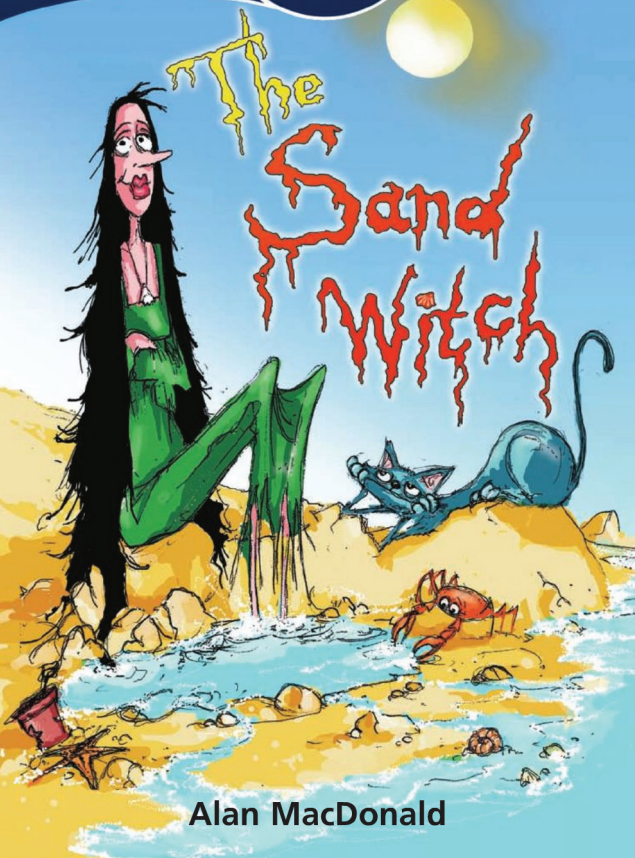




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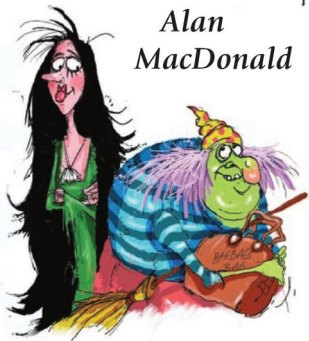
ALL
STARS



Alan MacDonald

The Sand Witch

Alan
MacDonald



Illustrated by
Chris Mould

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Contents

1 Hagbag	5
2 Make Yourself at Home	11
3 Squoozles	18
4 No Rest	25
5 Lucky Spots	28
About the author	32





Chapter 1

Hagbag



One morning, a letter arrived for Drusilla. It said:

THE SAND WITCH,
THE BLACK BEACH HUT
MUDLEY-ON-SEA

Drusilla opened it up.

"That's odd," she said to her cat, Peg.
"Where's the letter? There's only a crayon
in here."



The crayon jumped out of her hand.
It started writing on the wall.

"Oh, no! Not Hagbag!" groaned
Drusilla. "I hope she doesn't want to stay
for long."

All of a sudden, there was a puff of blue smoke. Hagbag had arrived. She was a large witch with three chins and purple hair.



“Drusilla, you old witch!” cackled Hagbag. She gave Drusilla a hug that nearly squeezed the life out of her.

Hagbag plumped herself down in Drusilla's rocking chair. Peg leapt off with a yowl.

"Scram, cat!" cried Hagbag.



She turned to Drusilla. "Now, what's for breakfast, ducky? I'm starving."

Hagbag sat at the table while Drusilla waited on her. She ate ten slices of toast and a whole jar of jellyfish jam. She drank six mugs of seaweed tea and gobbled all the crab cakes.

At last, Hagbag smacked her lips and said that she was full up.

"Now, ducky," she said. "What do you do for fun around here?"



"I'm afraid you'll be bored," said Drusilla. "It's so quiet by the sea."

"Perfect," said Hagbag. "I need a good rest. I may stay for a week."

Drusilla turned pale. Peg slunk out the door in a sulk. A whole *week*? How could they stand a whole week of Hagbag?





