

Teachers' Notes by Meredith Costain

MONSTERS

by

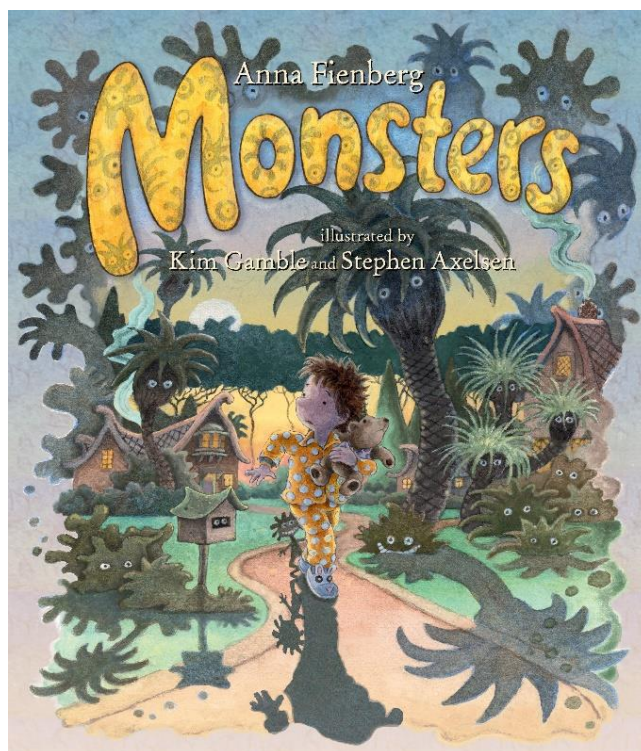
**Anna Fienberg, illustrated by Kim Gamble
and Stephen Axelsen**

ISBN 9781760293369

Recommended for ages 4 – 8 yrs and older

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Introduction.....	2
Creator biographies	2
Sharing the illustration	3
Discussion questions & activities	5
The reality of fairy tales	5
Irrational fears.....	5
Visual literacy	6
Creative writing & art activities	6
Create your own monster.....	7
Letter writing.....	7
About the writer	7
Blackline masters	8
Sample letter.....	8
Write & illustrate a monster story.....	9
Colouring in.....	10
Word games and quiz	14



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INTRODUCTION

A delightful new picture book by the popular creators of *Tashi*. Its themes include: humour, monsters, night-fears, loneliness, courage, and above all, the power of friendship.

STORY SUMMARY

Tildy knew there were monsters. They sailed in from outside and hid behind the curtains. Moonlight brought them in. Tildy hated moonlight. Mum and Dad said there were no such things. Her aunt and uncle couldn't see them, and when Tildy wrote to her twenty-three cousins about monsters, only one wrote back saying she shouldn't eat spicy food before bedtime.

Then a new boy came to school. Hendrik drew pages and pages of monsters when the class was writing numbers. He had a way of dealing with his monsters.

When Tildy dares to stay over at Hendrik's house, she panics when the moon rises ... but together they make the night safe, and Tildy can watch the moon sail through the starry sky.

HOW THE BOOK WAS CREATED

Monsters is much-loved illustrator Kim Gamble's final book. He began work on it in 2015, after being diagnosed with cancer. The story is set in Kim's childhood garden, where as a child he would lie for hours on his back looking up at the clouds, seeing ships and dragons, giants and monsters.

The illustrations were completed by his lifelong friend, Stephen Axelsen, after Kim died of cancer in 2016. You can find out more about how this came about – and read heartfelt tributes to Kim from Stephen and Anna, the author of the story – in the endpapers at the end of the book.

CREATOR BIOGRAPHIES

ANNA FIENBERG

Anna Fienberg grew up in a house filled with books. Her mother was a teacher librarian who relished stories as much as chocolates. 'On Sunday mornings, we'd all lie in bed with our books, lost in magical wardrobes, witches' spells, international spy rings ...What we were going to read next was just as important in our family as what was for lunch!' says Anna.

Anna started writing stories when she was eight, but never imagined being an author. After studying psychology at university, she worked as a freelance writer for magazines before scoring what she considered to be the best job in the world, working for the NSW *School Magazine*. As well as getting the opportunity to read over 1000 books a year, she wrote reviews and articles, stories and plays. It is also where she first met the artist Kim Gamble, who illustrated her first book: *The Magnificent Nose and Other Marvels*, winner of the CBCA Book of the Year for Younger Readers. Since then, Anna and Kim have worked on over 30 books together.



