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For the magical team at Oxford Children's and everyone who has been a part of Isadora, Mirabelle, and Emerald's adventures over the last 10 years!

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The World of HARRIET MUNCASTER

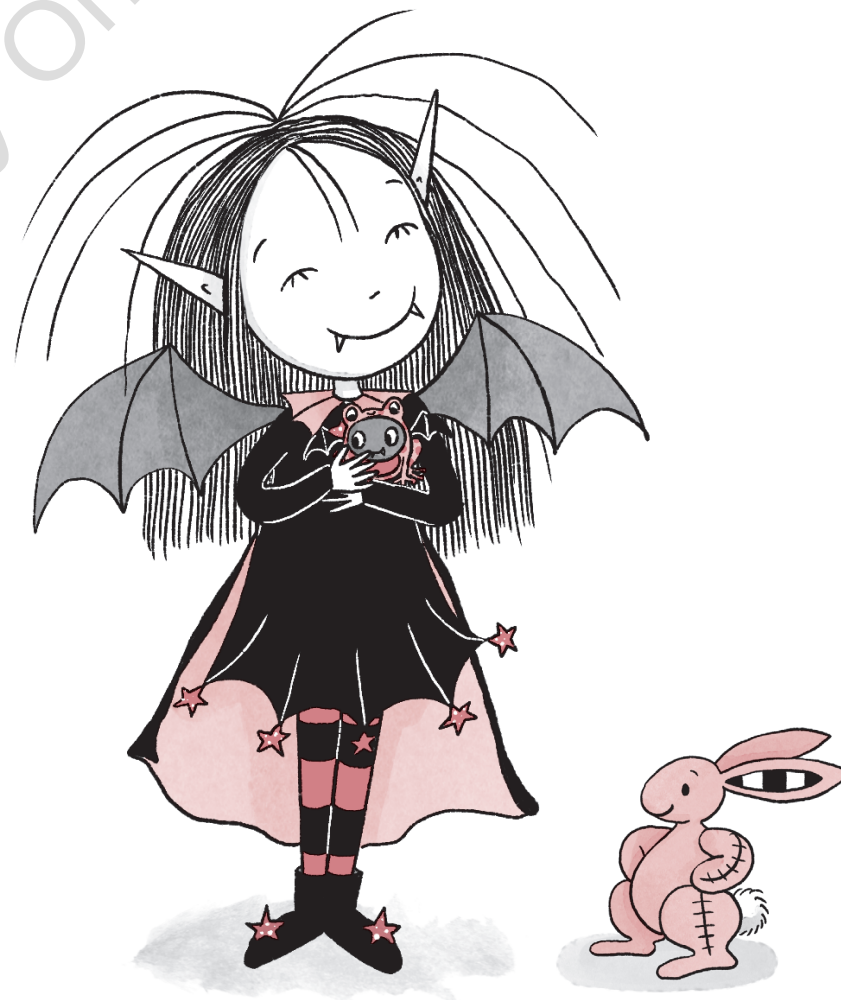
Isadora Moon & Friends Story Collection



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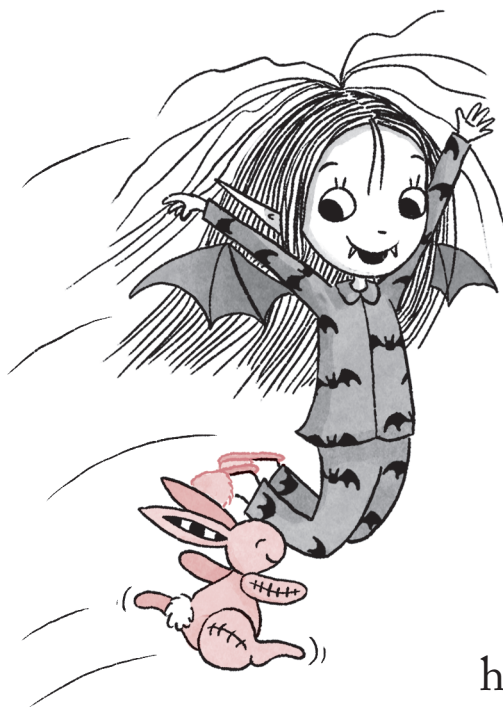
and the Vampire Festival



