

A school for monsters is no place for an ordinary girl!

MONSTACADEMY

The Halloween Parade



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MONSTACADEMY
THE HALLOWEEN PARADE

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CHAPTER 1

The Letter

To most children, their school seems perfectly ordinary. I imagine that yours is the same. I bet that when you turned up for school this morning there was little chance of you bumping into a Werewolf. There are probably not many Vampires in your class. The chance of you sitting next to a Ghost or Banshee in maths is, I would guess, very remote.

This was also true of St. Agatha's Primary School. St Agatha's was a lovely, small school with a tree-lined playing field and with just enough children to keep it interesting but not quite enough to be big and scary. Until recently, St Agatha's had been the school of nine and three quarter year-old Trixie Grimble.

It had all started with a letter, as these things so

often do. This particular letter had arrived at the beginning of July in a neat brown envelope with a lovely, handwritten address on the front and was stamped with the mark of Wexbridge Borough Council. It was plainly labelled for the attention of Trixie Grimble. However, Trixie's mum, upon finding the letter lying there on the doormat, had done what mothers so often do when they think that they know best. She had opened it herself.

Dear Miss Grimble,

We are so sorry to inform you that due to budget cuts at Wexbridge Borough Council we are closing St. Agatha's Primary School.

However, please do not panic. We have been able to find you a place at Monroe's Academy for the Different. We do hope that you enjoy your time there. They are very much looking forward to welcoming you into their halls.

Yours sincerely

Mr Bothwold-Oxelton

Mr Bothwold-Oxelton

P.S. In order to make up for this terrible inconvenience, I have enclosed a coupon for a year's supply of toilet paper from Keith's Toilet Emporium on the High Street.

Well, you can imagine the scream that Mrs Grimble let out upon reading the letter. It quite disturbed Mrs Burbage, the nosey next-door neighbour who was stood near to the open kitchen window listening for titbits of information whilst pretending to trim her bush.

Trixie had been peacefully sleeping in her bedroom when her mum's shriek had echoed through the house and rudely woken her from a lovely dream. Leaping from her bed and racing down the stairs, nearly tripping over her ancient and overweight pet cat, Snot, in the process, Trixie found her mum in quite the tizz.

"What is it, Mum?" she asked sleepily. "Is that a letter? It's addressed to me!" she shouted, suddenly awake and noticing the open and now empty brown envelope slowly soaking in a bowl of cereal where her mum had dropped it. It had been torn neatly along the top edge. Trixie snatched the note from her mum's unresisting hand and read it for herself.

"Monroe's Academy for the Different?" Trixie

gasped, not believing the evidence in front of her very nose. “I can’t go there, and you can’t make me! You do know what they call it, don’t you? Monstacademy!” she continued, quite agitated because, quite rightly, nobody likes moving to a new school.

Trixie loved her mum in the way that all children do, and she was sure that her mum loved her back in her own way. They had never been very close preferring to go about their business on their own and occasionally meeting up for dinner in the kitchen. Trixie had long believed that her mother would prefer it if they both had separate houses to themselves and didn’t get under each other’s feet so often. Now, it seemed, she would get her wish.

Trixie had quite a nice group of friends at St Agatha’s, and she didn’t really think that she needed any new ones. Certainly none that went to Monstacademy! And what was worse was that Monroe’s Academy for the Different was just that. It was a school for the different.

Now, when you or I think about people that

are different, we might think of somebody who is considerably shorter or very much taller than most or who might have a head full of vivid purple hair or perhaps who has a large boil on the end of their nose just waiting to be popped or maybe even somebody who looks a little bit like a potato.

That is not the type of different child that Monroe's Academy for the Different usually takes in. You see, Monstacademy was really very different indeed. Many of the pupils who attended were what you or I might call the supernatural.

Wait, I hear you asking, do you mean that there is a school for superheroes and those with special powers?

Were you to ask me that question I would simply scoff and say, "Of course not, that is ridiculous!" Instead, Monstacademy is a school for those of a spookier nature such as Vampires, Werewolves and even the odd Witch or Wizard.

Trixie was all too aware of the type of people that attended Monstacademy. There were always rumours at school about how their Vampire pupils

would be sent down into the village for sucking practise or the Bogie-boys and -girls would be instructed to hide under the beds of normal boys and girls to practise making them scream with fear. She didn't like it one bit.

“You know as well as I do that I've wanted to get Trixie into a boarding school for a long time. I never meant somewhere like this, though! I had high hopes for Snufflingberrys or Blimpingtons. They'll drink her blood and turn her into a zombie! What will the neighbours think if she's off flying around all night as a bat?” her mother had sobbed to her boyfriend Rob when he'd returned home from work on that fateful day.

Trixie's dad had run away with his rock band when she was tiny and her mum's current boyfriend, Rob, had been living with them for a year now. Trixie didn't like him one bit. His company manufactured toothbrush bristles. Rob's job was to sell them to all sorts of companies in all sorts of exotic countries, and he often spent days away from home. He was also the sort of adult who

thought he was really good at talking to children, but in fact he was boring and patronising and didn't actually like spending any time with them. He'd made this very clear when Trixie overheard him talking to her mum on the stairs one evening, a few days after the letter had arrived.

"Now listen," he'd began, reassuringly, "I'm going to be working away a lot for the next year, and you don't really want to be left alone to look after a growing girl, do you? Monstacademy is a boarding school. She'll be living there. You'll have all that time for yourself. You know how you've always wanted the time to train a cat circus? Well, now you'll have that time! Besides, she'll be much better off around other children. She'll get bored here just you two."