Chapter 2

Make Yourself at Home

Hagbag spent the next day lazing on the beach. She borrowed Drusilla's swimsuit. Somehow she squeezed herself into it. She settled into Drusilla's deckchair. Then she read Drusilla's new Spell Book.

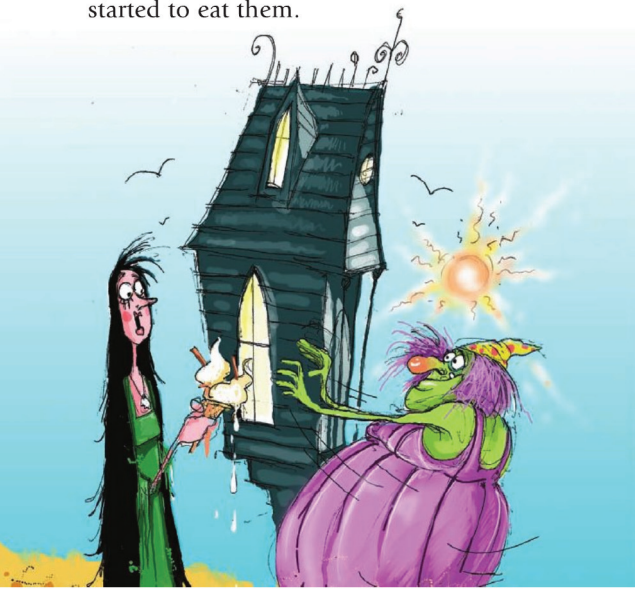
"Well, this *is* a treat," she said. "I'm going to like it here."

But after five minutes Hagbag was hungry.

"Do you know what I fancy?" she said.
"A nice ice-cream. Be a poppet and get
me one, Drusilla."

Drusilla walked all the way to the
shops. She carried back two dripping ices.
One for Hagbag and one for herself.

"Two? You *are* spoiling me!" said
Hagbag. She grabbed both the ices. She
started to eat them.



Drusilla and Peg watched her hungrily. Hagbag didn't even offer them a lick.

All day, Drusilla fetched and carried things for Hagbag. Every time she sat down, Hagbag would think of something else.

"Got any sun cream, ducky?" she'd ask.

Or, "Did I hear you
say tea?"



By the end of the day, Drusilla was worn out. It was a relief when Hagbag said she was ready for bed. She started to climb the stairs to Drusilla's bedroom.

"Where are you going?" asked Drusilla.

"To bed of course, ducky!"

"But I've only got one hammock ..."

began Drusilla.

"Don't worry, that'll do me fine. Night night, Drusie. Sleep tight!"

Hagbag got into Drusilla's pyjamas. She climbed into Drusilla's hammock.

Soon, the whole hut shook with the sound of her horrible snoring.



Drusilla put her fingers in her ears.
Peg hid his head under a cushion.
It was no good. There was no chance
of any sleep with Hagbag
in the house.



"That settles it, Peg," said Drusilla.
"We've got to get rid of her. The question
is, how?"

Drusilla's Spell Book lay on the table.
Peg leapt on top of it.

He miaowed loudly.



"Of course, you clever cat!" said Drusilla. "We'll make a spell to drive Hagbag away."

Drusilla looked through her Spell Book. Could she turn Hagbag into a large brown rat? Maybe not. Hagbag might move in forever and nibble all her food.

Drusilla went on turning the pages. At last, she found the spell she was looking for.

“Perfect!” she said. “We’ll make her think she’s got the Squoozles. And I know just how to do it.”

All night, Drusilla was mixing something in her big pot and singing her spell.





Chapter 3

Squoozles

Next morning, Hagbag came downstairs. There was a surprise waiting for her. On the table was a cake.

It looked like any ordinary cake, except that it had green spots.

"A cake! For me?" said Hagbag, licking her lips greedily.

She took a closer look. "Should it be green?" she asked, doubtfully.

"Oh, yes," said Drusilla. "But I'll eat it myself if you don't want it."

"No, no!" said Hagbag, quickly. "I'll try a little piece."