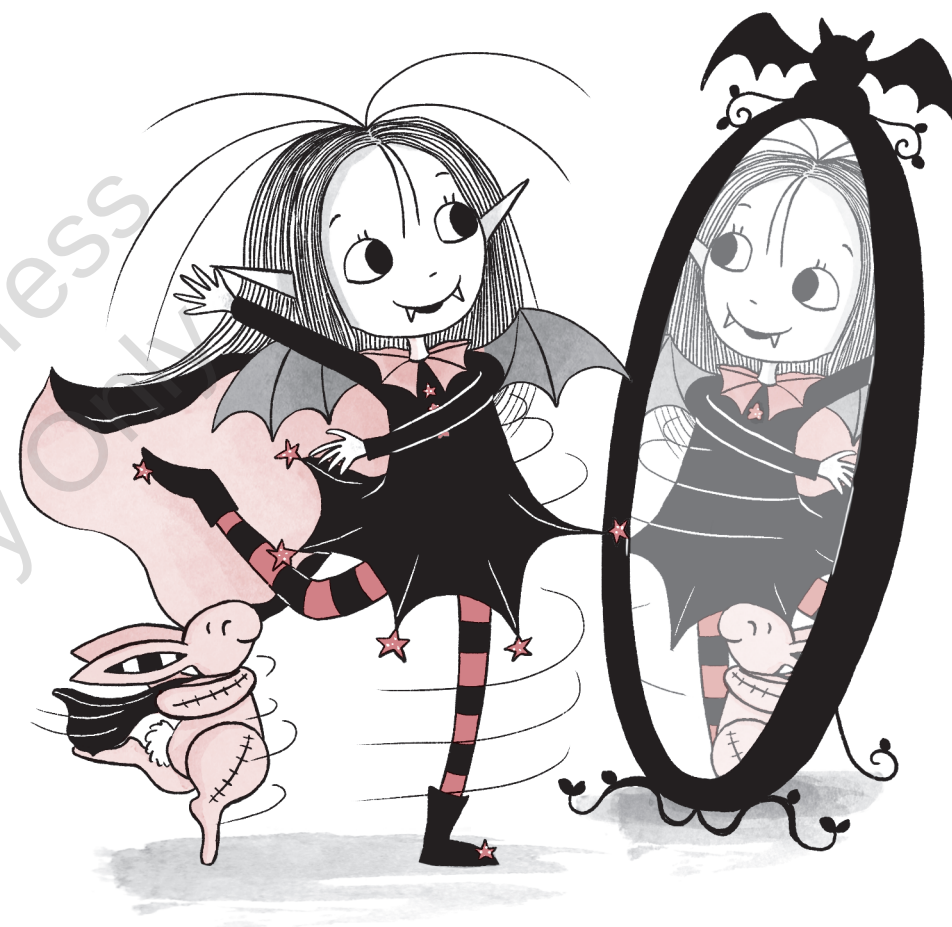


Chapter ONE

It was Saturday evening and the stars were just beginning to twinkle in the sky when I finally woke up from my long afternoon nap. Mum had insisted I have a nap, because we were going to be staying up *all* night! Yes, really! Tonight was the annual Vampire Festival and I was *so* excited to go for the very first time.



I *bounced* out of bed with Pink Rabbit bouncing along behind me. (Pink Rabbit used to be my favourite stuffed toy, but my mum magicked him alive with her fairy wand!) I rushed straight to my wardrobe—I couldn't wait to put on my new party dress! It was black velvet with a pink batwing collar and glittery star buttons. I also had a matching cape and pointy boots with stars on the toes. I put my clothes on and did a little twirl in front of the mirror with Pink Rabbit.



He was wearing a little rabbit-sized cape.

We both felt very smart!

‘There you are!’ said Mum when Pink Rabbit and I bounded into the kitchen.

‘OH!’ I said, stopping dead in my tracks so fast that Pink Rabbit crashed into my legs and went rolling across the floor. (*Whoops!*)

Mum did *not* look like herself at all!