"Well, there is that. In a way it would be kinder to send her. But what about the other children? I've heard that they have Vampires and Zombies and everything else there. They might try to suck her blood!"

"Well, everyone needs a hobby, dear," he'd

replied, clearly unconcerned about Trixie's neck or the threat of eternal damnation. "Besides, those are just rumours. It's probably just a few extra hairy kids and some of those moody ones that like to wear black and listen to depressing music. You know the ones I mean..."

"Teenagers?" offered her mum.

"Yeah probably," Rob trailed off, distracted by a most terribly important business call on his mobile phone.

And that had been that. Rob had persuaded her mum that a little time to herself would be a good thing. In the end, even though she was never comfortable with Trixie mixing with what her mother had called "their sort", she'd decided that having her out of the house was worth the risk. She'd even spent time looking for kittens that looked suitably athletic. Trixie's displeasure had only been matched by Snot's who now spent most of his time on top of the fridge in protest.

"You'll make lots of new and exciting friends!" her mum had argued after one particularly bad

fight.

“But, Mum,” she’d wailed, “I am nearly ten years old, I’m pretty sure I’ve got all the friends I’ll ever need!”

So it had continued throughout the summer. Eventually the holidays had drawn to an end, uniforms and equipment had been bought and Trixie soon found herself stood at the front door to her new life.



Comprehension Questions

Pages 1 - 2

1. In the opening paragraph, what effect does the use of second person have on you as a reader?
2. Who are you not likely to meet in your classroom?
3. What was the name of Trixie's first school?
4. What does the description of St. Agatha's tell you about the school?
5. Find a word that has a definition close to "a specific item".
6. When did the letter arrive?
7. Find the sentence that begins, "However, Trixie's mum, upon finding the letter...". What does this sentence tell you about her personality?
8. Why did St. Agatha's school close?
9. Why does the letter tell Trixie not to panic? Why might she panic?
10. What type of word is "inconvenience" in this context?
11. What did Mr Bothwold-Oxleton offer to Trixie?

Pages 3 - 4

12. Why do you think Mrs Grimble screamed when she read the letter?
13. What does the description of Mrs Burbage tell you about her?
14. What does the phrase "rudely woken" mean?
15. Find a word that tells you how old the cat Snot is.
16. Where had the envelope fallen?
17. What does the word "unresisting" tell you?
18. Why do you think the school is nicknamed Monstacademy?
19. How does the author feel about moving school? How do you know?
20. Write a paragraph summarising Trixie and her mother's relationship
21. How does the author use Trixie's thoughts to explain their relationship?
22. How do you think that the school is different to normal schools?

Pages 5 - 6

23. What does the word “vivid” tell you about the purple hair?
24. What might you consider to be different, according to the story?
25. Find a word that has a definition close to “went to”.
26. Find the paragraph that starts, “Wait, I hear you ask”. This is a narrator’s voice. What effect does it have on you as a reader?
27. Write a definition for “rumour”.
28. What type of things had Trixie heard the monsters did?
29. Find the sentence starting “What will the neighbours...”. What does this tell you about Trixie’s mum’s personality?
30. What does the company do that Rob works for?

Pages 7 - 9

31. Write a definition for “patronising”.
32. Which word means that Trixie heard something she shouldn’t have?
33. What do you think a cat circus would be like? What kind of things would the cats do?
34. Which word is a synonym for “convinced”?
35. Why is Trixie’s mum looking for athletic kittens?
36. Why is Snot annoyed?
37. The chapter ends with “at the front door to her new life”. Where is the front door?
38. Write a short story predicting what you think will happen on Trixie’s first day.

Comprehension Answers

Pages 1- 2

1. It draws the reader in and puts them in the story
2. Werewolves, Vampires, Ghosts or Banshees
3. St. Agatha's Primary School
4. It was just the right size, lovely and pretty.
5. Particular
6. The beginning of July
7. She is nosey and thinks she knows best
8. Budget cuts
9. Because her school is closing and she doesn't know where she is going to go
10. Noun
11. A year's supply of toilet paper

Pages 3 - 4

12. She was worried about her child going to a new school/she knew what the school was like
13. She is nosey/likes to listen to other people's conversations
14. It woke her abruptly/suddenly/not in a nice way
15. Ancient
16. Into a bowl of cereal
17. Trixie's mum wasn't holding on to the envelope tightly/didn't put up a fight
18. Any explanation with a good reason is acceptable
19. The author thinks that children don't like it, and that this is quite right
20. Any summary that talks about them not being very close emotionally
21. Trixie thinks about how they aren't close and how she believed her mother wanted them to have separate lives
22. Any prediction that talks about the name Monstacademy and possibly containing monsters is acceptable

Pages 5 - 6

23. It is bright and stands out
24. Somebody who is taller or shorter, who has a head of purple hair, who has a boil on their nose or who looks like a potato
25. Attended
26. Any explanation that talks about how you feel as a reader
27. A piece of information that doesn't have any evidence or isn't proven true
28. Sent down to the village for sucking practise or to hide under children's beds to scare them
29. She cares a lot about what other people think
30. Manufacture toothbrush bristles

Pages 7 - 9

31. Talking down to
32. Overheard
33. Any suitable prediction with an explanation is acceptable
34. Persuaded
35. For her cat circus
36. The idea of new kittens in the house
37. Monstacademy