

# MONSTER HOUSE™

## Chapter 1 *Do you want to die?*

It was the afternoon before Halloween\*.

A little girl was on her bike in Oak Street in Mayville. She went happily between the trees and the lovely gardens. But then her bike went onto a front lawn and she stopped.

There was a strange sound and she looked up. The lawn was in front of a big old house. There were two windows over the front door. The windows looked down at her angrily.

There was a loud shout and an old man came out of the house. It was Mr. Nebbercracker. 'Get off my lawn!' he shouted, 'Do you want to die?'



\* Halloween is on 31st October. Children wear special clothes and ask for treats.

The little girl was frightened and she ran away. Mr. Nebbercracker walked across the lawn and took the bike. 'And don't come back!'

'These children!' he said. 'They never listen.' The sound came again. It was louder and then it stopped. Mr. Nebbercracker went into his house and closed the door.



DJ Walters lived opposite Mr. Nebbercracker's house. DJ saw everything and wrote about it in his book. There was a lot of writing in the book. Today he wrote: '30th October. N. took bike.'

'DJ!' his mom called.

'I'm coming!' DJ looked at the pictures on the walls of his bedroom. They were photos of Mr. Nebbercracker's house.

'DJ!' she called again.

DJ ran out of his house. His mom and dad were in the car. 'Mom!' said DJ. 'He took a bike again!'



'DJ,' she said. 'You can't stay in your room for hours to watch an old man.'

'But there's something wrong with that house!'

'We're going,' said his dad. 'Zee is coming soon. She's staying with you tonight.'

'We love you,' called his mom, and they drove away.

Then a boy with a ball came across the street. It was Chowder, DJ's best friend.



'It's Halloween soon,' said Chowder. 'What are you going to wear?'

'I'm not going trick-or-treating this year,' said DJ.

'But we always do.'

'We're too old now.'

Chowder tried to throw his ball into the basket on the wall. He turned and looked at DJ.

'Be careful!' shouted DJ. Chowder turned back and the ball hit him.

'Aghhh!' Chowder put his hand on his nose.

'Are you OK?' asked DJ. Then he saw the ball. 'Oh no!' It was on Mr. Nebbercracker's nice lawn.



'You're older, DJ. You get it,' said Chowder.

'No!' said DJ.

'But it was expensive!'

'Maybe Mr. Nebbercracker is sleeping,' DJ looked at the house. 'OK.' He put one foot on the lawn. The ball was

close. He ran to it.

Suddenly the door opened and Mr. Nebbercracker came out. 'You!'



DJ moved quickly. His shoe pulled out a bit of the lawn. 'I'm sorry,' cried DJ. He wanted to run, but Mr. Nebbercracker held his shirt.

'Do you want to die?' shouted Mr. Nebbercracker.

'No. I love life!'

Mr. Nebbercracker pulled DJ's shirt. 'This is my house,' he shouted. 'Stay away!' The old man's face was very red and his eyes went big. Suddenly he fell on top of DJ on the lawn. The old man didn't move.

'Uh-oh,' said Chowder.

Then there was a cold wind, and the door closed loudly.



# THE CIRCUS

**Constance the Giantess lived in a circus before Mr. Nebbercracker found her. In the past, circuses often had shows with people like Constance. These shows were very cruel and they stopped a long time ago.**

## When was the first circus?

The first circus was the Circus Maximus in Rome around 2,000 years ago. People went there to watch horse races. They also saw unusual animals, acrobats and special performers.

## How did circuses change?

☛ For a long time after the Romans there were no large circuses. But performers went

to different towns and gave small shows.

☛ In 1768 Philip Astley opened one of the first circuses in London. Most of his shows were with horses. For many he is the 'father' of today's circus.

☛ In the 1800s circuses started in the USA. In 1835 P. T. Barnum started to use shows with unusual people.

☛ In 1927 the Moscow Circus School

**What do you think about circuses?  
Do you want to be a circus performer?**

started. In the 1950s Russian circuses went to other countries. The acrobats were fantastic!

☛ In the 1960s and 1970s there weren't so many circuses. People weren't happy about animals in shows because it was cruel.

## What is the circus like today?

The circus today is different from in the past. Some circuses still have animals (usually just horses), but most circuses just have people in their shows. These people can do fantastic and unusual things. The Cirque du Soleil is a very famous circus like this.

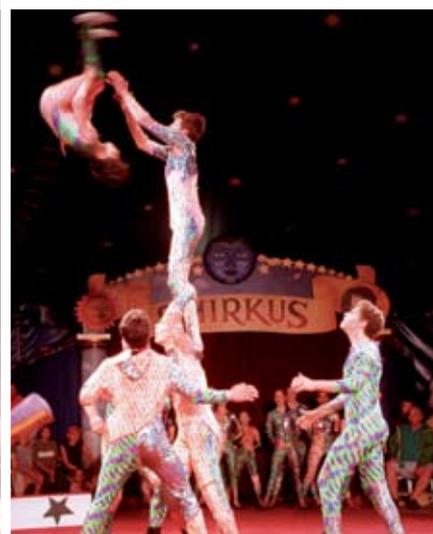
## The Cirque du Soleil

The Cirque du Soleil ('Circus of the Sun') started in Canada in 1984. It is famous and very special because each show tells a story. It uses music, special lights and fantastic performers.

At first it moved round the world. Now some shows go to different countries, but the Cirque du Soleil's main home is in Las Vegas.



Acrobats in the Cirque du Soleil



## Do you want to be in the circus?

CIRCUS SMIRKUS is a very special circus school. It started in 1987 in Vermont, USA. Young people go to Circus Smirkus in their school holidays and learn to be circus performers. Every summer Circus Smirkus has a show with the best performers from the school. They perform in more than 70 shows in 14 towns in 7 weeks!

**What do these words mean?  
You can use a dictionary.**

**show cruel horse race unusual  
animal acrobat perform/performer**