Instead of her usual, pretty fairy dress, Mum was wearing a long, black gown with spiky sleeves, and she had groomed her normally wild fairy hair into a smooth, sharp bun.



She was even wearing black lipstick!

It felt kind of . . . strange to see her like that.

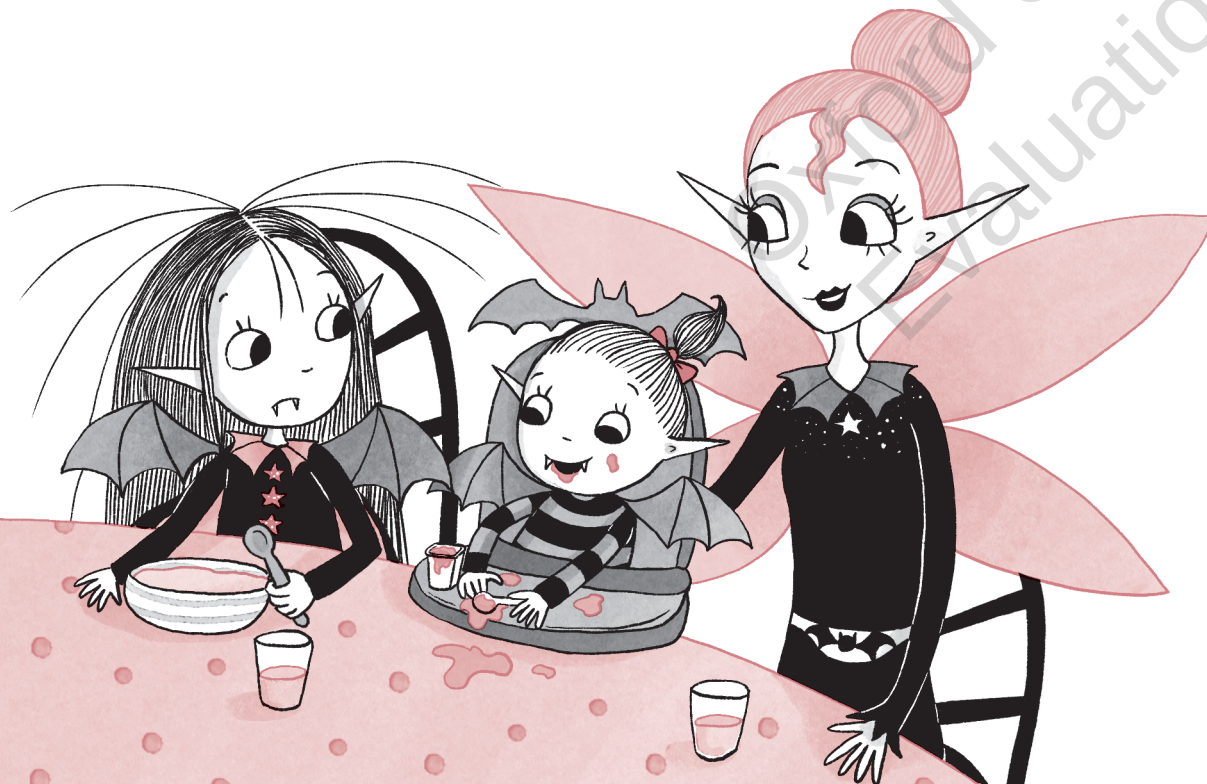
‘I thought I’d get into the vampire spirit,’ Mum said, a little nervously, ‘seeing as it looks like I’ll be taking you and Honeyblossom to the Vampire Festival on my own.’

‘What do you mean?’ I asked, confused. ‘Isn’t Dad coming, too?’

‘Unfortunately, not.’ Mum sighed. ‘You know he went to bed with a cold this morning? Well, during your nap he woke up and started sneezing all over the place! I’ve told him to stay in bed with some hot raspberry and ginger juice.’

