

Exercises

Read to understand

A answer these questions with reference to the context

But you sit so still and straight,

Ever staring, ever smiling, at the door!

1 who does 'you' refer to?

A. The word you refers to the child's father.

2 who says these lines?

A. The child says these lines.

3 what is the speaker's mood at this time? why?

A. The child is getting impatient with his father because it is getting late.

B answer these questions

1 what sounds does the child hear in the night?

A. The child hears the sound of someone whispering murmuring roaring and laughing in the night.

2 Does the child think the sound is from an animal or human? why do you say so?

A. Yes the child thinks it is a human voice because the child asks who and not what.

3 what explanation does the father give for the sounds?

A. Father said the sounds you hear are due to blowing of breeze roaring of waves on the shore so you should not be afraid.

4 was the child satisfied with the explanations? how do you know?

A. No the child wasn't satisfied by his father's answer because he asked similar questions again and again.

5 which lines tell us that the child was a little afraid of the dark?

A. Oh! Father let's go for the light is burning low it is dark and it is late.

Discuss and write

1 Does the poem make you feel sad nervous or a little scared? why?

A. Yes I feel sad because the child was frightened and the father was not reacting in a quick or positive manner.

2. Do you think the father answered the child's questions truthfully? give reason for your answer.

A. No father did not answer truthfully he just wanted to come down him.

3. In stanza 4 the child says tell me what you are waiting for but the father does not respond how do you think the child must have felt?

A. The unresponsive nature of the father must have scared the child even more.

Read to appreciate

A fill in the blanks to identify some of the style elements used by the poet.

1. There are 5 lines in each stanza

2. The 2 and the 5 line in each stanza and with the same word.

3. The 3 and the 4 line in each stanza and with the rhyming words

B arrange the words in these lines in the correct order to get a stanza written in the same style as used in the poem night voices the last word in each line is underlined.

- 1 father father I think I heard some knocking
- 2 who is it that's walking on the porch
- 3 there's none that I can see
- 4 for its quite dark and dreary
- 5 but I am sure there is someone on the porch.

Summary

Summary of night voices

Night Voices is one creepy poem.

The first two stanzas seem to be a conversation between a young child and his (the gender isn't clear, but let's assume it is a young boy for the sake of expediency) father near bedtime. The child asks his father, "who is it who whispers in the wood?"

The father, as any parent does, is quick to assure his child. He says, "it is the breeze/As it sighs among the trees."

But the child is unsure. He is convinced that "there's some one who whispers in the wood."

The second stanza is the same as the first, replacing whispering in the wood with murmuring in the night.

The third stanza is where things start to change. We (the readers) start to become aware that something is not right. The child asks the father to "let us go,/For the light is burning low." Let us go from where? Why would a child be pleading with his father to let him go? And who is "us"?

In the fourth and final stanza, our whole perception of this poem is drastically changed. For your convenience, here is the whole fourth stanza:

**"Father, father, tell me what you're waiting for,
Tell me why your eyes are on the door.**

It is dark and it is late,

But you sit so still and straight,

Ever staring, ever smiling, at the door."

Now, the father's actions have replaced the noises in the night as the creepy subject of the poem. The father is not a comforting figure, but stares, "ever smiling, at the door." He is terrifying--the active figure in the horror story. His answers from earlier in the story are under question, and we fear for the future of the children