KIM GAMBLE

Kim Gamble was born in Sydney in 1952. He trained as a teacher and worked in a variety of occupations before beginning, at the age of thirty-six, to illustrate stories for children. His first assignment was for the *School Magazine*, and he continued illustrating stories for the magazine for many years. It was there he met Anna Fienberg, with whom he has since produced more than twenty books, including *The Magnificent Nose and Other Marvels*, the Tashi series and Tashi picture books, the Minton series and a book close to his heart: *Joseph*. The Tashi books have been translated into over twenty languages and adapted for television.

Kim has also illustrated books for other authors, including *First Day* by Margaret Wild, *Victor's Quest* and *Victor's Challenge* by Pamela Freeman and *Arabella* by Wendy Orr.

All his life Kim was interested in drawing, painting, reading, music, gardens, walking and making things. He described himself as fairly relaxed, loving, curious, grateful, a bit confused and often happy, especially when the pictures flowed, and he considered Odilon Redon and Marc Chagall to be truly 'great artists'.

Kim illustrated over 70 books during his long career. Children's literature specialist Judith Ridge described Kim as being 'one of the greatest children's book illustrators this country has ever produced'. He died in February 2016.



STEPHEN AXELSEN



Stephen's first book was published in 1975. During his time working for the *School Magazine* he illustrated many cartoon series written by Cassandra Golds. *The Nelly Gang*, his own cartoon series for the magazine, was later expanded into a book of the same name, along with another series with Cassandra, *The Mostly True Adventures of Matthew and Trim*. His other books include *Whatever Happened to Humpty?* and the *Piccolo* and *Annabelle* series.

Stephen writes: 'I grew up a serious and studious boy and did exactly as I was told. But I was always secretly drawing during classes at school and later in university. Then, without any training or plan, I began illustrating and writing books for children. To my amazement this became a proper job. Fantasy and humour are the things I like best, and I have a great fondness for graphic novels, and monsters of course. I live by the beach in a pleasant swamp with my wife Jen, old dog and scaredy grey cat in the far north of New South Wales.'

A note from Stephen Axelsen about taking over the illustrations:

'Kim had finished the first half of the *Monsters* illustrations when he stopped work, three days before he died. When he realised that he couldn't go on he asked his sister Wendy to ask me and his two daughters to finish the illustrations. Kim's daughters were happy for me to fulfil the task. Initially I agreed without much thought, feeling greatly honoured.

Much thought came later, and doubts. Would my work be good enough to do Kim and Anna's story justice? Could I make the pictures in the book look like the work of one person? I didn't want my half to look like it was stuck on with sticky tape. Also, to make things harder for me, Kim had left no roughs (preparatory drawings) for the second half of the book. (Normally an illustrator does roughs for the whole book before starting on the finished art).

Kim's illustrations were done in watercolour – brushes, paper and paint. I had not illustrated this way for ten years, using my computer instead. I had to see if I still knew how to hold a brush and to mix colours.

But Kim and I did have similar techniques of drawing and painting, and a similar sense of humour and adventure. My confidence grew as I went on. Also, I consulted Kim in a couple of dreams, in which he said that I was doing fine and that I should relax. Phew.

It was a Very Unusual Commission, sad and lovely at the same time. In a way, Kim was my mentor, as far back as primary school. Even then he was obviously a drawing prodigy. I'm not sure that I would have kept drawing if it weren't for Kim. For decades, I'd looked forward to seeing what he was working on next, and to visiting his wonderfully colourful and exciting studios.

Many years ago, we decided to make a book together. It was going to be called *The Big Book of Monster Poems* and it was going to be fantastic and win all the awards. This would make us rich as kings and popular wherever we went. But we became too busy with other work and raising our beautiful, expensive babies.

So, *Monsters* is our collaboration, at last. Not in the way we wanted it to be, of course. I must give enormous thanks to Anna for her unswerving confidence that I could finish the job, and to Kim's girls too.'



Illustration shows the process involved in Stephen adapting Kim's Tildy to a pose of his own.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

THE REALITY OF FAIRY TALES

Help students to make a distinction between imaginary stories (fairy tales, fables, monster stories) and reality.

