

SIMPLIFIED READERS

A2⁺
LEVEL 3

Horror Stories

E. F. BENSON - AMELIA B. EDWARDS - MARY E. BRADDON - ALGERNON BLACKWOOD



WORKSHEETS

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ABOUT THE STORIES

The first story in this book, *Mrs Amworth*, is about a vampire who threatens a small, quiet village in England. It was written by Edward Frederic Benson, an English novelist, biographer and archaeologist, who is particularly known for his short stories and memoirs. It was published in Benson's 2nd collection of ghost tales, *Visible and Invisible*, in 1923.

The Phantom Coach, the second story in this book, was written by Amelia B. Edwards, who is one of the best Victorian ghost story writers. The story, which was published in 1864, is a classic ghost story, which Edwards is best known for.

Another story in this book is *Good Lady Ducayne*. It is a gothic story by Mary Elizabeth Braddon, who is one of the most popular novelists of the Victorian era. The story was published in 1869. It is based on a 19th century popular folkloric belief which associates vampirism with deaths from mysterious illnesses.

Keeping His Promise, the last story in this book, was written by Algernon Henry Blackwood, one the most creative ghost story writers. He wrote ten books of short stories. This story was published in his collection entitled *The Empty House* in 1906.

SUMMARY

Mrs Amworth

Maxley is a quiet and peaceful village until a 45-year-old woman arrives there from London. She is a very cheerful and friendly person, and the villagers like her very much. Until two years ago, she lived in India because her husband, who is now dead, was a judge there. After his death, she leaves India and lives in London for a year. Then, she moves to Maxley where her ancestors used to live hundreds of years ago. The narrator, the man who tells the story, has a close friend who is a retired professor of physiology and studies supernatural happenings like vampirism. One day, a 16-year-old boy, who has been bitten by mosquitoes and has two wounds on his neck, becomes very ill. The professor suspects that Mrs Amworth is a vampire and the boy is her victim. When he confronts Mrs Amworth, she is accidentally hit by a car and killed. Two months after she is buried, the narrator sees her entering a neighbour's house one night. She has risen from her grave in search of blood. So, the professor makes a plan to get rid of this vampire. He and the narrator dig up her coffin, and the professor drives a pick through the heart of the corpse. Having killed the vampire, they put the coffin, back into the grave.

The Phantom Coach

The story begins in the open county, where the narrator, who is also the main character, has gone to hunt. He has stayed out too late, and it starts to snow. So, he looks for a place to spend the night. Luckily, he runs into an old man who is the servant of an old scientist living in a farmhouse nearby. He spends a few hours in that house having dinner and a chat with the scientist. When it stops snowing, he decides to leave. The scientist tells him to get on the night mail coach and gives him directions to the crossroads where it will pass in an hour. The old servant accompanies him to the old road. As they walk, he talks about a coach accident that happened on that road nine years ago. When the servant leaves, he starts to walk in the dark deserted old road. Just as he is thinking about the coach accident, the night mail coach that he wants to

catch arrives. He stops it and gets on. He starts talking to the three passengers on it. Suddenly, the coach has a big crash. The story ends when he wakes up from a coma. His wife tells him that he had a brain injury when he fell onto a rock during the crash.

Good Lady Ducayne

This is the story of a young poor woman, Bella, who finds a job as a companion to a very old and rich aristocratic lady. The lady pays Bella a very high salary and takes her to Italy, where Bella has a very nice life. Bella is very pleased with all this and likes the old woman. A few months later, Bella becomes very ill and weak. She gets thinner and paler every day. The lady's doctor tells her that it is because of the mosquito bites on her arm. She is also having strange dreams. Then, Bella learns that the old lady's previous two companions died from an unknown illness, and she fears that she might die, too. A young doctor, who Bella has become friends with and who is very interested in her, tries to cure and help her. He believes that the lady's doctor has made Bella ill in an effort to make the old lady live longer. When he accuses the lady and her doctor of this, the lady decides to stop this treatment and hire a new doctor. She wants Bella to leave and gives her a check for a thousand pounds.

Keeping His Promise

When a university student named Marriot is studying for an exam one rainy night, someone comes to his door. He is Marriott's old friend from school. He is very thin and weak, so Marriott takes him inside and gives him supper. The friend never talks and goes to sleep in Marriot's bedroom. When Marriott goes into the room to check on his friend later, he is not physically there. But Marriot hears his breathing and is not sure what is happening. Meanwhile, he has pain in his arm and there is a drop of blood on his wrist. He is very confused. He tells this to a friend of his the next morning. They both wonder if Marriott had a hallucination and where the mysterious man is.

Discuss before you begin reading:

- 1 Have you read any vampire stories or watched any vampire films? Which ones? What did you think of them? Did they frighten you?
- 2 Why are ghost or vampire stories so popular?

E. F. Benson Amelia B. Edwards Mary E. Braddon Algernon Blackwood

A Word Search

Find the ten words that you need to fill in the blanks in the paragraph about vampires.

