


TWENTY
QUESTIONS

School hadn't started yet, but Alexander was about to take a quiz. It wasn't a math quiz or a spelling quiz. It was a super-secret quiz about monsters. His two best friends, Rip and Nikki, had made it for him.



Alexander grabbed his pencil and got to work.

Super-secret MONSTER QUIZ!

NAME: Alexander Bopp NICKNAME: Salamander

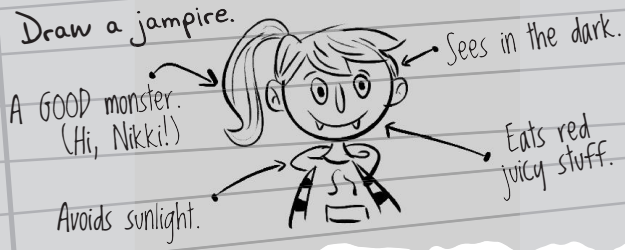
SHOE SIZE: 4½

BIRTHDAY: February 29

FAVORITE SOUP: Chicken noodle

1. Balloon goons suck air. True / False

2. Draw a jampire.



A GOOD monster.
(Hi, Nikki!)

Sees in the dark.

Eats red
juicy stuff.

Avoids sunlight.

He raced through the questions. *True! False! All of the above! Don't get eaten!* The quiz was totally easy, until he got to question #20.

20. What's the stinkiest monster in the notebook?

~~sewer slug~~ ~~cheese blaster~~
saber-toothed skunk?



DING! Rip hit a bell. “Time’s up, weenie!”

“Let’s see how you did!” said Nikki.

Rip, Nikki, and Alexander were the three members of the Super Secret Monster Patrol. They were hanging out in an old caboose in the woods: S.S.M.P. headquarters.

Alexander handed his quiz to Nikki.

“Nice work, Salamander,” she said. “You’re a grade-A monster-fighter. Or grade-A-minus, anyhow. You missed the last question.”

“Nuts,” said Alexander. “So, which monster is the stinkiest?”

Nikki held up an old notebook. It said S.S.M.P. on the cover, and its pages were full of monster drawings. She flipped it open and passed it to Alexander.



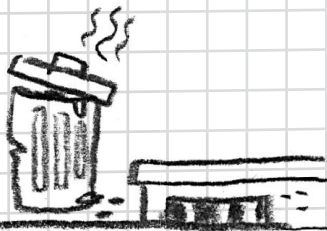


TRASH-SQUATCH

Walking heap of garbage.

HABITAT

Out at the curb,
every Tuesday.





BOOHOO! Nobody ever wants to hug a trash-squatch.



DIET

Banana peels, rotten eggs, fuzzy bread.

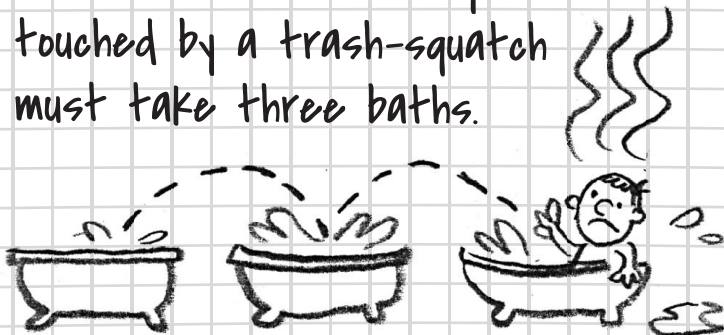
BEHAVIOR

These monsters smell like gym socks filled with ham salad.



WARNING!

Trash-squatches are **THE STINKIEST!** Anyone touched by a trash-squatch must take three baths.



“Of course!” said Alexander as he snapped the notebook shut. “Nothing stinks worse than a trash-squatch!”

“Except for the end of summer vacation,” said Rip. “I cannot believe we’re going back to school tomorrow.”

“Speak for yourself,” said Nikki. “I can’t *wait* for school to start. We’ll be in a brand-new building! With a brand-new teacher!”

“I guess so,” said Rip. “And I *will* be able to show off my awesome new shoes. They light up when I walk!”

“HEY, KIDDO!” sang a far-off voice. “DINNERTIME!”



“That’s my dad,” said Alexander, tossing the notebook in his backpack. “Gotta go! See you tomorrow!”