1. Find examples of other books for this age-group that feature monsters and imaginary beasts:

- *Where the Wild Things Are*: Maurice Sendak
- *Mr Mo Starts to Grow*: Laura Stitzel
- *Leonardo, the Terrible Monster*: Mo Willems
- *A Monster Wrote Me a Letter*: Nick Bland
- *Monster Chef*: Nick Bland
- *Go to Bed, Monster*: Natasha Wing
- *There's a Monster Under My Bed*: James Howe and David S Rose
- *Polly and Buster*: Sally Rippin
- *The Gruffalo*: Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler
- *The Big Monster Snoreybook*: Leigh Hodgkinson

2. Question the 'reality' of images on a page:

- Are the monsters you see in *Monsters* and other books real?
- If someone draws something (like Hendrik does in *Monsters*) does that make it real? Or is still only in their imagination?
- Are the monsters real to some people, but not others? What kind of people would think they were real?
- How do you know that a drawing is of a made-up monster, rather than a real animal?

3. Ask:

- Which other stories do you know where someone uses a sword or other weapon to slay a monster? Do you think they would be able to do this in real life? What might happen to them if they did?
- Tildy takes a 'real-world' object – a large and heavy Oxford dictionary – out to the garden with her in case she is surrounded by lurking monsters. Do you think she would actually use it? What does she end up using it for instead? Why?
- If you were writing your own story about protecting yourself from monsters, what would you take with you?

IRRATIONAL FEARS

1. Talk to students about their 'imaginary fears'. Ask:

- What things make you scared? Maybe it's the dark. Or strange noises at night. Perhaps you're worried that there might be monsters or creepy creatures lurking under the bed or in your wardrobe.

Are all these things real? Or do they come from your imagination?

- What are some good ways to overcome fears?

Do you share your worries and fears with a best friend? Or talk to your mum or dad about them?

Or maybe you could draw pictures of the things that scare you, or write about them in a journal.

You could even make a comfy play area in your wardrobe or under your bed and invite any nearby monsters to visit!

VISUAL LITERACY

1. Look at the cover image. Notice how the illustrator has drawn the everyday objects (trees, plants, houses, the letterbox, shadows).

- How do these make you feel?
- Why do you think he has drawn them this way?
- Why do you think the boy is wearing pyjamas?
- What do you think this book will be about?

CREATIVE WRITING AND ART ACTIVITIES

CREATE YOUR OWN MONSTERS!

There are many kinds of monsters in this book. You can find them lolling about on cushions, reading Tildy's books, waiting behind curtains, peeping down hallways or hiding in the garden.

- How many monsters can you find on each page?

Draw some monsters of your own. These could be:

- fierce monsters
- friendly monsters
- funny monsters
- sad monsters

Give your monsters names.

LETTER-WRITING

[A [sample letter](#) is provided as a handout on page 8.]

Tildy writes a letter to her many cousins with a list of questions about monsters.

Write your own letter requesting information about monsters.

- Who will you send it to? (You will need to know their address.)
- What kinds of questions would you put in it?

Use this template for your letter:

1.	Your name
2.	Your address
3.	The date
4.	For formal letters -The address of the person you are writing to. For more friendly letters, this is not necessary.
5.	Dear ... (the name of the person you are writing to)
6.	Your message...
7.	A closing e.g. Yours sincerely
8.	Your signature

WRITE AND ILLUSTRATE YOUR OWN MONSTER STORY

- [Guidelines for students](#) are provided as a handout on page 9 of these notes.

ACTIVITY SHEETS

- [Colouring sheets](#) for students are on pages 10 – 14.
- [Word-based activities and a quiz](#) occupy the final pages of these notes.

ABOUT THE WRITER OF THESE NOTES

Meredith Costain grew up in West Gippsland, Victoria. Her love of writing and reading stories and poems began there, as did her love of animals. After school and university, Meredith taught English and then travelled for some time. Back in Victoria, she returned to teaching and also played in rock and blues bands. At this time, she began writing stories for students and was published in Pursuit, Challenge, Explore and Comet magazines. Eventually, Meredith decided to become a full-time writer.

Meredith has written numerous picture books, chapter books, novels and information books for young readers, and has also written many educational and literacy books for students and teachers. She continues to love writing poetry and short stories, too. She lives in an inner-city suburb of Melbourne with her partner and a cat, two dogs, seven chooks, seven goldfish and several stray possums, lizards, flying foxes, parrots and bush rats. Besides writing, she still loves playing blues piano.

