

# 'The Witching Hour'

## COMPREHENSION

This is the beginning of a great book, *The BFG*, by Roald Dahl. Read how Sophie, an orphan, is about to embark on a wonderful adventure. Then answer the questions on the next page.

- Sophie couldn't sleep.
- A brilliant moonbeam was slanting through a gap in the curtains.
- It was shining right on to her pillow.
- The other children in the dormitory had been asleep for hours.
- Sophie closed her eyes and lay quite still. She tried very hard to doze off.
- It was no good. The moonbeam was like a silver blade slicing through the room on to her face.
- The house was absolutely silent. No voices came up from downstairs. There were no footsteps on the floor either.
- The window behind the curtain was wide open, but nobody was walking on the pavement outside. No cars went by on the street. Not the tiniest sound could be heard anywhere. Sophie had never known such a silence.
- Perhaps, she told herself, this was what they called the witching hour.
- The witching hour, somebody had once whispered to her, was a special moment in the middle of the night when every child and every grown-up was in a deep deep sleep, and all the dark things came out from hiding and had the world to themselves.
- The moonbeam was brighter than ever on Sophie's pillow. She decided to get out of bed and close the gap in the curtains.
- You got punished if you were caught out of bed after lights-out. Even if you said you had to go to the lavatory, that was not accepted as an excuse and they punished you just the same. But there was no one about now, Sophie was sure of that.
- She reached out for her glasses that lay on the chair beside her bed. They had steel rims and very thick lenses, and she could hardly see a thing without them. She put them on, then she slipped out of bed and tip-toed over to the window.

- 1 Why couldn't Sophie sleep? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2 Sophie's bed was in a *dormitory*. How is that different from your bedroom? Your dictionary could help. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3 What were the other children in the dormitory doing? \_\_\_\_\_
- Read the first half of the story again.
- 4 What word is used to describe Sophie's house and the street outside? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5 Sophie decided it was the witching hour. When does that happen? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6 What happens during the witching hour? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7 Why did Sophie get out of bed? Circle the right answer.
    - a to go to the lavatory
    - b to close the curtains
    - c to look out the window
  - 8 Which of Sophie's five senses wasn't as good as the others? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 9 How many floors do you know for sure were in Sophie's house? \_\_\_\_\_ What words tell you this? \_\_\_\_\_
  - 10 What sort of things keep you awake at night? \_\_\_\_\_

by **Roald Dahl**

# Don't forget your toothbrush!

It's Allison's birthday in eleven days' time. She's made her own invitations on her computer.

**GOOD NEWS**

I'm eight on Friday  
so Mum says I'm allowed  
to have a sleep over.

**Where?** Banksia Close  
Turrumurra

**When?** 4pm - Friday 3rd March  
till 10am Saturday

**Bring** your sleeping bag, pyjamas and swimmers  
and Mum says don't forget your toothbrush.

**BAD NEWS**  
Mark is allowed to invite a  
friend over to keep him company.  
Let's hope they leave us alone  
and play the computer all night.

**R.S.V.P.**  
**1st March**  
**Ph. 9653 1573**

P.S. I've ordered pizzas for  
dinner and a funny video for  
after dinner.

1 Whose birthday is it? \_\_\_\_\_

2 What sort of party is she having? \_\_\_\_\_

3 Where will the party be held? \_\_\_\_\_

4 a When will the party start? \_\_\_\_\_

b When will it finish? \_\_\_\_\_

5 What four things should the children bring with them?

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_

6 How will they let Allison know if they are able to come?

7 Draw what you think the children will be doing before dinner  
(check the list of things the children have to bring).

8 Who do you think Mark is? \_\_\_\_\_

10 Draw yourself in pyjamas at  
a sleep over.

9 What do you think these  
letters mean? Your dictionary  
might help.

RSVP \_\_\_\_\_

PS \_\_\_\_\_