She cut herself a fat slice and took a bite. "Mmm," she said, with her mouth full. "Not bad."



She cut herself a second slice even bigger than the first. That went into her mouth. So did a third slice and a fourth.

Before long, only a few crumbs were left on the plate. Hagbag had scoffed the whole cake – just as Drusilla knew she would.



In the cake was Drusilla's spell. And now the magic started to do its work.



Hagbag's face turned yellow. Then it went a deep shade of pink.



More and more spots started to appear on her face.

Large, green spots, like those on the cake.



Soon, she was covered in spots.

Hagbag pulled out a purple hanky. She saw her hand. "Spots!" she shrieked in horror. "I've got spots!"

She sat down. "I don't feel too well, ducky," she said.



Drusilla tried not to smile. She gave Hagbag a mirror so that she could see herself.



"I'm afraid you've got the Squoozles," said Drusilla.

"The Squoozles? Odds frogs! What's that?"

"Nasty spots," said Drusilla. "Your legs go wobbly and your knees go knobbly. I expect you want to go straight home."

"Home?" croaked Hagbag. "But I'll be all on my own at home!"

"But ..." said Drusilla.

"No, no. I'm staying here till I'm better," said Hagbag. "You can look after me."

Hagbag crept upstairs.

Drusilla put a hand to her head. What had she done? Her spell had made things much worse. A healthy Hagbag was bad enough. A Hagbag who thought she was ill would be unbearable!





Chapter 4

No Rest

At first, Hagbag said she was too hot. Drusilla opened all the windows. Soon, Hagbag was too cold. She wanted the windows closed.

Her stomach ached, her toes tingled, and her head throbbed. The sun was too bright. The hammock was too hard. The seagulls made too much noise.

One minute she was hungry. The next she wanted a drink.

So it went on all day. Hagbag gave orders and Drusilla dashed up and down the stairs.



At long last, Drusilla heard the sound of snoring. Hagbag had fallen asleep.

Drusilla crept downstairs. She had never felt so tired in her life. She hadn't even had time to eat a meal.

She cleared Hagbag's dirty plates from the table. One of the plates had a few crumbs left on it.

Drusilla hungrily tipped them into her mouth. She sat down in her chair and closed her eyes.

The crumbs in her mouth tasted like cake. Sleepily, she remembered what kind of cake it was. Green spotted cake! The cake that she'd baked for Hagbag.





Chapter 5

Lucky Spots

In the morning, Hagbag bounded downstairs.

"I'm better, ducky," sang Hagbag. "The spots have gone. I may even stay for two weeks ... " She broke off and stared at Drusilla.

Her mouth had dropped open.

"What's the matter?" asked Drusilla.

"The spots! The Squoozles!" gasped Hagbag.

"They're all gone. You're better," said Drusilla.

"Not me! *You*, Drusilla! You've caught the Squoozles!"



Drusilla looked in her mirror. It was true. Her face was covered in bright green spots. The crumbs of cake she'd eaten had been enough to work the spell.

Hagbag backed away from her.

"You poor old thing! What a shame!
I'd love to stay longer but those
Squoozles are obviously catching."
She grabbed her bag.

"Bye, bye, Drusie, I must fly!"

There was a puff of blue smoke.



Hagbag vanished as suddenly as she'd
arrived.

Drusilla went upstairs to her very own bedroom. She climbed into her very own hammock. She didn't mind having spots. They would only last a day.

All that mattered was that Hagbag had gone.

Peg jumped up on to her lap. He started to purr. Drusilla smiled.

It was going to be a quiet day in Mudley-on-Sea.



About the author

I've always enjoyed writing stories for as long as I can remember.

Often I'm asked, "Where do you get your ideas from?" The answer is from everywhere. (Or sometimes out of nowhere.)

Drusilla came from thinking about the word "sandwich", which is a funny word when you think about it. I started to imagine what a Sand Witch might look like and what she would do.





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The Sand Witch



Poor Drusilla and Peg have an unwanted guest. Greedy old Hagbag has arrived for a holiday. They need a spell to send Hagbag back home.

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