Hey, That's MY Monster!

Fluency Drill

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Hey, That’s MY Monster!

Tonight, when I looked under the bed for my monster, I found this note instead.

“So long, kid. Gotta go. Someone needs me more than you do. Gabe”

“What? Gabe was MY monster! Nobody needed him more than me!”

But someone sure DID need a monster – my little sister Emma. Now that Emma slept in a toddler bed, she liked to climb out, roam the house, and play noisy games at night.

I knew a monster would keep her in bed so she could fall asleep. But not MY monster! I had to get Gabe back.

I tiptoed across the hall to Emma’s room. She wasn’t even there.

But Gabe was! I gulped, zoomed across
the carpet, and leaped onto Emma’s bed before Gabe could grab my toes.

“Gabe,” I whispered. “Please go back to our room. I’ll get Emma to sleep.”

“You!” he snorted. “You’re going to get her to sleep? Ha! That’s a good one! But you know what? I like you, kid, so I’ll give you three chances. If she’s not asleep, I’ll be back!”

And Gabe was gone.

Just then Emma toddled into the room. She clearly needed a monster. Maybe she didn’t know how to get one. But I did.

“Hey, Emma,” I said. “Let’s play. Can you knock on the floor?”

Emma knocked - with a dinosaur. It worked. I heard some creaking under Emma’s bed. Then something sniffled. It squelched and dripped.
So far so good, I thought. This monster sounds scary enough for Emma. But Emma kept on playing.

A slime-covered monster slid out. It oozed toward Emma.

"Icky!" she laughed, wiping one of the monster’s noses. “Icky! Wipe!”

Emma wasn’t scared at all!

“Excuse me,” I said to the mucous monster. “I didn’t catch your name.”

“By dabe is Agatha," she said through stuffed noses. “Tibe for bed, Ebba.” Emma giggled and wiped some more.

I knew this wouldn’t work. “Thanks, Agatha. Nice try. But I think we need a monster with claws.”

Agatha sniffled, and then she was gone.

“Emma,” I coaxed again, “knock, knock.”
She knocked on the floor – with a teapot this time and I heard more creaking. Then a slippery tail slithered out from under the bed.

The second monster rasped, “I’m Cynthia.” Much better, I thought when I saw the jagged claws. Cynthia might be the perfect monster for Emma.

But Emma blinked and said, “Pretty!” Then she decorated Cynthia’s tail with bracelets.

“Ugh,” Cynthia snarled. “I’m not here to play dress up! I’m here to scare you into bed!” Cynthia rattled louder, but Emma danced to the beat.

“I’m sorry, Cynthia,” I said. This isn’t going to work.”

“Well, I never,” she sniffed, and then she was gone.
“Cynfia, come back!” Emma demanded, stomping on the floor. Excellent, I thought. Maybe that would summon the perfect monster for Emma.

Tentacles swarmed from under the bed, and an icy voice called, “Whooooo . . .” I shrank back in horror, but Emma was enchanted.

“Whooooo’s out of bed?” The monster continued. “Come to Vla-a-adimir . . .”

Emma high-fived one of the tentacles, and the third monster emerged.

I already had doubts about this one, but he was my last chance. “Vladimir,” I asked, “can you get Emma to sleep?”

“Yes-s-s,” he hissed, reaching for Emma. “I can GET her!”

Emma giggled and hopped over the tentacles like jump ropes. “Oh, no!” I blurted.
“She’s not supposed to be having fun! This’ll never work!”

Vlad’s tentacles drooped, he slunk under the bed, and he was gone. “Sorry, Vlad . . .” I called.

Boy, was I sorry. I was about to lose Gabe forever.

Now Emma was coloring. And singing.

“Vladimir, blah, blah, Cynfia, ya, ya, Agafa, fa, fa . . .”

Gabe must have heard her, because he was back. “That’s it, kid,” he grunted. “You had your three tries. Now it’s MY turn.”

Emma peered at my hulking, sharp-clawed monster and said, “Fuzzy.”

“Hey, Gabe!” I cheered. “Emma isn’t afraid of you!”

“What?!!” Gabe burst out from under
the bed and loomed over Emma. Steam spurted from his ears.


Emma hopped up. But she kept singing.

"Fuzzy, fuzzy monster."

"Gabe," I said, "Emma's not scare enough to fall asleep. Please, let's go back to our room."

"No can do, kid," Gabe growled, "I may not be the perfect monster for Emma, but I'm the best so far. At least she's in bed now. I gotta stay here. You're on your own."

I knew Emma needed Gabe, but he was MY monster. How was I ever going to get to sleep without him?

Just then, we heard a tiny noise. Hic, hic, hic.

Emma froze. Gabe and I peered under
the bed.

“Stella, what are you doing here?” Gabe asked.

“Hi, Gabe,” Stella said, tugging on her tutu. “You forgot -hic- your snack. Mama thought -hic- you’d be hungry, so she -hic- sent this.”

Who knew? Gabe had a little sister, too! I thought Stella’s hiccups were cute, but Emma obviously didn’t. Stella sure noticed. She tiptoed closer, hiccuping with every step. Hic, hic, hic. From under the covers, Emma squeaked. “Shoo!”

“Shoo?” Stella repeated. “Oh, Shoe! That’s where toes go. I looooove toes.” Stella crept toward Emma’s feet.

Emma squealed, scrunched in her feet, and giggled, “No toes, no toes!”
Gabe laughed, “Stella, it looks like you’re the perfect monster for Emma. Now, if you don’t mind, you can get her to sleep while I get back to what I do best.”

Stella nodded. “Hic!”

I sighed with relief and switched off Emma’s lamp. Then I ran to my room, leaped into bed, and scrunched in my feet so Gabe couldn’t get them. I shivered happily.

Emma had Stella. I had Gabe. Everything was back to normal. I shivered again. We’d all be asleep in no time.
Directions:
Set a timer for one minute and read as much of the story as you can, including the title. Stop when the timer goes off and make a mark where you ended. Count and record the number of words you read. Reset the timer and go back to the beginning and read it again, marking the spot where you ended this time. Count and record the total again. Repeat this timed fluency activity four times and you’ll be surprised at how much your fluency increases!

Number of words read correctly:

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