

Nocturnal 'missions

by Alison

Hagrid's little problems are always very profitable to Horace Slughorn. Is there *anything* the new potions master won't sell?

Complete short story

Chapter 1 of 1

Hagrid's little problems are always very profitable to Horace Slughorn. Is there *anything* the new potions master won't sell?

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Professor Slughorn was just considering wandering up to the Great Hall for a possible late breakfast or early lunch on this fine Saturday morning when there came a diffident knock on his door.

When he answered it, he was confronted with what appeared at first glance to be a wall of cloth. This initial impression was rectified as Slughorn's gaze traveled up the waistcoat and saw atop it the bushy beard and shaggy hair framing the face of Hogwarts' Care of Magical Creatures teacher.

"Horace? Could I have a word if yeh've got a spare minute?"

"Hagrid! My dear fellow, of course, come in!"

Slughorn stood aside as Hagrid bent slightly at the knees to get under the door, then stood in the centre of the study looking nervous and ill-at-ease.

"Sit down, Hagrid, make yourself comfortable. Can I offer you anything? Some tea perhaps? Or I have some wine here if it's not too early in the day?"

Hagrid waved away the offer with one large hand. "No, I won't be keepin' yeh long, Horace. I've just got a bit of a ... problem, like. Poppy Pomfrey went a bit funny when I asked her about it earlier, said I should come ter you with it. I wouldn'a bothered yeh, but after that beautiful yology you did for Aragog at his fun'ral, I thought yeh'd understand ..."

Slughorn poured himself a small measure of elf-made wine and seated himself comfortably on an easy chair across from the sofa that Hagrid was now occupying. He reflected that Hagrid's last problem with his spider friend's death had been decidedly profitable for Horace Slughorn. "Tell me all about it, my dear chap, and I'll certainly see what I can do," he answered.

"Thanks, Horace," Hagrid answered, relaxing a little. The springs on Slughorn's white Italian leather sofa squeaked alarmingly at the shift in position. "Now, me problem – I dunno if Dumbledore's ever mentioned it to yeh, but I've got a little drop of giant blood in me ..."

Slughorn benignly regarded the man-mountain currently stressing his sofa. "Do you really? I would never have guessed."

"Yeah, well, the fact o' the matter is, me mum was a giantess. And last year when I was traveling on the continent, I ran into me little half-brother. He's a full-blood giant, Grawpy is. And it's him what's got the problem."

"Indeed. You intrigue me Hagrid, such a dark horse! Are you sure you won't have some wine? It really is an excellent vintage."

"Ah, go on then, jus' a little. Anyway, I brought Grawp home wi' me, and he lives in the Forbidden Forest now. Well he's a bit too big to fit inside a house, like. Ta, Horace." And Hagrid took the offered glass of wine and downed it in one gulp as Slughorn sat back down.

"He seemed to be settling in right nicely, too, but lately he's started ... well," Hagrid paused, looking embarrassed. "I'm not sure how ter put this, ter tell you the truth ... when he sleeps, like, at night, he sorta loses control of his body functions ..."

"Do you mean he wets or soils himself?" asked Slughorn.

"Oh, no, nuthin' like that! In fact, he's pretty good with those sorta things. We dug a big trench, and I showed him how to cover up his doin's with some of the dug earth after he's finished. After it's rotted under the topsoil for a month or two, it makes right good fertilizer," Hagrid added as an afterthought. "I got a coupla barrow-loads of it in, and you should see the size of the school pumpkins! The house-elves in the kitchen reckon it makes the best juice!"

Slughorn mentally crossed pumpkin juice off his list of things he liked to drink with dinner.

"And as for the rhubarb, brings it up a treat ... "

Slughorn decided to interrupt before Hagrid managed to put him off all Hogwarts' food. "Er, the problem?" he insinuated delicately.

"Oh, yeah, sorry, Horace. Well, Grawpy sorta lets ... moisture ... slip when he's asleep, big puddles of it."

"Ah, I see!" Slughorn said, the light dawning. "You're talking about nocturnal emissions! My dear chap, that's quite a natural function, you know. Every man has those now and then. It's nothing to worry about."

"Well, I wouldn't normally worry yeh 'bout Grawpy's nocturnal 'missions, 'cept for the fact that where the puddles land, nuthin' grows. See, giants tend to live up in rocky mountains, not much plant life up there anyway, but over in the forest, it's starting to show. The centaurs have been complaining about wet sticky patches everywhere and grass dyin' off and that."

"Hmm, that is a problem. Couldn't he clean it up after he wakes up?"

Hagrid looked blank. "There's a lot of it, Horace. I tried gettin' Grawp to cover it with leaves, but it seems to burn the soil underneath. Is there any way you can think of to make it stop happenin', like? Sorta stop it at the source?"

"Ah, now, I'm not sure that's a good idea. How old is your brother?"

Hagrid counted on his fingers slowly, then looked up. "He's aroun' thirty. That's teenaged for a giant, 'cause we got ter grow so big, it takes us longer to become adults."

"Hmm, so he's probably just got into puberty then. No, not a good idea to stop the emissions." *And not to mention*, Slughorn thought greedily, *giant semen would be worth its weight in crystallized pineapple to certain apothecaries of my acquaintance.* "But I could have a look at a sample if you'd like and find out if there's a potion that perhaps could change your brother's body chemistry to de-acidify the emissions, make it safe to bury without harming the soil ... "

Hagrid's face split into a big smile. "There now, you're a real gen'lman, Horace! Poppy Pomfrey was right when she said you were the man to ask!"

Slughorn beamed at Hagrid. "Not at all my dear chap, happy to help. What are colleagues for, hmm? However, I'm going to need a sizeable sample. You know, I'll have to run tests and check various potions against it. Would you be able to provide, say, a gallon?"

Hagrid nodded eagerly. "Not a problem, Horace. Grawpy prob'ly loses that much durin' a nap!" He felt inside his capacious overcoat and produced a large sealed jam jar. "I've got a bit for you to start off with, and I can get the rest by tomorrow."

Slughorn tried to keep the light of avarice from shining in his eyes as he reached for the jar. Fresh giant semen! It was a license to mint Galleons! But as he held it up to the light to check it, he noticed an anomaly.

"This is a very funny colour, Hagrid," he remarked.

"Oh, yeah, well, it's prob'ly got a bit 'a dirt in it; I had to scrape it off the ground, like ..."

"No, I mean, it's clear and colourless. Nocturnal emissions are normally white, a milky shade. You must know, you've probably seen it when you've done it yourself."

Hagrid looked puzzled. "No, I've never had no nocturnal 'missions."

"But you must have done! Everyone does at some stage in their life."

Hagrid shook his head. "Nope. These 'mission thingies sound to me like semen. But that's not Grawpy's problem." He gestured at the jam jar. "No, poor lad drools in his sleep somethin' chronic."

The End.

Author's note: If you liked this story, please have a read of my original story "Love Inhuman" at this link:

<http://www.thepetulantpoetess.com/viewstory.php?sid=11932>

Alison