

Monsters and Mayhem

by Prof M McGonagall

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Chapter 1 of 1

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"It had been a long, hard day, but the monster was gone. The little boy curled up next to his mother in her soft, grey nightshirt. 'I love you, Mum,' he murmured sleepily. 'I love you, my son,' his mother replied. The little boy fell fast asleep."

Hermione peered at the small boy sleeping in the bed. Giving a gentle smile, she got up from the rocking chair and went into the sitting room carrying the book she had just finished reading aloud to her son.

Severus glanced at her from the sofa where he was reading. "Did Hadrian have any trouble falling asleep?"

"No," Hermione answered, seating herself next to Severus and extending the book towards him. "He just loves this story. He'd listen to it every night if I'd let him."

A strange look crossed Severus's face for a moment. "Where did you get this book, Hermione?"

"Haven't you heard of *Monsters and Mayhem*? Oh, I suppose not, but it's *the* most popular children's book at the moment. I don't know who the author is—what's her name? Sabrina Snapdragon— but she certainly understands little boys. Ginny says that James and Albus Severus can't get enough of the story either."

Once again, that strange look crossed Severus's features.

"Now, Severus, I know what that look means. There is nothing wrong with the story just because James and Albus like it. Hadrian is too small to enjoy *Moste Potente Potions* at bedtime."

"Oh, no... no, it's not that." He paused a moment and took a deep breath. "I was wondering if you'd like to take a trip to Diagon Alley this weekend."

"That would be wonderful, Severus! I'll just owl Harry and Ginny that we're coming to London."

Saturday found them walking in Diagon Alley. They had left Hadrian with the Potters so that Severus could keep an appointment and Hermione could do some shopping.

When they came to the door of Wizarding Press, Hermione grabbed his arm. "Severus, are you here to talk about publishing your potions textbook?"

Severus looked very uncomfortable. "Not exactly." Looking like he was about to face the Dark Lord again, he opened the door and went in. Walking up to the receptionist, he said, "Would you please tell Mr. Binder that Sabrina Snapdragon is here to see him?"

"One moment, sir."

"Sabrina Snapdragon?" Hermione was bewildered. "Severus..."

Just then a finicky little man with glasses on his nose came quickly through the reception area to meet them. Grabbing Hermione's hand, he shook it vigorously as he said, "Ms. Snapdragon, it is an honour to finally be able to meet you. I, of course, am Bronson Binder. Please, come back to my office."

"Mr. Binder, uh..." Hermione began faintly.

"If you please, my dear, let us be comfortable in my office before we talk. This gentleman may accompany you, if you wish?"

The question mark in his inflection caused Hermione to say, "This is my husband, Severus Snape."

Mr. Binder shook hands with Severus and proceeded to walk back to his office, Hermione and Severus following after him. When they reached his office, Binder invited them to sit. "Now, Ms. Snapdragon, let us discuss the publicity tour for your book."

"But, Mr. Binder, I believe there's been a mistake. I'm not Sabrina Snapdragon."

"You're not?" Mr. Binder looked quite perplexed.

"No, she's not," Severus said slowly. "I am."

Hermione stared at Severus with surprise.

Mr. Binder looked even more confused and perhaps a bit angry. "You..." He stopped, took off his glasses, and wiped them carefully with a handkerchief before replacing them on his nose and looking almost rudely at Severus. "*You're* Sabrina Snapdragon."

Severus nodded.

Hermione reached over to give Severus a hug. "Severus, why didn't you tell me? You wrote that wonderful book? How could you not tell me?"

Severus looked a little ashamed of himself. "I'm sorry. I didn't know how to tell you. Severus Snape does not write children's literature."

Hermione gave him a sympathetic smile. "Apparently he does, and he's marvellous at it."

"Oh no... no, no, no. This will. Not. Do." Mr. Binder was pacing up and down behind his desk. He gave Severus a glare through his glasses. "We cannot have you giving interviews and doing book signings as Sabrina Snapdragon! The children would run away screaming!"

"Book signings!" exclaimed Severus. "Why would I want to do book signings? Crowds of children asking me for my autograph? There will be no book signings."

Mr. Binder rounded on him. "You signed a contract that says you will fully cooperate with the promotional aspects of selling your book. And book signings are a promotional part of selling the book. But to have a known former Death Eater signing children's books..." He sat down and put his head in his hands as he contemplated the public relations nightmare.

"Hermione," Severus began, turning toward her with what Hermione privately called his Slytherin expression, "maybe you could do the book signings."

"So that's your plan?" Hermione rolled her eyes at him. "Everyone knows I'm not Sabrina Snapdragon. I won't be able to fool anyone."

"Of course, they'll recognize you. But it would be... more palatable for everyone if you were Sabrina Snapdragon, not me. You actually like children; I think they're a bunch of dunderheads."

Hermione thought for a moment and then smiled sweetly at Severus in what he privately called ~~her~~ Slytherin expression. "I'll do it... but only if I can tell Ron and Lavender and Harry and Ginny the truth."

Severus closed his eyes, imagining the stupid jokes his wife's friends would come up with. He sighed and shook his head. He had no choice. He simply couldn't face book signings. "It's a deal."

"Splendid!" cried Mr. Binder. "And now, let's talk about the sequel." Severus and Hermione both glared at him, so he said weakly, "Another time, perhaps."

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Thanks to Voxangelus for her original prompt: There's a new best-selling children's book sweeping the Wizarding World. Snape has written it under a pseudonym and tries to convince Hermione to pretend to be the author at a book signing.

Thanks to ladyinthecloak for her beta skills.