Here is an example of a letter:

Sam Agnelli
36 Mushin Drive
Collingwood VIC 3066

10th May 2018

Dear Anna Fienberg,

I have just read **MONSTERS**, about Tildy who is afraid of monsters. We read it in Ms Panna's class at school.

I really liked your book. My little brother is afraid of monsters under his bed. I'm going to try to help him the way Hendrik helped Tildy. I'll let you know if it works!

Were you afraid of monsters when you were little? I bet Kim Gamble and Stephen Axelsen were because they draw **REALLY** good ones. I especially like the picture of all the monsters hiding in the bamboo.

I hope you are well. It's sad that your friend Kim is dead.

Yours sincerely,


Sam Agnelli

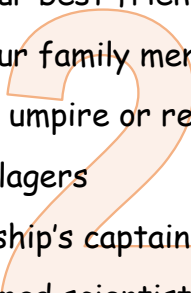
Write and illustrate your own monster story!

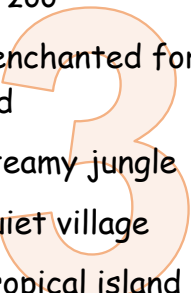
What will your story be about? Choose an IDEA for your story from Box 1, or think up your own.

Who will be in your story? Choose some CHARACTERS for your story from Box 2, or invent your own.

Where will your story take place? Choose a SETTING for your story from Box 3, or think up your own.

- 
- Taking a group of noisy monsters to the zoo
 - Inviting a monster home for dinner
 - Playing football or basketball against a team of monsters
 - Saving a village from fierce, marauding monsters
 - Being shipwrecked on an island full of monsters
 - Creating a monster in a science laboratory

- 
- You
 - Your best friend(s)
 - Your family members
 - An umpire or referee
 - Villagers
 - A ship's captain and crew
 - A mad scientist
 - A firefighter
 - A TV news crew

- 
- Your home
 - The zoo
 - An enchanted forest or wood
 - A steamy jungle
 - A quiet village
 - A tropical island
 - A football ground or basketball stadium
 - A science laboratory

Some more things to think about ...

- What are some of the things that will happen in your story?
- How will your story end? Will it be happy or sad, scary or gruesome?

Now go ahead and write and illustrate your story.

Remember to use lots of *imagination!*

Colour in the picture
and tell the story!



Colour in the picture and tell the story!



Colour in the picture
and tell the story!

