

The Slurp



Greely gazed at the “Help Wanted” ads in the paper. There was one job left that he hadn’t tried. Maybe today would be his lucky day!



*Three kids need a monster.
Not too scary, not too sweet.
Are you the one for us?
Come to our open house and find out!*

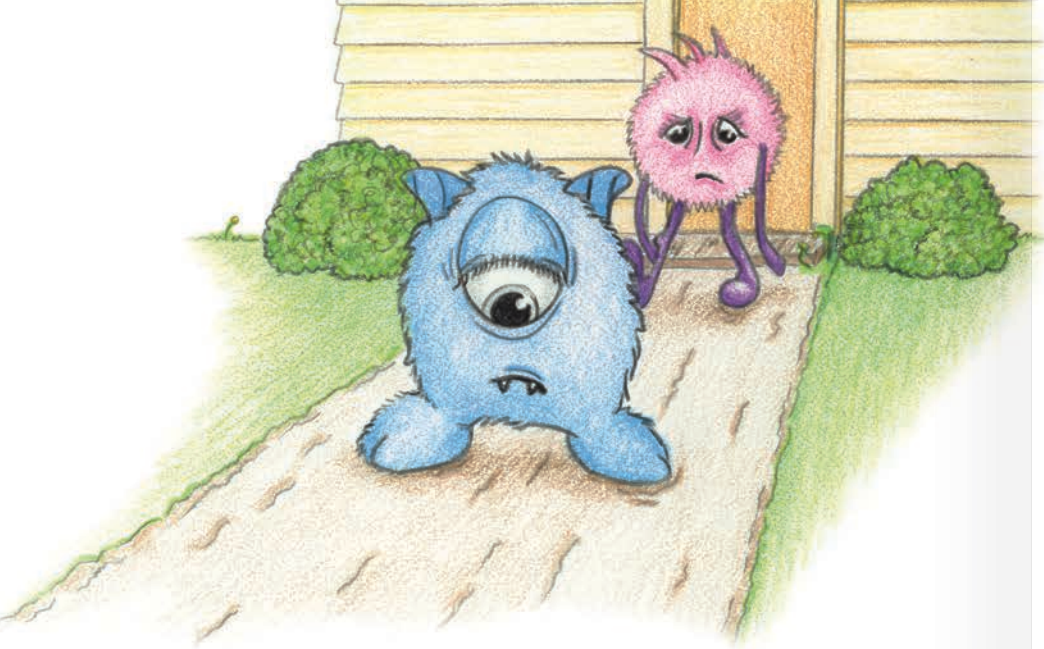
“Not too scary and not too sweet? That sounds just like me! I’d better hurry before some other monster beats me to it!”

He smoothed down his long eyebrows and eagerly waddled off.

When Greely got to the house, he was sorry to see so many monsters waiting on the lawn. There weren’t that many jobs for monsters anymore and he really needed this one. He hoped these kids wouldn’t mind that he was a Slurp monster.

You see, Slurp monsters slurp loudly when they eat and drink, and Greely ate and drank a lot! Slurp monsters weren’t in demand because of all the noise they made, so he would just have to hope for the best.





One by one, the other monsters came out of the house with sad faces.

“What happened? Why didn’t they hire you?” Greely asked each one.

“Too messy,” growled Plop, who drooled a lot.

“Too neat,” said Prim, who pressed her socks.

“Too clingy,” wailed Huggy as he grabbed Greely and sobbed.

“Too gross,” snarled Coot as he wiped his nose on his sleeve.

“Oh, dear, these kids are very picky!” Greely worried. “I’d better not tell them that I’m a Slurp monster.”

When it was his turn, Greely sat in front of the three kids. Mel was just a cute little boy, but Sage and Dolly were very stern girls. Greely’s tail curled with worry.



“Why should we hire you?” asked Sage, the oldest girl.

“I can jump out of closets to scare you, but I’m not *too* scary. Your hair will stand on end, but you won’t faint or anything.”



“Go on,” said Sage.

“I’m a sweet monster that you can cuddle, but I’m not *too* sweet. I’ll still tease you and steal all your toys and make gurgling noises under your bed. Oh, and I can teach you to play the drums,” Greely added.

“That could be fun,” said Dolly. “What else can you do?”

“I make the best peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in town! No one can turn them down,” Greely said proudly.

“You haven’t met our little brother Mel,” said Sage. “He’s a very picky eater. He won’t eat anything but steamed beans and ice cream. It’s starting to worry us.”

Greely loved steamed beans and ice cream! He tried not to think how yummy they were with a cup of hot tea.

“Please give me a chance. I can get your little brother to eat!” said Greely.

“Hm. You do seem like the perfect monster for us,” said Sage. She turned to Dolly, who nodded. “We’ll try you out for thirty days. If you can get Mel to eat, you can stay forever.”

