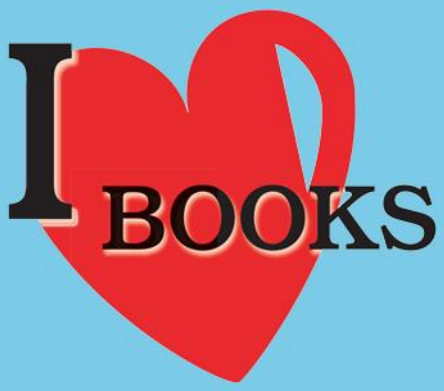


Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from

The Monster Hunter

Written by

Guy Bass

Illustrated by

Pete Williamson

Published by

Stripes Publishing an imprint of Little Tiger Press Group

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.



VISIT THE AUTHOR'S WEBSITE AT:

www.guybass.com

STRIPES PUBLISHING
An imprint of Little Tiger Press
1 The Coda Centre, 189 Munster Road,
London SW6 6AW

A paperback original
First published in Great Britain in 2016

Text copyright © Guy Bass, 2016
Illustrations copyright © Pete Williamson, 2016

ISBN: 978-1-84715-649-5

The right of Guy Bass and Pete Williamson to be identified as the author and illustrator of this work respectively has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988.

All rights reserved.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition, including this condition, being imposed upon the subsequent purchaser.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Printed and bound in the UK.

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

THE FIRST CHAPTER

LET'S PRETEND WE'RE MONSTERS

(A bit of excitement)



In a castle full of monsters
There's noise from time to time
But for weeks it has been tranquil
Which suits us monsters fine

Signed,
The Creations of Grotteskew

"GRR…"

A great, clawed hand reached around the dungeon door, pushing it open with a rusty *creeeaak*. A monstrous thing of implausible proportions stepped inside. The beastly Creature's three arms stretched out, tail and tentacles writhing, its single glaring eye probing the darkness.

"GRRoOoWRR…" it whispered.

It loomed over a tiny, makeshift bed on the floor, upon which lay an even tinier, almost-human shape, covered from head to toe in a blanket. The Creature bared a mouthful of jagged teeth. It extended its largest, most-clawed arm and dragged the blanket from the bed, with a blood-curdling roar.

"GRRRRRAAAAAAUH!"

The bed was empty but for a pile of rags.

"Boo," whispered Stitch Head, hopping out from behind a crate.

"Eeeeeeeeeeeee—!" the Creature squealed in surprise. The sound was so high-pitched and shrill that even the tiniest mouse would have considered it feeble. The Creature flung its arms and tentacles in every direction as it dived in horror behind a pile of boxes.



"Don't HURT me, monster!" howled the Creature. "I'm too YOUNG and CREATIVE to die!"

"It's all right, Creature, it's me! It's Stitch Head!" cried Stitch Head.

As the first creation of Mad Professor Erasmus, Stitch Head was also his least monstrous. He was small, slight and barely taller than a toddler, with a patchwork of stitches covering his ashen face.

"Stitch Head? I KNEW that!" the Creature lied, clambering out from behind the boxes and trying to look casual. The Creature was one of the professor's more-recent creations. In stark contrast to Stitch Head, it was a massive, menacingly monstrous mishmash, with three arms, numerous tentacles and a single, cyclopean eye in the centre of its face. But since Stitch Head had cured it of a nasty case of

werewolfism, it was as gentle as a kitten's lick.

"NICE idea, making a FAKE you out of RAGS," the Creature added, inspecting the bed. "I NEARLY lost my ICE-cool COMPOSURE…"

"I-I didn't mean to scare you," said Stitch Head. "I learned that trick while I was escaping from my master's last creation. Of course, she *was* trying to pull my arms off…"

"GOOD old ANTOINETTE. How IS she?" the Creature asked.

"Much better for a dose of Psycho Path to Enlightenment potion," said Stitch Head. "She prefers sewing to savagery now."

"GREAT! She can join my KNIT WITS and SEW-AND-SEWS Crochet Club!" boomed the Creature excitedly.

Stitch Head smiled. It made a nice change to have only the odd rampaging creation to worry

about. He had spent his almost-life keeping the professor and Castle Grotteskew safe, even though his master had all but forgotten he existed. But after the events of recent months (attempted kidnappings, angry mobs, ghostly hauntings and the castle almost burning down, not to mention an entirely chaotic visit from a hundred human orphans) it finally seemed as though almost-life was returning to normal – or as normal as it could be.



"*There* you are," said a voice. Stitch Head and the Creature turned to see Arabella standing in the doorway. She was a determinedly scruffy girl of nearly eleven, with a thick, tangled mess of bird's-nest hair. Only her polished boots were vaguely

presentable. "What are you playing? I'm bored out of my brain!" she added.

"Only the GREATEST game EVER!" declared the Creature. "It's called Let's Pretend We're MONSTERS."

"Let's pretend we're…?" began Arabella. "But you *are* monsters."

"No, but REAL monsters," said the Creature. "MONSTROUS monsters, like the ones the PROFESSOR makes! I mean, before Stitch Head CURES them."

"That sounds like the stupidest idea for a game I ever heard," chuckled Arabella. "Can I play?"

"Of course! IVO is still HIDING around here SOMEWHERE, waiting to TERRIFY our HEADS off," boomed the Creature. "SO, do you want to be a MONSTER or an unsuspecting VICTIM … or BOTH?"

"Monster! Obviously," Arabella replied.

"You can take my place," said a relieved Stitch Head. He collected his shoulder bag and carefully began filling it with potion bottles. "I should check on the professor's newest creation. It's only a day or so off being awakened…"

"Stitch Head, have you ever thought it might be a bit more exciting if you didn't make all the prof's monsters un-monstrous?" said Arabella. "I mean, it's so blinkin' *boring* around here."

"But – but I *like* boring," said Stitch Head, imagining the havoc his master's creations might cause if he didn't create potions to relieve their rage. He slung the potion bag over his shoulder. "Boring means no one is running for their lives."

"You sound like my ol' nan – she *loved*

boring. Come on, I'll show you," said Arabella. With that, she ducked under the Creature's legs and up the dungeon steps.

"What? Where are we going?" asked Stitch Head, hurrying after her.

"WAIT, what about our GAME?" the Creature called after them. "We STILL haven't FOUND—"

"Boo!"

The oval head of Ivo suddenly popped out from the Creature's coat pocket. Despite his tiny, doll-like stature and cloak of rags, the sight was too much for the Creature to take.

"Eeeeeeeeeeee—!"