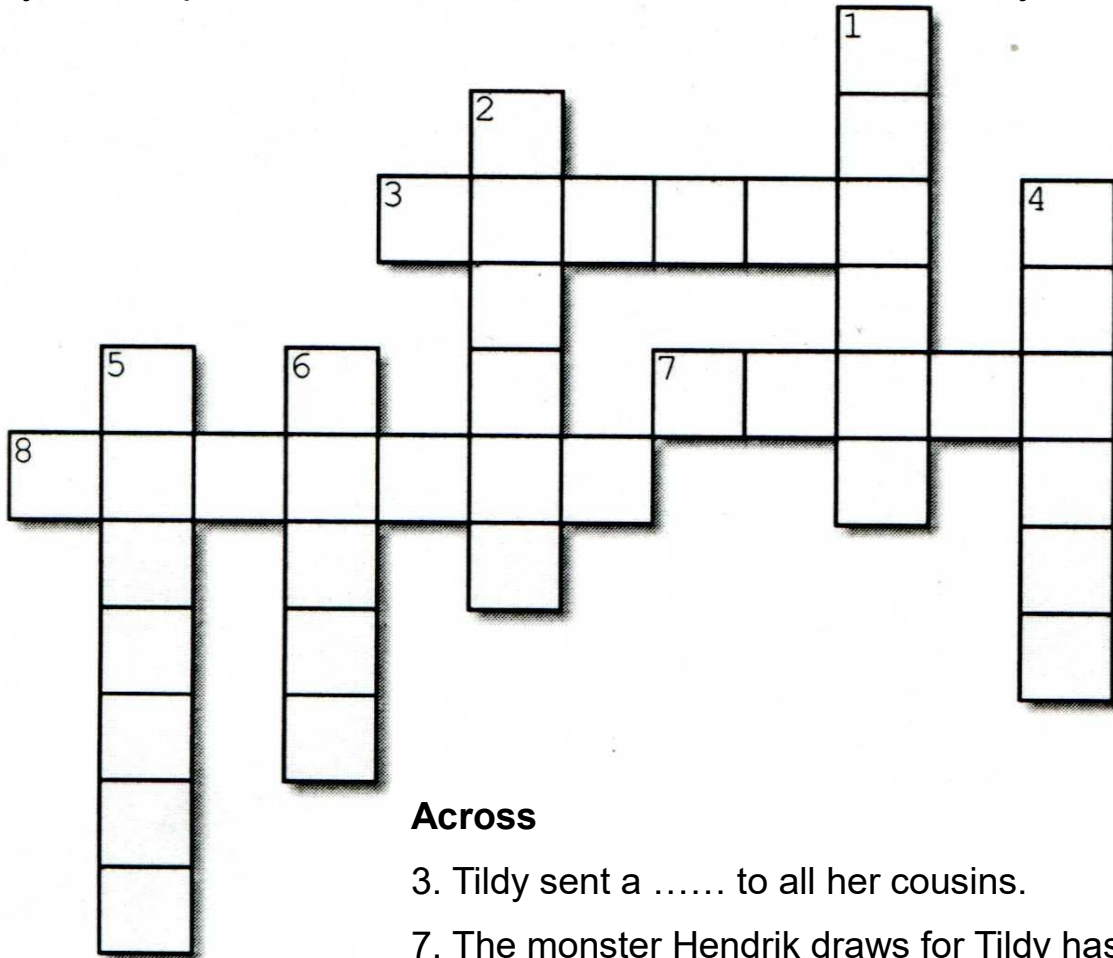


Colour in the picture
and tell the story!



CROSSWORD

Can you complete the crossword with words from the story?



Across

- 3. Tildy sent a to all her cousins.
- 7. The monster Hendrik draws for Tildy has wobbly
- 8. Hendrik draws with coloured

Down

- 1. Tildy and Hendrik camp out in Hendrik's
- 2. Tildy's aunt is called Aunt
- 4. Tildy looks for monsters in the azalea
- 5. Tildy's monsters hide in her
- 6. The moon at the end of the story is like a ship lighting up the

WORDSEARCH

WORDSEARCH

Can you find these words from the story in the wordsearch?

NOTE: They are printed forwards, backwards, up, down and diagonally.

AFRAID
AUNTS
AWFUL
BAMBOO
BEDROOM
BIG
BREEZE
CHAIRS
COUSINS
CRUMPLED
CURTAINS
DICTIONARY
DRAW
DREAMS
EXIST
EXPLORER
EYES
FATHER
FRIEND

GARDEN
GRASS
KNEES
MASKS
MONSTER
MONSTROUS
MOON
MOONLIGHT
MOTHER
NERVOUS
OUTSIDE
PAGE
PENCILS
PYJAMAS
QUESTIONS
SAILED
SCORPIONS
SCRUNCHE
SHADOWS

SHIP
SHIVERED
SKEDADDLED
SKY
SLEEP
SLINKY
SNAKY
SNICKERING
SPICY
STARRY
SUNDOWN
SUNSET
SWALLOWED
TOOTHBRUSH
TRAVELLED
WHISKER
WOBBLY
WORLD
WRIGGLY

WORDSEARCH

WORDSEARCH

N	Y	M	P	E	D	I	S	T	U	O	H	T	S	I	X	E	S	S	D
W	L	O	I	Y	S	C	O	R	P	I	O	N	S	S	F	P	T	T	N
O	B	O	G	K	F	Y	X	Y	S	O	E	R	L	L	N	M	N	A	E
D	B	N	M	N	G	Q	K	U	T	Q	Z	D	U	I	E	O	U	R	I
N	O	B	A	I	I	A	O	H	A	T	E	L	F	C	D	T	A	R	R
U	W	E	S	L	N	R	B	R	R	T	E	R	W	N	R	H	U	Y	F
S	T	D	K	S	T	R	E	A	O	S	R	O	A	E	A	E	R	K	S
D	T	R	S	S	U	K	V	K	N	L	B	W	P	P	G	R	E	R	H
C	S	O	N	S	S	E	D	I	C	T	I	O	N	A	R	Y	R	E	I
H	A	O	H	I	L	T	A	D	C	I	Q	O	S	E	G	P	O	H	V
A	M	M	H	L	P	T	E	H	S	D	N	B	V	A	E	E	L	T	E
I	A	W	E	I	R	W	D	N	E	Q	O	S	A	E	I	S	P	A	R
R	J	D	H	U	O	I	O	L	M	T	R	Y	L	M	K	L	X	F	E
S	Y	S	C	L	A	I	D	O	B	I	G	S	K	X	B	N	E	Y	D
S	P	K	L	R	T	D	N	S	W	O	D	A	H	S	S	O	E	D	K
U	S	A	F	S	A	S	P	D	E	H	C	N	U	R	C	S	O	E	Q
N	W	A	E	D	T	M	O	O	N	L	I	G	H	T	G	R	A	S	S
S	H	U	E	E	H	S	P	I	C	Y	X	C	R	U	M	P	L	E	D
E	Q	K	R	X	Y	L	G	G	I	R	W	S	U	O	V	R	E	N	M
T	S	C	O	U	S	I	N	S	L	W	A	R	D	R	E	A	M	S	E