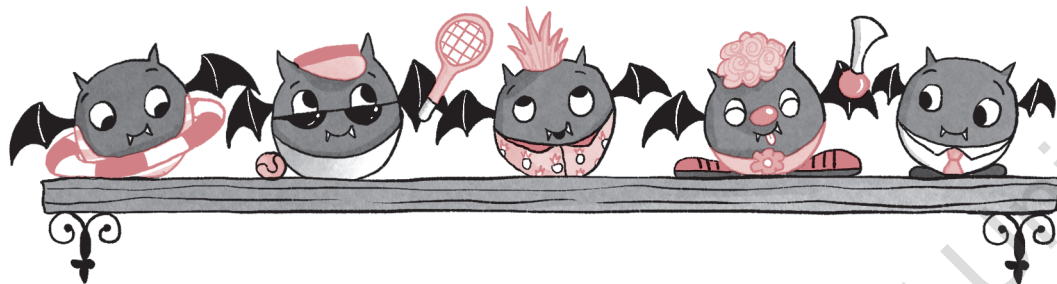
‘Oh no!’ I cried. ‘Dad will be so sad to miss out!’

‘I know,’ said Mum. ‘But he’ll be happy that you and Honeyblossom are still going. And I’ve dressed up extra vampire-y to make up for Dad not being there. Now, eat your evening breakfast quickly because the vampire taxi will be here soon!’



I sat down at the table, next to my baby sister, Honeyblossom, who was in her high chair eating strawberry yogurt. As I picked up my porridge spoon, I felt a mixture of emotions. Excitement for all the fun I was going to have with Mum and Honeyblossom, but also a twinge of sadness that Dad would be missing out. This was my and Honeyblossom’s first Vampire Festival and Dad had been so excited to show us around. He goes every year. He *especially* loves trying to win a different collectable bat ornament each year from the hook-a-bat stall. He’s won five in total. They all sit on the shelf in Mum and Dad’s bedroom. My favourite

one is the bat in a pink-and-white swimming costume with a rubber ring around its waist. It was a shame that Dad wouldn't be adding to his collection this year.



Unless ...

Maybe *I* could try and win a bat for him?

I would have to try really hard as Dad told me the hook-a-bat stall is one of the most difficult ones to win prizes on. But if

I *did* manage to win a new bat ornament for Dad, then he would be so pleased!

Once we had all finished our breakfast, everything happened in a bit of a rush as the doorbell suddenly rang and Mum hurried us out of the house into the vampire taxi. She seemed a bit more ... stressed than usual. We sat squished in the back of the taxi together as the driver flew us through the sky towards the Vampire Festival. Mum kept fiddling with her hair and dress. I think that maybe she felt a bit uncomfortable. Then Honeyblossom dropped her pink milk on to the floor and made a puddle, which made Mum even more flustered.



It was Thursday morning before school
and I was finding it hard to focus on
eating breakfast because my stepsister
Delphina wouldn't stop bouncing up and
down in her chair next to me.

'I'm *so* excited about the celebration
on Saturday!' she squealed. 'I've been
practising my ribbon twirling all week!'

‘It’s going to be fantastic!’ My stepdad, King Auster said, beaming. ‘You’re so good at ribbon acrobatics, Delphina!’

