

# Guess Who's Coming To Dinner?

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Chapter 1 of 1

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"Why does 'ee 'ave to come 'ere?"

Fleur Weasley slammed the colander full of salad leaves under the cold running tap forcefully, causing drops of water to splash back on to herself, adding further fuel to her annoyance.

"Flower, honey, you know we've been through this before." With great patience, Bill tried to appease his wife *again*.

"But 'ee is so slimy! Zat man gives me zee creeps!" She was taking handfuls of the leaves now and dumping them unceremoniously onto a number of plates on the side.

Bill sighed as his four-year-old daughter tugged at his trousers with her hands outstretched, wanting to be picked up. Bill swooped down and picked up little Eminie with ease, resting her on one muscular arm.

"He's a bit of a greasy git, but he's harmless, love. Anyway, we should thank him properly for that cream he made for Mum's birthday. It would have cost a fortune if we'd bought it from Diagon Alley."

Fleur huffed and made grumbling noises as she began turning her attentions to roughly chopping scallions and tomatoes. Bill stepped towards his wife.

"It's only for an hour or so, love," he said quietly. Fleur continued chopping, a frown creasing her delicate features, animosity radiating off her in waves. She was so strong-minded and stubborn, but that was one of the reasons Bill had fallen in love with her. *She even looks beautiful when she's angry*, he thought wistfully.

A curt rap at the door interrupted his reverie. Fleur shot him a filthy look.

"I'll just get that, shall I?" he asked with forced geniality as he made his way out of the kitchen and away from his wife's temper.

Bill threw open the door. Standing on the door step was a tall, stern-looking man, dressed head to toe in black. His shoulder-length raven hair hung around his face like curtains, and his eyes glinted like polished onyx. His face was expressionless and inscrutable.

"Hello, Severus. Good to see you. Come in!" Bill said jovially, beckoning him with his free hand.

"Bill," Severus replied curtly, stepping over the threshold and glancing suspiciously at the little girl on his arm.

"Oh, you haven't met our daughter Eminie yet, have you? Eminie, this is, er, Uncle Severus," Bill said awkwardly.

The little girl looked at the dark man with curiosity in her big blue eyes. One pudgy finger tangled a lock of her strawberry-blonde curls around as she regarded the man. "Uncle Sevvvers?" she asked quizzically.

The stern man gazed at her coldly. "It's Severus," he enunciated clearly.

"Uncle Sevvvers," she repeated, breaking into a big grin. Severus resisted the urge to sneer as Bill invited him into the lounge. He stalked past them both with Bill following in his wake, the little girl still grinning at him. Severus sat on the proffered armchair, looking ill at ease.

Suddenly, there was a loud crash from the direction of the kitchen.

"MERDE!"

Fleur's shrill voice echoed into the lounge. Hurriedly, Bill put his daughter back down on the floor.

"Sorry about this, Severus, I'd better check on Fleur. Can you keep an eye on Eminie for a minute?" Without waiting for a response, Bill sped into the kitchen and closed the door behind him, leaving Severus glowering at the child in front of him.

The girl was twisting the bottom of her dress in her hands shyly, looking like she wanted to say something. Severus tried to ignore her. After a couple of moments, the girl came bounding up to him.

"Do you like books?" she asked, blinking up at him.

*Insufferable child.* "Yes," he replied slowly.

She grinned widely, trotted to the cabinet to the side, picked up a book and trotted back again. She held the book in front of her for him to take. Severus eyed her wearily.

"Please can you read me a story?" she asked eagerly.

Severus sighed, taking the book off her. *Now I'm some bloody babysitter!* He glanced at the title of the book: "The Dragon That Could". It was a flimsy little book; it would take a mere minute to read.

"Very well," he growled, opening up the book.

Eminie raced towards him, making a celebratory noise, and attempted to clamber up on his knee. *For the love of Merlin*, he thought through gritted teeth. She made a little whimper noise of frustration from not being able to reach, and fearing that she would cry or scream, reluctantly he lifted her up onto his knees, facing away from him. He was surprised at how light she was. She smelled like apples. Eminie wriggled around until she was sat facing the side, across his knees.

"Better?" he muttered with barely disguised disgust. Eminie pushed her thumb into her mouth and nodded, waiting for Severus to start the story.

He cleared his throat. "There once was a dragon called Ernie. Ernie lived in a forest far, far away. Ernie's best friend was a lion called Jeffrey. *Who writes this shite*, he thought incredulously.

"Jeffrey went to visit Ernie one sunny day. 'Hello, Ernie,' said Jeffrey with a roar."

The little girl looked at him disapprovingly. "You have to do the voice!"

Severus raised an eyebrow.

The girl roared like a lion, then giggled up at him. Severus rolled his eyes. *Will this torture never end? Cruciatius is far less painful.*

With a deep, withering sigh, Severus continued to read, changing the voice for the lion's character. Eminie relaxed and flopped against him, nestled against his chest. When at last he finished the story, he looked down and saw that her eyes were shut and she was fast asleep. Some small flicker of tenderness cut through his annoyance. She looked so peaceful and untroubled. *Did I once look like that, sat on my own mother's knee?* He somehow found it hard to imagine. He delicately lifted a hand and smoothed a strand of hair away from her face. It was soft, like down. For the first time, Severus felt a stab of regret for never having a family of his own. He stroked her hair, feeling a sense of overwhelming emptiness.