

Harmony Tree International Speech Festival (HTISF)
2025-2026 Set Pieces for Asia Division

FINAL

Prose Reading
Born in 2012-2013

The House at the Edge of Magic

by Amy Sparkes, an adapted version.

“I am Flabberghast. High Wizard, Chair of the Tea Tasters Committee, World Hopscotch Champion 1835,” he said, holding his head high.

Then he stumbled down the last couple of steps. “Blasted gown,” he muttered.

The creature called Eric grinned and reached out a thick arm towards the wizard.

With a quick movement he tore the gown away, revealing what looked like indigo pyjamas and purple, fluffy slippers underneath.

Eric threw the gown towards an empty umbrella stand in the corner of the hall.

Nine gasped as a blue arm zoomed up from inside it, caught the cloak, then disappeared back into the stand taking the cloak with it.

“Wretched gown. Only wear it for visitors, really. Plays havoc with one’s hopscotch practice.”

“Hopscotch?” Nine said incredulously. Something fast-moving on the staircase caught Nine’s eye.

What appeared to be a wooden spoon with a face – and spindly arms and legs – slid down the bannister.

The spoon whooshed off the end of the bannister and landed by Nine’s feet.

“About time, lassie!” it declared. “What took you so long?”

“You talk,” was all Nine managed. “That’s ... incredible.”

“Trust me,” said Flabberghast, “the novelty does wear off.” He cleared his throat.

“This is Dr Spoon, and—”

“Dr Spoon? That’s an odd name,” said Nine.

“Oh, aye?” said the spoon, pointing the sword at her. “And yours?”

“Nine.”

The spoon raised an eyebrow. “We’ll call it a draw.”