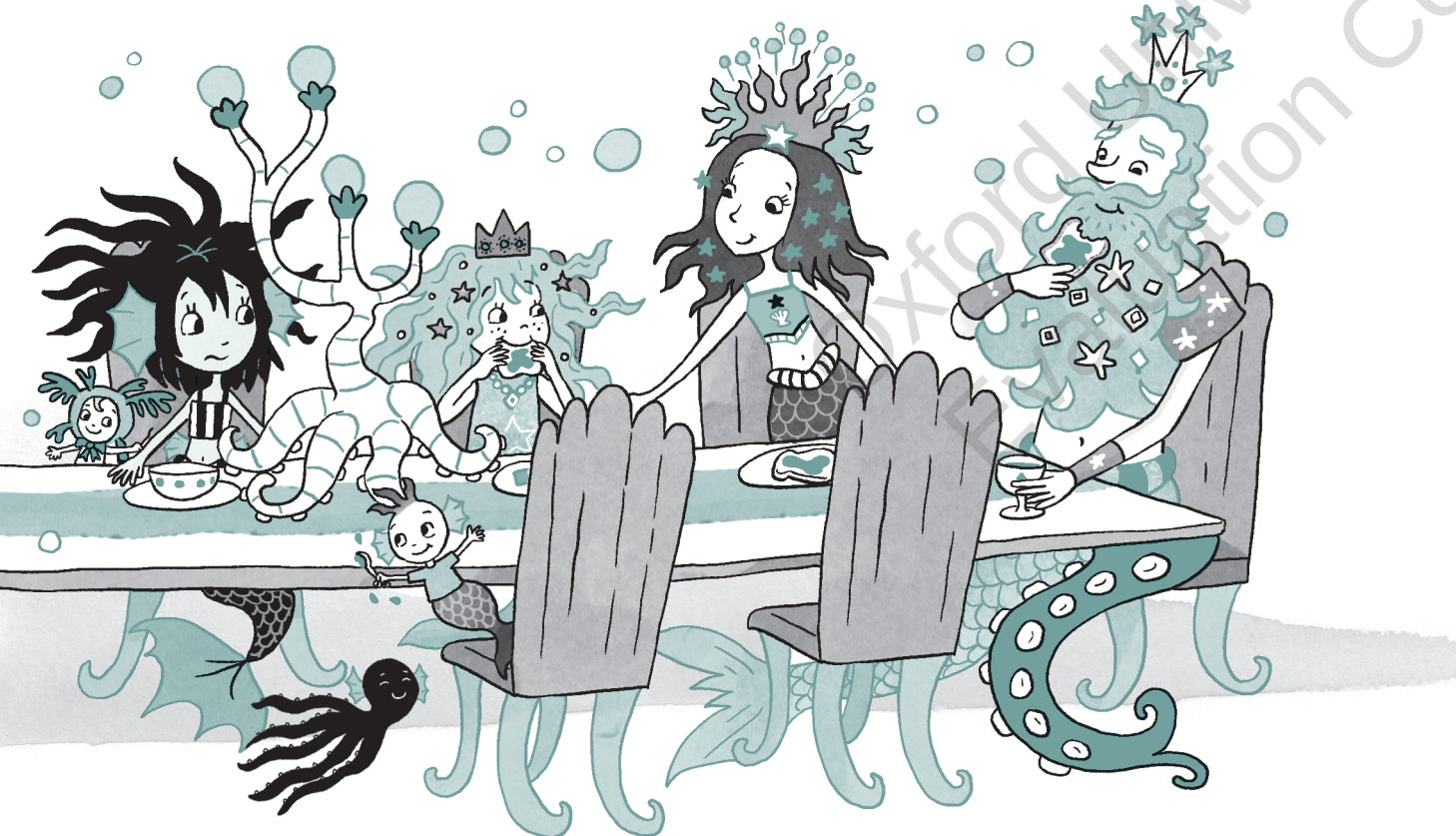
‘I’m looking forward to the show,’ said Mum, smiling. She then turned to me. ‘Have you decided what *you’re* going to perform for the celebration yet, Emerald? You know the final

rehearsal is *tonight!*’

‘Tonight?!’ I felt a sudden zing of anxiety ripple through my fins. Auster had been king for ten years, so there was going to be a huge party in Scallop City to celebrate. *Everyone* was invited. There was going to be a large stage in the centre of town for merchildren from different schools to perform on. I knew that as one of the princesses in the palace, I would be expected to perform *something*.

‘Erm . . . I’m still thinking about it!’ I said. I knew the celebration was a big deal for my stepdad, but I had no idea what I was going to do.

‘Well, how about a song?’ suggested



Mum. 'You have a lovely voice, Emerald.'

'That would be wonderful!' agreed King Auster, looking pleased.

'You can borrow one of my frilly, floaty tops!' said Delphina excitedly.

'Erm . . .' I began.

I really wasn't sure about *singing* in front of hundreds of merpeople. And I definitely wasn't sure about wearing one of Delphina's frilly, floaty tops. We have quite *different* styles.

'What will you sing?' asked Auster, before I'd had a chance to reply.

'Something tuneful and sweet?' suggested Mum. 'Something fit for a princess, seeing as it's going to be

a royal celebration! How about that Glimmerbubble song I keep hearing on the shell radio at the moment? You know the one. What's it called?

'Rainbow Dreams'!