“It’s a deal,” said Greely.

Greely moved in that very day.

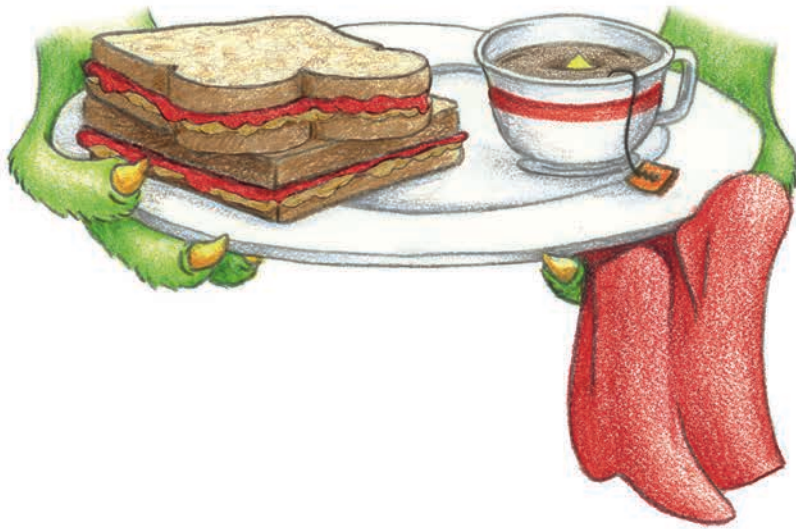


It was hard not to slurp all the time, but it was worth it. Greely was so happy to have kids to scare and noises to make. When he wanted to eat sandwiches and drink tea, he just waited until the kids were sleeping and then went down to the dark basement. No one could hear his slurping from there.



Greely fit in nicely with Sage, Dolly, and Mel. But even after a week of his best tricks, he had not been able to get Mel to eat anything but steamed beans and ice cream. The clock was ticking.

“Come on, Mel,” Greely pleaded. He put a sandwich and a cup of tea near the little boy, just as he did every day. “This is the best peanut butter and jelly sandwich you will ever taste! And nothing beats a cup of tea!”



But Mel crossed his arms and pursed his lips, just as he did every day. Greely would have loved to slurp up that sandwich and tea, but Mel wouldn't even taste it.

The days passed quickly. Greely tried everything. In the mornings before playing hide and seek, he stacked sandwiches in the doghouse, in the trees, under the porch, and behind the shed. Greely hoped that Mel would eat a sandwich while he hid.

But Mel never did.





At bedtime, the kids asked Greely to read them stories. He acted out all the parts and gave each person a funny voice. Before tucking Mel in, Greely made him a sandwich and some tea. Then in a silly monster voice, he'd say, "Little boy, if you don't eat this sandwich and drink this tea, I'll turn you into a hairy toad."

But Mel was not convinced.

Greely even tried getting into Mel's dreams by mumbling quietly under the bed while Mel slept:

"Tea ... peanut butter ... jelly ... yum. Tea ... peanut butter ... jelly ... yum."



But Mel still woke up each morning and asked for beans. Time was running out for Greely.



On his last day, Greely did everything in his power to make Mel eat. He set the sandwich and the tea on the table. Then he pleaded. He growled. He pouted. He did handstands. He danced a jig. He swung from the lamps.

“Please, Mel,” Greely begged. “Just eat the sandwich!”

Nothing.

Tired and sad, Greely slumped in the chair next to Mel, his long arms dangling at his sides. Without thinking, he reached for the cup of tea and ...

SLURP!



Everyone stared. Greely trembled with fear. His secret was out!

Mel giggled.

Sage frowned and said, "Ick!"

Dolly stepped back and said, "Yuck!"

"Greely! You didn't tell us you were a Slurp monster!" Sage and Dolly scolded. "You can't stay here! You must go!"



Greely slumped and turned to walk out the door. He didn't want to leave. He had tried so hard to be funny and get Mel to eat sandwiches and drink tea. Greely couldn't help it if he was a Slurp monster.

Mel kept giggling. He reached for the tea.

SLURP!

Then he reached for the sandwich.

SLURP!

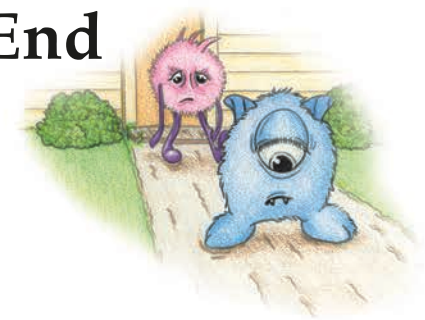
Greely and the girls froze. Was Mel really eating more than just steamed beans and ice cream? He was!

“Greely, you did it! Mel is eating!” Sage said.
“Please stay with us forever—slurps and all!”

Greely grinned from ear to ear and slurped
his tea.



The End





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