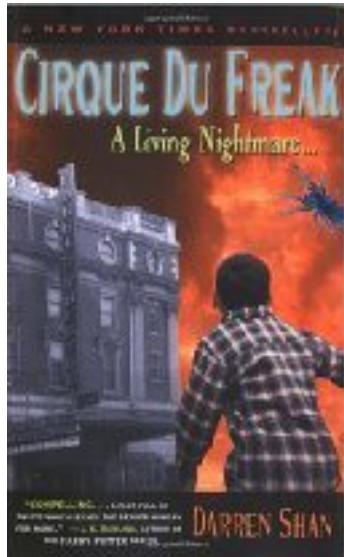


# Cirque Du Freak #1: A Living Nightmare: Book 1 in the Saga of Darren Shan (简装)



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著者:Darren Shan

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Anyone who loves the humorous but hair-raising horror in R.L. Stine's Goosebumps series will devour British author Darren Shan's first novel with equal zeal. Some books are born with a surrounding buzz; this one even has Harry Potter creator J.K. Rowling's stamp of approval: "Fast-paced and compelling, full of satisfying macabre touches," she writes. Warner Brothers will be making it into a movie, and the rest of the series is already in the works. Given all that, you'd expect a tour de force! Really, though, Cirque Du Freak is a thrill ride that will keep even the most reluctant readers turning pages, but will never take its place in the literary canon.

Darren Shan, author and narrator, sets the book up as a true story, warning readers: "Real life's nasty. It's cruel.... Evil often wins." Indeed, evil begins to win when Darren

and his buddies find a flier for "Cirque Du Freak," a traveling freak show promising performances by the snake-boy, the wolf-man, and Larten Crepsley and his giant spider, Madame Octa. Darren and his friend Steve wouldn't miss it for the world.

So, Saturday night they sneak out to the old theater, tall and dark, with broken windows. "Every act you see tonight is real," croaks Mr. Tall. "Each performer is unique. And none are harmless." That's for sure. (A werewolf bites off the hand of someone in the audience, for instance.) Things grow very serious for the two boys when Steve not only recognizes Mr. Crepsley as a famous vampire, but professes his true desire to join him! To make matters worse, the spider-obsessed Darren goes back to the old theater to steal Madame Octa so he can teach her tricks in his room. (He does, with mixed results.) The plot further coagulates as Darren is faced with some terrible decisions about what to do to save his bloodthirsty friend Steve.

Readers may be too enthralled to notice some clumsy editing (the aforementioned bitten-off hand is later referred to as an arm, Darren stops dead in his tracks when he's already stopped, etc.). They may also not notice that the boys constantly use adult-sounding expressions like "his breath stank to the high heavens," though the book is clearly set in the 21st century. If this book gets under your kids' skin (and it probably will), they're in luck--we haven't heard the last of the Saga of Darren Shan. (Ages 10 and older, not for the faint of heart) --Karin Snelson --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

With strong sales overseas and a movie deal in the works, book one in The Saga of Darren Shan series is poised to capture a wide audience of series horror readers. After a rather slow buildup, a boy with the same name as the author sneaks out with best friend Steve to an illicit freak show, and his life becomes entangled with a vampire spider-wrangler, Mr. Crepsley. "This is a true story," writes Shan. "In real life, bad things happen. People die. Fights are lost. Evil often wins." The scenario is compelling, and the author mines the exploitative history of early 20th-century sideshows to create an artfully macabre "Cirque du Freak." But Darren's actions are often undermotivated: "I can't explain why Madam Octa [the spider] meant so much to me, or why I was placing my life in such danger to have her. Looking back, I'm no longer sure what drove me on." Also his intermittent attraction to and repulsion by the vampire is never fully explored. His behavior may be explained in the sequel, *The Vampire's Assistant* (due in Sept.), but the open ending leaves so many loose ends that readers may leave more frustrated than intrigued, especially since the characters' wooden dialogue drains them of personality ("I'm upset," says Steve. "It hurt, what Mr. Crepsley said, and you ignoring me at school... If you break up our friendship, I don't know what I'll do"). Readers interested in boys becoming vampires would be better served by M.T. Anderson's *Thirsty* and those fascinated with freaks by Iain Lawrence's *Ghost Boy*. Ages 10-up.

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Gr 4-8-In his introduction, 12-year-old Darren claims that this is a true story, though the names have been changed and the country (obviously England) kept secret. When a bizarre-sounding freak show comes to town, he and his friend Steve sneak out to attend, and Steve recognizes one of the performers-as a centuries-old vampire. Darren decides he must steal the vampire's performing, poisonous spider. The theft is successful, and he learns to control Madam Octa with a combination of flute music and ESP-until she bites Steve. Darren must then sell himself into vampire slavery to get the cure to the spider's poison. This volume is neither as well written nor as

compulsively readable as the "Harry Potter" books (Scholastic), though surely J. K. Rowling's endorsement on the cover will win it a few fans. Most of the characters aren't developed much beyond their names and a brief description. The slowness of the plot in the beginning might turn some readers off, but once the supernatural enters, they will be hooked. The fun here is in the details and in the uniqueness of the non-evil vampire monster. Several volumes of the series are already out in England, and the movie rights have already been purchased, ensuring that this title and probably its sequels will be in demand.-Timothy Capehart, Leominster Public Library, MA