A	B	N	F	R	C	O	R	P	S	E	T	L	X	N
C	R	I	U	D	L	Z	V	A	Z	F	Q	J	H	Y
H	X	M	W	C	O	F	F	I	N	D	K	S	O	C
K	L	M	S	Z	L	J	W	E	I	P	I	R	S	I
T	B	T	B	B	L	O	O	D	H	B	N	O	C	K
X	Q	X	D	V	Y	I	E	G	A	R	L	I	C	R
I	A	V	B	U	L	H	M	U	V	N	K	D	Q	N
R	B	H	L	E	G	E	N	D	C	O	O	S	M	E
V	I	C	T	I	M	A	X	Q	V	M	R	E	B	Y
X	M	S	U	N	R	I	S	E	J	W	F	L	E	V
W	D	E	K	R	O	J	Z	C	B	S	S	G	Q	Y
A	H	V	D	W	P	G	R	A	V	E	U	Z	X	H
N	V	O	C	B	C	M	O	N	S	T	E	R	J	S
R	E	U	K	A	C	A	U	M	K	C	U	V	S	C
O	Z	W	C	E	P	I	D	E	M	I	C	L	R	V

Vampires are fictional **1** _____s that appear in movies, books and other media. They feed on the **2** _____ of the living people, whom they hunt during the night. They bite the throat of their **3** _____. According to a **4** _____, a person bitten by a vampire becomes a vampire, too. Vampires that have died wake at night and rise from their **5** _____s to roam the streets, searching for victims. But they must return to their

6 _____s before **7** _____. Vampires cannot stand the smell of **8** _____ or the sight of a Christian cross. One way to destroy a vampire is to drive a sharp object through its heart. Stories of creatures with vampiric features were first told in ancient times. Tales of walking **9** _____s that drank the blood of the living people and spread disease were very common in medieval Europe during times of every **10** _____.

B Can you match the boxes (1-4) with the story titles (a-d)?

- a Mrs Amworth b The Phantom Coach c Good Lady Ducayne d Keeping His Promise

1 ... is very very rich and very very kind. She is easy to please. I read to her a lot, and she falls asleep. _____

2 'There was a mysterious disease in India. She and her husband were there. And ...'

'Well?' I asked.

'He was one of the victims.' _____

3 'And I made a scar in his arm like mine. We exchanged drops of blood in each other's cuts. He put a drop into my arm, and I put one into his.

'But why?'

'It was a boys' agreement.' _____

4 I climbed up and opened the door myself. There were three passengers inside. I went in, shut the door and sat down in the empty corner. _____

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A Put (✓) next to your choices.***Mrs Amworth*****Stop reading the story at the end of page 10. The vampire that Mr Urcombe is talking about is probably Mrs Amworth. Choose the statement(s) that make us think so.**

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 She said she is 45 years old, but she looks ten years younger. ___</p> <p>2 She is friendly with everyone, always cheerful and very active. ___</p> <p>3 Her ancestors are buried in Maxley. There was an epidemic of vampirism in Maxley hundreds of years ago. ___</p> <p>4 She says she is not frightened of ghost stories; she loves them. ___</p> <p>5 There was an epidemic of vampirism in India before she came to England. Her husband was one of the victims. ___</p> | <p>6 She does not want to meet Mr Urcombe after his talk about the epidemic in India. ___</p> <p>7 She loves gardening. ___</p> <p>8 She tells the narrator to keep his windows open at night. ___</p> <p>9 She says she loves the night air and the soil. ___</p> <p>10 The narrator had a dream in which she was at his window, smiling at him, but maybe, this was not a dream. ___</p> |
|--|--|

The Phantom Coach**At the end of page 27, guess why James sees a tiny light when he looks back toward the old road.**

- 1 Someone is following him. Perhaps he is a vampire or a murderer. ___
- 2 There is no light. He is imagining this. ___
- 3 It is the night mail coach that he wants to get on. ___
- 4 It is the phantom of the coach that fell into the valley below nine years ago. ___

Good Lady Ducayne**Stop reading at the end of page 41 and guess which of the following happens at the end of the story.**

- 1 We discover that Lady Ducayne's doctor is a vampire. He preys on the lady's young, healthy companions. ___
- 2 Lady Ducayne finally dies, leaving all her money and jewels to Bella. Bella and her mother become rich. ___
- 3 Mr Stafford discovers the truth about Lady Ducayne and her doctor. He accuses them of murder. ___
- 4 Mr Stafford marries Bella and starts working for Lady Ducayne as her doctor. He replaces Dr Parravicini. ___

Keeping His Promise**At the end of page 64, try to guess who really Marriott's guest is and why he visits him.**

- 1 He is the ghost of a dead friend and makes himself invisible later on. Only his breathing is heard. ___
- 2 He died while sleeping in Marriott's bed. But his spirit remains in the bedroom. ___
- 3 Marriott had a hallucination because he was very tired. Actually, no one came to his door. The breathing that he hears is also a hallucination. ___
- 4 He was bitten by a vampire on the way to Marriott's house. And he has bitten Marriott's wrist because he himself is a vampire now. ___

A Character Crosswords.

Look at the crossword in the box. It is about the character of Lady Amworth in the 1st story. Then, make crosswords about the characters in the other stories.

VERY ACTIVE

A MYSTERIOUS WOMAN

WIDOW

45 YEARS OLD

BURIED IN THE CEMETERY

PIQUETTE - HER FAVOURITE GAME

HOUSE IN MAXLEY

1 the main character in *The Phantom Coach* (the lawyer)

.....M.....

.....U.....

.....R.....

.....R.....

.....A.....

.....Y.....

2 the main character in *Good Lady Ducayne*

.....B.....

.....E.....

.....L.....

.....L.....

.....A.....

3 Lady Ducayne's doctor

.....P.....

.....A.....

.....R.....

.....R.....

.....A.....

.....V.....

.....I.....

.....C.....

.....I.....

.....N.....

.....I.....

4 the main character in *Keeping His Promise*

.....M.....

.....A.....

.....R.....

.....R.....

.....I.....

.....O.....

.....T.....

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