'I LOVE Glimmerbubble!' shrieked Delphina. '*Everyone* loves Glimmerbubble!'

I stared at my family, my mouth open in shock.

Glimmerbubble?

'Rainbow Dreams'?

Did they not know me at *all*?

I *never* listen to Glimmerbubble.

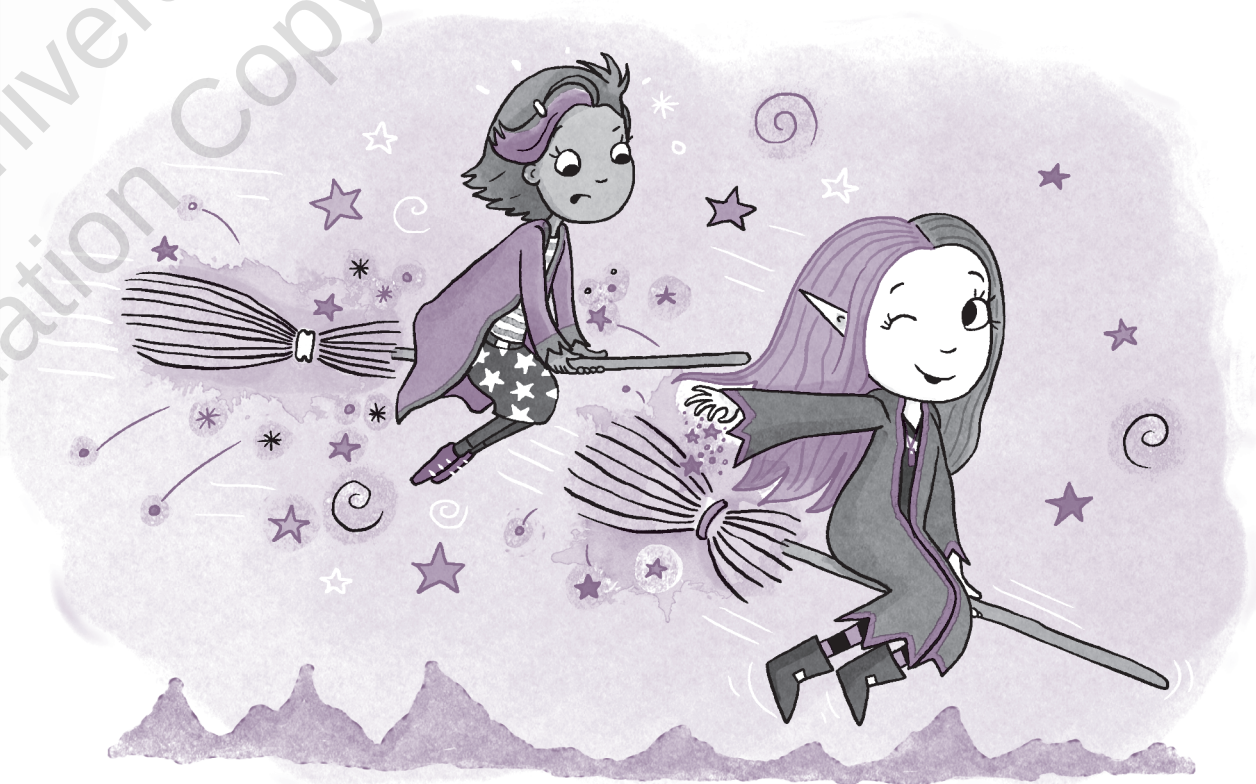
It just isn't *my* kind of music. It's far too light and . . . bubbly, like sweet,





MIRABELLE

and the Bitten
Catastrophe





‘Open your books at page three hundred and eleven!’ ordered our teacher. There was a riffing of paper as everyone in Miss Spindlewick’s class hurried to open their spell books at the right page. We were in the middle of a potions lesson and I was trying really hard to concentrate properly.