Word Scramble

Can you unscramble the names of these different types of monsters?

1. AVRM**P**IE -----
2. IZBOME -----
3. ER**O**LEWF -----
4. MEIG**R**IN -----
5. SAN**B**EHE -----
6. OSLE**E**TPITRG -----
7. E**I**TY -----
8. ER**K**KAN -----
9. C**R**O -----

Write the bold letter from each word in the boxes below.

□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

10. Now unscramble the letters to find the name of a monster with the body of a lion, the head of a man, porcupine quills and the tail of a scorpion!



Answers:
1. vampire 2. zombie 3. werewolf 4. gremlin 5. banshee 6. poltergeist 7. yeti 8. kraken 9. orc 10. mantichore

SECRET CODE

Tildy knows that she likes Hendrik the first day she meets him. The reason why she feels this way has been written in a secret code.

Use the table below to help you crack the code and discover the reason.

Hint: Each letter of the alphabet has been replaced by a number, in reverse order.

SECRET CODE KEY

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18

J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9

S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	
8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	

The reason why Tildy likes Hendrik so much is because:

19 22	4 26 8	7 19 22	12 13 15 2	11 22 9 8 12 13
18 13	7 19 22	4 12 9 15 23	4 19 12	
16 13 22 4	7 19 22 9 22	4 22 9 22	14 12 13 8 7 22 9 8.	

Now use the code to write a secret message to a friend!

Psst!

Answer: He was the only person in the world who knew there were monsters.

WORD FIND

Tildy takes her father's big Oxford Dictionary to Hendrik's place in case she needs it to protect her against monsters in his garden.

Dictionaries are full of words! How many new words can you make using the letters in **DICTIONARY**?

RULES

1. You can only use a letter as many times as it is shown in the original word.
2. Each word must be at least three letters long.

DICTIONARY



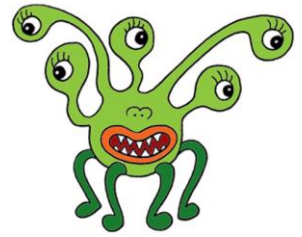
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

20 words = *Wonderworder!*

30 words = *Starworder!*

50 Words = *Legendworder!*

MONSTER QUIZ!



Can you answer these questions about the story?

- When Tildy's monsters came inside her house, they hid behind the ...
 - pot plants
 - curtains
 - door
- Tildy had aunts and uncles and twenty-three ...
 - grandparents
 - nephews and nieces
 - cousins
- Tildy's Aunt Beetle travels the world and brings back ...
 - shrunk heads and voodoo dolls
 - demon masks and dried scorpions
 - crocodile teeth and dragonfly wings
- If you eat spicy food before bed, you might have bad ...
 - dreams
 - stomach pains
 - tooth ache
- Tildy's teacher is called Mrs ...
 - Cheetah
 - Cheerleader
 - Chaseling
- When Tildy is invited to go camping at Hendrik's place, she packs her pyjamas, a toothbrush and ...
 - some DVDs
 - a book of fairy tales
 - an Oxford dictionary
- The first monster Tildy saw in Hendrik's garden was behind the ...
 - washing line
 - garden shed
 - hedge
- Tildy tells Hendrik she has to go home because her mother has ..
 - the measles
 - chicken pox
 - the Plague
- The monster that Hendrik draws for Tildy looks scared and ...
 - lonely
 - lovely
 - lost
- At the end of the story, Tildy decides she likes looking ...
 - in the mirror
 - at the moonlight
 - at the mountains

Answers
1. b 2. c 3. b 4. a 5. c 6. c 7. a 8. c 9. a 10. b