

***The Witching Hour***

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.

Answer these questions. Some sentence starters have been added to help you answer in full sentences.

1. Why couldn't Sophie sleep?

*Sophie couldn't sleep because* \_\_\_\_\_.

2. What is the moonbeam compared to?

*The moonbeam is compared to* \_\_\_\_\_.

The house was absolutely silent. No voices came up from downstairs. There were no footsteps on the floor above 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.

3. What is 'the witching hour'?

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4. Copy two phrases that tell us the dormitory/house was quiet:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

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.

...

Across the road, she could see Mrs Rance's shop, where you bought buttons and wool and bits of elastic. It didn't look real. There was something dim and misty about that too.

Sophie allowed her eye to travel further and further down the street.

Suddenly, she froze. *There was something coming up the street on the opposite side.*

*It was something black...*

*Something tall and black...*

*Something very tall and very black and very thin.*



5. Why did Sophie get out of bed?

*Sophie got out of bed <to/because> \_\_\_\_\_.*

6. Why did Sophie freeze when she looked out of the window?

*Sophie froze when she looked out of the window because \_\_\_\_\_*

\_\_\_\_\_.

7. Why do you think the author chose to finish the chapter where he did?

*The author chose to finish the chapter where he did <to/because> \_\_\_\_\_*

\_\_\_\_\_.