not hide its own smell of dust and rotting

The skull yawned under Michael's fingers
again. The scarecrow spun round, glided, and
fell sideways toward it. Michael made one at-
ttempt to rescue the skull and then got hastily
out of the way. For as the scarecrow fell
across the bench, there came the fizzing jolt
of strong magic and the skull melted into the
scarecrow's turnip head. It seemed to get in-
side the turnip and fill it out. There was now a
strong suggestion of a rather craggy face on
the turnip. The trouble was, it was on the back
of the scarecrow. The scarecrow gave a
 wooden scramble, hopped weight uncertainly,
and then swiftly spun its body round so that
the front of it was under the craggy turnip
face. Slowly it eased its outstretched arms
down to its sides.

"Now I can speak," it said in a somewhat
muddy voice.

"I may faint," Fanny announced, on the stairs.

"Nononsense," Mrs. Fairfax said, behind Fanny.

"The thing's only a magician's gadget. It has to do
what it was sent to do. They're quite harmless."

Lettie, all the same, looked ready to faint. But
the only one who did faint was Percival. He
flapped to the floor, quite quietly, and lay
curled up as if he were asleep. Lettie, in spite
of her terror, ran toward him, only to back
away as the scarecrow gave another hop and
stood itself in front of Percival.

"This is one of the pests I was sent to find," it
said in its muddy voice. It swung on its stick
until it was facing Sophie. "I must thank you,"

It said, "My skull was far away and I ran out of

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