

Pupil 1



A radiant smile glowed on Mr Blackthorn's face; it was contagious. The students gushed into the classroom along with a flood of noise. Mr Blackthorn began to write his name onto the whiteboard. The squeaking of the pen pierced through the chaos and the bell rang. The silence was broken by Mr Blackthorn's introduction, he had kind eyes, but the pupils were funeral black. His hair was black and silky, but his clothes contrasted with this. He had a burgundy suit that was impeccable - not a crease in sight. He greeted every student with a warm smile as he handed out the lined paper.

“I want to get to each and every one of your personalities, your likes and dislikes and some of your hobbies, for example, I hate garlic and love cranberry juice. On the weekends I enjoy reading and hunting..... deer of course!” said Mr Blackthorn, “Now, your turn. The students began scribbling away with wonder covering their faces. Mr Blackthorn settled back down into his desk. He had a flask labelled cranberry juice and every so often he took a brief sip and his eyes lit up and a sense of relief rushed through his body.

The bell rang and a sea of students flooded the hallways, Mr Blackthorn left an unforgettable, kind impression in every student that sat in his classroom, everybody loved him.

He slammed the door and the sound echoed through the corridors. However, a small window was in this door. Small but visible. Mr Blackthorn began tinting each and every

window in his classroom and soon enough the classroom had been switched from a greenhouse, to a lair.

An old telephone rang; Mr Blackthorn marched over to it and rasped down the phone
“I am at work; I told you not to call me here.”

He hang the phone up with force and glided a crystal bottle, with thick glass walls and a jewel stopper out of his draw. Carved into the bottles was the letters AB-.

Merit x 2

Strength: You reveal Mr Blackthorn’s vampire identity through carefully connected clues, especially the “cranberry juice” and the final AB- label. You achieve all three challenge elements: avoiding the forbidden words, planting an early clue that gains significance, and giving “hunting... deer of course” a darker double meaning.

Next step: Refine your sentence punctuation to control the suspense. Separate complete ideas with full stops rather than commas, particularly in the opening paragraph, so each revealing detail has greater impact.

Pupil 2



Mrs Pickle was the most charming housemaid in town. Everyone loved her. She was the maid of Tim's household, and was always making them the fluffiest scones in the morning. Mrs Pickle liked to do this at night, as she said it helped her to focus, and have some quiet time. She spoke in an almost mesmerising way, like her voice was drawing you in. Smiling was the thing she did best. She was always smiling. Her expression never changed, just stayed with this one, huge smile. Her face was soft and wrinkled, and consistently covered in makeup. She always made sure one little spot on her cheek was fully covered, 'for extra effect', she always chirped. Every night you could hear her shuffling about downstairs, occasionally giggling with glee. She was marvelling at something, but no-one knew what.

Mrs Pickle never went on holiday. In fact, she never left the house! Even when the entire family was out, she would stay at home and do 'work'. Tim always found it strange that hardly anything changed from the time they left to the time they came home. Even when they offered to take her out, she always said no, as she claimed she was 'seriously dedicated.' She would stay at a window to wave, make sure they were gone, until she went back inside. Mrs Pickle had her own room, the basement, and strictly no-one was allowed in under any circumstances. She had placed tripwires and laser sensors outside, so she would know if anyone dared. Little did anyone know, she kept a large rat called Gertrude, who she fed the scraps of dinner. She let him out in the house while 'making scones' at night, to locate and bring back a mix of items. Anything from money, to jewellery, little by little. She had made thousands. And then, just as the

family were starting to notice, she would disappear in the night, moving on to the next unsuspecting family. Each time, she would forge false reviews and ratings, allowing her to move on without suspicion. And there was one more thing. Her name wasn't Mrs Pickle. Nobody knew her real name. Not even her.

Merit x 2

Strength: You make Mrs Pickle's constant smile increasingly unsettling and achieve all three challenge elements: avoiding the forbidden words, revealing the hidden purpose of her nighttime "baking", and giving her claim to be "seriously dedicated" a darker double meaning.

Next step: Reveal her dishonesty through small discoveries rather than explaining her entire scheme. Let Tim spot Gertrude carrying jewellery towards the basement, allowing the reader to piece together the truth.

Pupil 3



Mrs

Whitmore was the sort of person everyone wished they lived next door to. Every morning she stepped outside her spotless house with a warm smile and a basket of freshly baked biscuits. Her silver hair was always neatly pinned back, and her bright blue eyes sparkled like sunlight on water. She remembered everyone's birthday, watered elderly neighbours' plants, and helped children carry their heavy school bags.

"You can always count on me," she would say in her gentle, musical voice.

Nobody ever questioned her kindness. Whenever something was lost, she was always the first to help find it. She moved calmly from room to room, opening drawers and peering beneath furniture with delicate fingers. Somehow, she always knew exactly where to look. When little Daniel lost his watch, she found it buried beneath a pile of leaves in his back garden.

"How clever of you!" His mother laughed.

Mrs Whitmore simply smiled. "I do like to keep an eye on things."

There was always something comforting about the way she said it.

Every evening, she sat beside her front window, sipping tea and watching the street. She waved at passing cars and greeted everyone by name. Yet whenever anyone waved back, her gaze followed them until they disappeared from sight. Her curtains never closed completely, leaving a thin gap through which two watchful eyes could always be seen.

One rainy afternoon, Daniel knocked on her door. His mother had sent him to return a borrowed umbrella. Mrs Whitmore welcomed him inside, where the air smelled of roses and freshly polished wood.

“Your mother must be worried about you,” she said hanging his wet coat on a hook.

Daniel frowned. “How do you know?”

She paused, her smile remaining perfectly still.

“Oh, dear. Mothers always worry.”

As he turned to leave, Daniel noticed a small photograph on the hallway table. It showed him standing outside his own bedroom window, wearing the blue pyjamas he had received only yesterday. Beneath it lay dozens of photographs of other neighbours, each carefully labelled with their names, routines and secrets.

Mrs Whitmore appeared beside him, holding a plate of biscuits.

“Take one darling,” she whispered. “I always make sure that my guests have everything they need.”

Daniel looked at the photos again. Behind him, Mrs Whitmore quietly locked the front door. After all, she had spent years learning how to make people feel safe enough to let her in.

2x Merit

Strength: You skilfully transform Mrs Whitmore’s kindness into something disturbing through precise details and controlled revelations. You achieve all three challenge elements: avoiding the forbidden words, making her ability to find lost belongings suspicious in hindsight, and giving “I do like to keep an eye on things” a chilling double meaning.

Next step: Sharpen the ending by finishing with Mrs Whitmore quietly locking the front door. This action would leave the reader to infer her intentions, making the final moment more unsettling.