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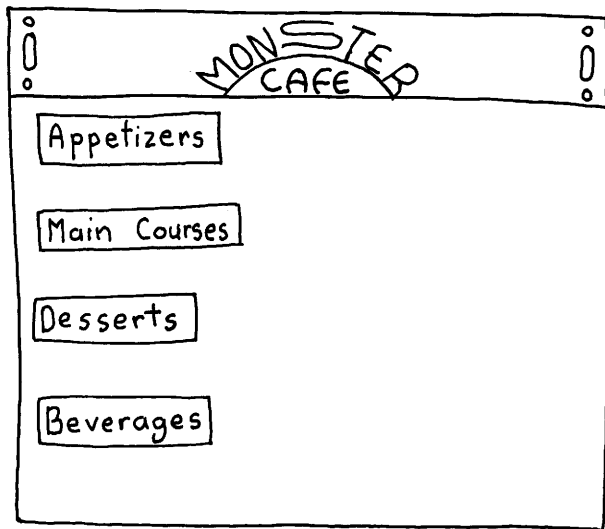
hat do monsters like to eat?

Worms smothered in butterscotch sauce? Broiled mosquitoes with lizard livers? Old rags dipped in mud? Where can a hungry ogre or zombie get such delicacies? McDonald's? Wendy's? Of course not. Monsters must patronize special restaurants—MONSTER CAFES.

Matt, a second-grader who appreciated a good monster story, had no trouble imagining a restaurant catering exclusively to creepy creatures. He understood instantly the fun and challenge to be had in designing a menu for such an establishment. And although Matt hated most writing assignments, he was unre-servedly enthusiastic about writing a menu for a MONSTER CAFE.

To begin our work, we took a sheet of paper and Matt drew a MONSTER CAFE logo on top.

We decided the cafe should offer two appetizers, two main courses, two desserts, and two beverages. I wrote appropriate section heads on the menu.



“Now for the hard part,” I said. “We have to think of the right foods. Let’s start with an appetizer.”

It only took Matt a few moments to make an appalling sugges-tion: slimy guts with chocolate cockroaches. No discriminating

MONSTER CAFE

GRADES

first, second, and third

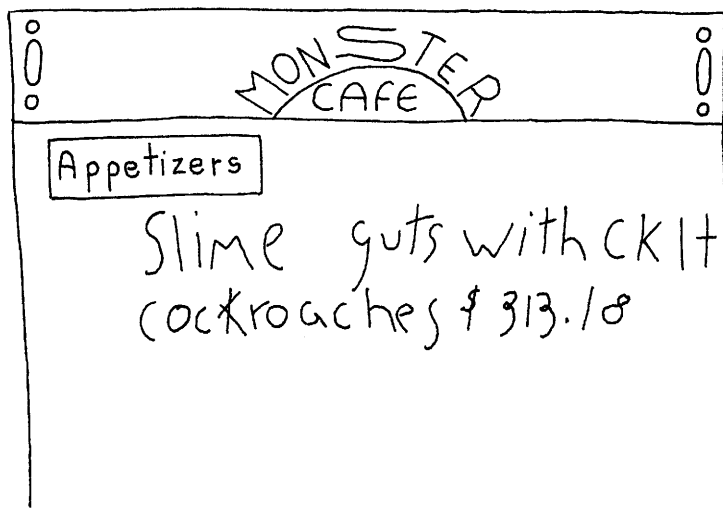
MATERIALS

paper

pencil

optional: crayons or colored markers

fiend could resist such delights. I suggested we charge \$13.18 for this specialty of the house. Matt felt \$313.18 was more appropriate. Ours was an establishment for wealthy monsters, he declared. Then he proudly wrote the first entry:

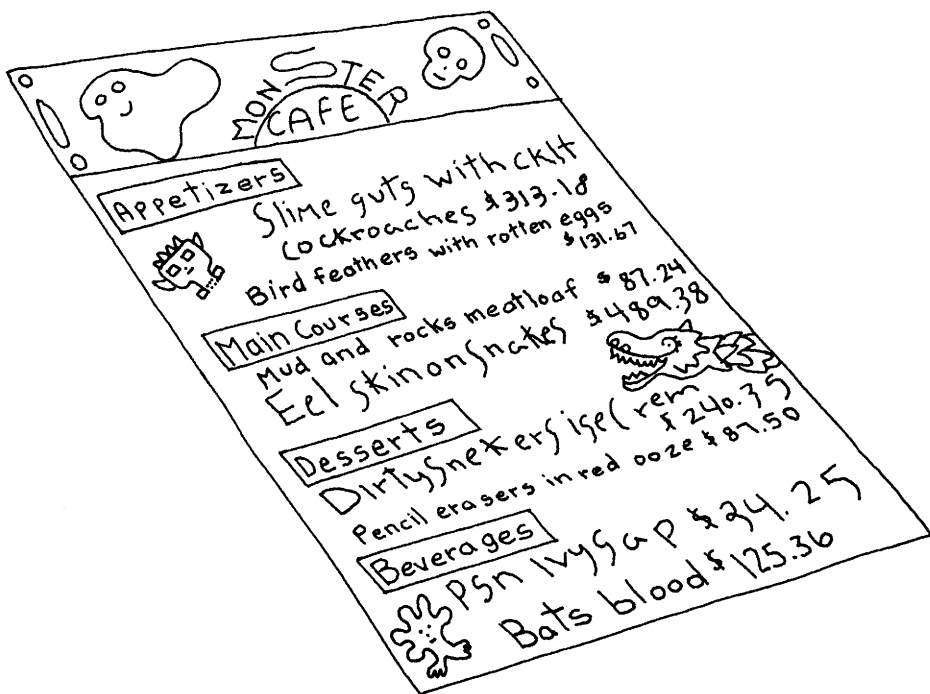


He asked for help spelling *cockroaches*. I obliged. He tackled *chocolate* on his own, with interesting results. Matt's unique spelling didn't disturb me. On the contrary, I was pleased that he attempted such a difficult word.

Next Matt suggested a thoroughly vile beverage: poison ivy sap. A monster could purchase this thirst-quencher for a mere \$346.25. Item by item, we filled in the menu. We didn't finish in one sitting. Instead, we spent a few minutes of several tutoring sessions planning our cuisine. I wrote some entries, but in general Matt did the honors. After listing all the food, Matt decorated the menu with ghoulish designs.

The day we finished, Matt ran to the door as soon as his father arrived to pick him up and take him home from our tutoring session. As his dad walked through the door, Matt shoved the completed menu into his hands.

"Read this!" he demanded.



Matt's father and I had talked about spelling, so I knew he wouldn't be disturbed to see *cklit* instead of *chocolate* or *blud* in place of *blood*. He asked for a translation or two, then gave Matt the perfect response, "This is totally disgusting!"

Later that night, Matt's mother called with good news. Matt, who had never volunteered to write so much as his initials before, had spent an hour jotting grotesque goodies for Monster Cafe II.

Does your own child delight in the revolting? Then try composing a monster menu. Of course, your child might not be attracted to the repulsive. Your child might prefer making menus for an ice cream parlor that caters to circus clowns, a diner open exclusively to children, a fast-food joint frequented by aliens from outer space, or a Royal Cafe that serves only kings, queens, princes, and princesses. Royal food must be pure and refined; that menu won't include a single pickled worm. Tastes vary. The repulsive path is best for some children, but not for all.