

## Babysitting in the Evening

The sound of the chimes ringing in the evening wind chilled Maura's blood. Dusk was slowly settling into the valley. Before long it would be completely dark. No lights from the town, which was nearly ten miles away, ever penetrated into the hollow night.

It was Maura's first time babysitting for the Martinez family at night. Their home was a beautiful old house, but its location was very remote. It was situated on almost one hundred acres of land off a road that was dominated by large farms. Maura loved the location in the daytime, but the mood at night was entirely different.

Tyler, the Martinez's only child, was a sweet toddler who had gone to bed without a problem. Without the sounds of Tyler's babbling and laughter, the silence in the house was overwhelming. Maura felt completely alone.

She decided to turn on the television. Slogans and advertising jingles blasted from the set, creating a comfortable background noise. Maura settled into the couch and tried to get interested in the Saturday-night movie, but a sudden creak disturbed her concentration. She immediately jumped and then stiffened; the sound had come from the back porch.

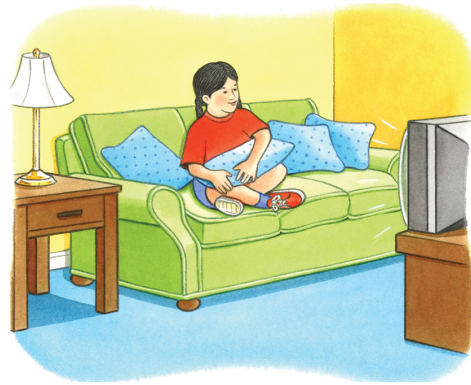
Maura clicked off the program and instinctively darted for the stairs, treading quickly, but lightly on her way to Tyler's room. She carefully opened the door to the baby's room and peered into the crib. Tyler was sound asleep; his facial expression was peaceful and pleasant as he cuddled with his fuzzy blanket.

Maura crept into the room, locked the door to the baby's room, and sat on the floor with her back to the door. She could barely hear Tyler's even breathing over the sound of her pounding heart. In the window above the rocking chair in Tyler's room, she could see the October moon growing brighter. She knew that she might be able to see the source of the noise if she dared to peek out the window.

A cool breeze rustled the drying leaves outside, and Maura again heard the noise. Panic flooded her veins when she realized that there was no telephone in the baby's room. The closest phone was across the hallway in Mrs. Martinez's room, and Maura could not make herself leave the shelter of the baby's room.

The noise occurred again, and this time Maura thought it sounded like metal clanging. She knew that she had to look out the window. Crawling toward the small window, she paused for a moment below it. Pushing Tyler's rocker out of the way, she slowly raised her head, stopping just as her eyes were above the windowsill. She scanned the area and saw nothing. Then she detected movement by the side of the house. She closed her eyes in relief when she realized what she had heard.

A small animal—probably a raccoon—had knocked over the trash can and was rooting through the garbage. Maura was relieved, but not entirely at ease. Her emotions were running wild, and her vivid imagination would not allow her to feel secure. She resolved to spend the rest of the evening locked in the baby's room with Tyler. Mr. and Mrs. Martinez would be home soon, and she would leave the room only when she saw their car pulling into the driveway.



Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Accept

Reject

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Which contemporary issue is *most* related to the plot of "Babysitting in the Evening"?

- A The need for wild-animal control
- B The high price of childcare
- C The fear of the unknown
- D The need for more police

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

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Which element from the story is *not* a commonly used symbol in mystery stories?

- A The full moon
- B The loud television commercials
- C The old, isolated home as a setting
- D The unknown sound outside the house

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Accept

Reject

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Give two examples the author uses to show Maura's feelings after she heard the noise. Be sure to write your response in your answer document.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Accept

Reject

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Which illustration would be *most* appropriate for “Babysitting in the Evening”?

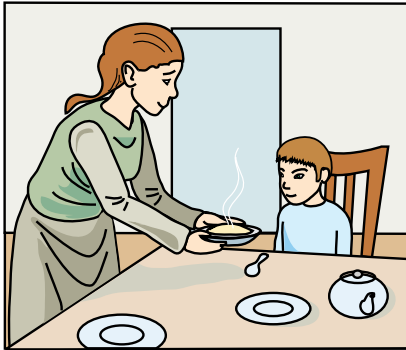
A



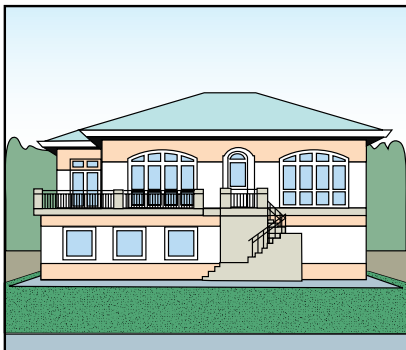
B



C



D



Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Accept

Reject

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3176953

Which descriptive words from the story *best* symbolize the mysterious mood of the story?

- A "It was situated on almost one hundred acres..."
- B "Slogans and advertising jingles blasted from the set..."
-  C "She immediately jumped and then stiffened."
- D "...his facial expression was peaceful and pleasant as he cuddled with his fuzzy blanket."

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Give two examples of how the author's choice of language helps to create the tone of the story. Be sure to write your response in your answer document.

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Reject

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Before she looks out the window, what evidence does Maura have that something is outside the house?

- A Television advertisements are blasting loudly.
-  B She hears a creak on the back porch.
- C The mood of the house is different at night.
- D Her heart begins pounding very fast.

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Which element from the story establishes the fact that the story *most* likely takes place within the last thirty years?

-  **A** The TV set
- B** The large farms
- C** The old home
- D** The description of the baby's room

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3176964

Because it uses plot elements, descriptive details, and symbols that often define modern mystery and horror productions, "Babysitting in the Evening" is a product of the era in which it was written. In a detailed essay, discuss how "Babysitting in the Evening" utilizes elements common to popular mystery and horror stories. Provide specific textual support in your essay. Be sure to write your response in your answer document.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Accept

Reject