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--This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Gr. 5-8. When Cirque Du Freak comes to town, Darren and his friends are obsessed with seeing the acts, which include a performing spider; spiders are a particular fascination of Darren's. It is a marvelously creepy show that lives up to their expectations. After the show, Darren's rowdy pal, Steve, stays behind and confronts the man with the spider--who turns out to be a vampire. Hidden in the shadows, Darren listens, horrified, as Steve begs Mr. Crepsley to make him a vampire, too. Steve's request is denied, but through a series of mishaps, Darren becomes the vampire. The unresolved ending will leave readers begging for more. The gripping plot moves forward at a lightning pace, and Darren's fascination with the grotesque will ring true for many. Though originally published in England, there are no off-putting Criticisms, just a rip-roaring story full of oddities, low-key horror, and occasional, unexpected poignancy. Debbie Carton

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"...compelling...[T]he author mines the exploitative history of early 20th century sideshows to create an artfully macabre cirque du freak." -- Publishers Weekly, 2/19/01

"...sure to start some great urban legends..." -- VOYA, 4/01 --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"When most people hear 'large-print book,' they immediately think senior citizen. But large-print editions of popular children's books -- from the powerhouse Harry Potter series to timeless classics like The Adventures of Tom Sawyer -- are now making their way onto the shelves of the Children's Department at the Canton Library. . . . Although large-print editions are targeted to the visually-impaired or dyslexic child, they can also be used by standard-vision readers. So Kershner [Children's librarian at the Canton Public Library] has decided against creating a special section in the Children's Department (as exists in the Adult Department) opting instead to intersperse large-print books on the shelves with the regular print versions of the same titles."

-- The Observer and Eccentric (October 2000) (The Observer and Eccentric)

"Thorndike Press has helped me not only find books I want to read, but they also look like regular books. That's important when you're a kid and you can only read Large Print, you want your book to look like all the other books. I'm reading a lot more now that we have found Thorndike Press."

-- Jim Bernardin, Islamorada, FL

"Everyone loves to read, there's nothing like curling up with a good book. We're a

reading family, so when our son was diagnosed with Stargardt's Disease and only able to read Large Print, it was particularly difficult. Books on tape are wonderful but they don't fill the void of actually reading a good story. Large Print books have been around a long time for older people, but to find a good novel for a young person in Large Print began to feel nearly impossible. The books that Thorndike Press publishes have truly made a difference in my son's reading life. He can enjoy current novels as well as some of the classics that he missed reading when it became too difficult with regular print."

-- Sara Bernardin, Islamorada, FL

"Compelling . . . Explores the powerful fascination of the dangerous and unnatural and also, movingly, the obligations of friendship."

-- J. K. Rowling --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

作者介绍:

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标签

小说

吸血鬼

English

DarrenShan

英格兰

奇幻

入门级

child

## 评论

My days as a human were over, my nights as a vampire's assistant are going to begin. A combination of Darren Shan and Rupert Degas is always my favorite.

儿童书里面非常棒的，比什么Percy Jackson好看多了啊，应该说很多方面不比Harry Potter差，属于儿童书里比较残酷的，当然文笔不是美的类型

词汇极其简单，同样，故事内容也简单，这应该是儿童读物吧~

小学还是初中的时候 爱死这书了

这个封面也太少年了吧。。吓死人吗

小学时简直着迷得疯狂，现在看英文版竟然能看懂大概了

边读边泪花闪闪 没想到

英语原版书阅读计划 奇幻冒险小说 期待第二本吸血鬼和他的助手的冒险之旅。

我知道我又情緒化了 上次lost看到不滿意的地方直接怒罵甩片  
這次看到第9本我越來越憤怒了 達倫山是個他媽的什麼狗屁男孩 一傻逼中二! "他殺人了  
所以我要殺他" "他害怕吸血鬼 所以他讓我惡心" 什麼傻逼言論! 老子想把他舌頭割下來  
塞進他馬眼裡 把左眼球扣下來剁碎 喂進他鼻子裡 還有他那臭逼老師 "他生來就邪惡"

邪惡你媽逼! 三番五次逼人家干壞事 好證明自己是對的 "看 我就說他邪惡" 干!  
不帶這麼惡心的! 老子要是按照出版商推薦的10歲時看 可能還成 中二書真的該中二時看  
現在看 就覺得他媽的處處是下限 人在裝逼 字字都羅唆 還有兩本半就看完  
還是看到結局吧 說不定結局這兩嘶傻的一逼被操翻了~

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better than twilight

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## 书评

It just amazes me how many people just don't know the difference between good and bad.

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可能是少儿版，向读大学时的阅读理解，但是有趣的多，昨天上网搜了他的电影版，看到第一本情节结束的时候，赶快按下停止，还是先读书再看电影吧，电影改编不少，开始就有很多剧透，担心看下一本的时候会不这么好看了。  
有疑问的是，难道这本是少儿读物吗？为什么再网上只看到yo...

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