one side.

“Hello, Nigel.”

Sophie grinned.

“No, no, just say *hello*,” Mrs B told the parrot. “Go on.”

“Hello. Go on,” the parrot gabbled.

“How about *hiya*?” suggested Sam. He turned to the parrot. “Hiya!”

“*Fire!*” the parrot screeched. “Fire, fire, FIRE!” He bobbed excitedly up and down.

Sophie giggled. “What about Pretty Polly? Can you say Pretty Polly?”

“You’re a wally! You’re a wally!” cackled the parrot.

Mrs B blinked as Sophie and Sam fell about laughing. “Oh, dear! I’m not sure he should be saying *that*!”

[…]

They went inside. In the kitchen they could hear Mrs B talking to Nigel. “Can you say ‘Who’s a lovely parrot?’ Come on. Who’s a lovely parrot?”

“Gimme a carrot!” squawked Nigel.

[…]

Sophie grinned. “Parrots are so cool.” She scratched Nigel’s head. “What do you think?”

“You stink!” the parrot cackled at her.

Sam burst out laughing.

“You stink! You stink!” Nigel screeched, bobbing up and down on his perch. “I think you stink!”