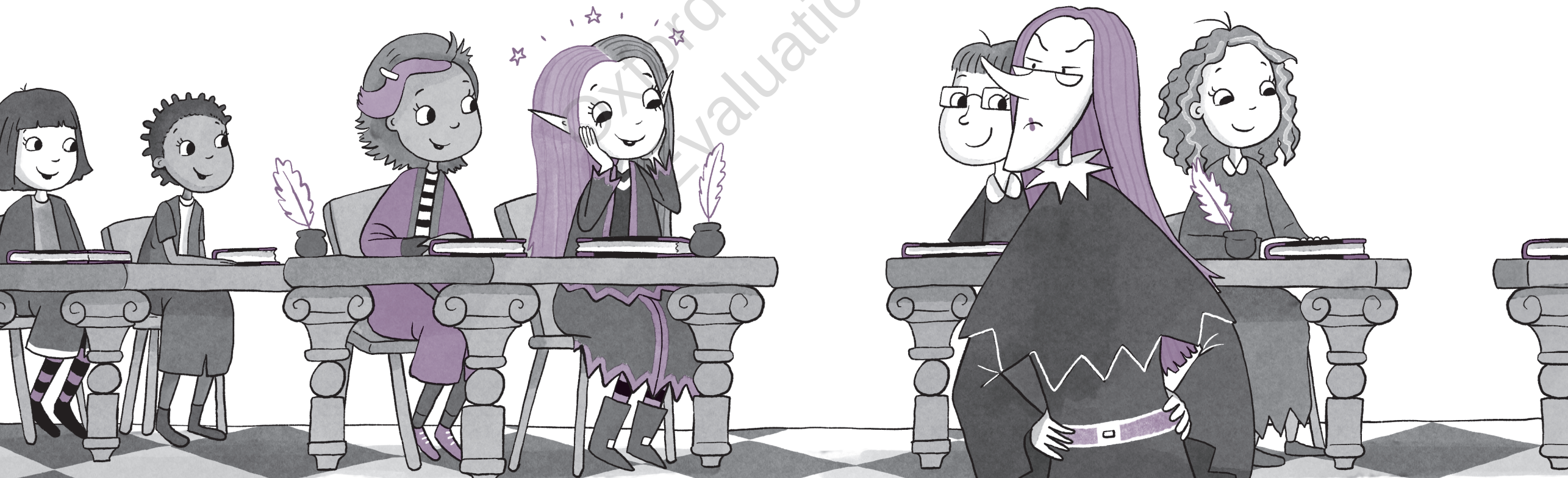
I *love* mixing potions—it's my absolute favourite thing to do at Miss Spindlewick's Witch School for Girls—but I *do* find it hard to stay focussed in class. Miss Spindlewick is very strict and she spends *ages* explaining how to do things, over and over again. She's always giving me very stern looks. It's almost as though she doesn't trust me . . .

I found the right page, glanced at the instructions, and gasped. We were going to magic up bittens! (Just temporary ones that would last a few hours.)

But still!

Bittens!

Bittens (bat-kittens) are my favourite animals, and I have only ever seen them in real life once before, when we went



on a school trip to the magical-creature sanctuary. They have big amethyst eyes and they are very cute and playful. They love chasing butterflies, which means that they are also very good at catching flies! Miss Spindlewick says that bittens are very useful for having around in the summer months when you are mixing potions in the garden.

I just wanted to get on with my potion, but Miss Spindlewick was *still* talking. 'I have a friend who accidentally mixed a fly into her hair-dye potion once,' she said. 'The potion went



completely wrong! She ended up with fuzzy bristles all over her head! A bitten would have kept the flies away.'

We all tried not to laugh, even though the story was quite funny. Miss Spindlewick doesn't really like laughter in the classroom.

'Let's get going on our potions then,' said Miss Spindlewick. 'You must follow the instructions in your spell book *very* carefully. It's a complicated spell, so there are a lot of steps.'

Carlotta and I grinned at each other. We were going to be working together, so we were sharing one spell book between us.

‘I really want to finish the potion first!’ I said.

‘The potion looks quite complicated ...’
Carlotta replied.



There *were* lots of steps and lots of ingredients. This was going to take ages, which made me feel a bit frustrated. I wanted a bat kitten *now*! If we were the

fastest potion makers, we would have more time to play with our bitten before the end of class.

‘Come on, Carlotta,’ I said, pulling her out of her chair. ‘Let’s go to the ingredients cupboard!’

