

SIMPLIFIED READERS

A1

LEVEL 1

The Judge's House

BRAM STOKER



WORKSHEETS

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ABOUT THE STORE

The Judge's House is a short horror story written by Bram Stoker, who is best known for his horror story, *Dracula*. *The Judge's House* has always attracted readers of horror fiction. Today, it is considered a masterpiece and one of Stoker's greatest works. The story first appeared in an English weekly magazine in 1891. It was first published in book form in 1914, in a collection of short stories by Stoker, entitled *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Stories*, two years after his death. It has appeared in several other Stoker collections, including *The Bram Stoker Bedside*

Companion (1973) and *Best Ghost and Horror Stories* (1997). It has been adapted as a play for radio and television and more recently, for comic books. The Judge in the story is as frightening and evil as Count Dracula. This judge character is based on Lord George Jeffreys, who served as a judge in 1685-1688. He was known as a 'hanging judge'. The story itself was inspired by an earlier Irish horror story, which is about students renting a cheap house in the country and which includes scary events, a giant rat, a portrait of the previous owner of the house, and an evil judge.

SUMMARY

In the story, a university student named Malcolm arrives in a small town, which he has never heard of before. He needs a quiet place where he can study for his final examination. He thinks this is a perfect town for him since he doesn't know anyone, and nobody knows him. He rents a very old and big house where he can concentrate on his studies. He learns that the house belonged to a judge who hanged criminals for punishment. The Judge died 100 years ago, but everyone thinks that his spirit lives in the house. The student does not care about this at all, and he happily moves in. Because the house is too big and has many rooms, he settles in its big dining room. He hires an old woman to clean it for him. He thinks he will enjoy living in this house although everyone in the town tells strange things about it.

While he is studying in his room on the first night, his room becomes filled with rats. They make a lot of noise. Luckily, Malcolm is not afraid of rats. He wonders where they are coming from and examines the room with a lamp. There are old paintings on the walls. They are all covered with dust and dirt. In one corner of the room, next to the fireplace, there is a rope hanging from the ceiling. He thinks it is the rope of the big alarm bell on the roof. When he decides to go to bed at dawn time, he notices that all the rats have gone away. The room is very quiet. Just then, he sees a huge rat sitting in the high wooden chair next to the fireplace. This giant rat irritates him, so he tries to hit it with the iron fire poker. But the rat goes up the rope and disappears in the darkness. Then, the other rats come out of the holes they were hiding in and run around and play in the room. Their noise does not bother Malcolm; he is so tired that he falls asleep in seconds.

The next day, on the way back from the park where he read his book, he stops by the inn and tells the landlady about the rats and the huge rat. She gets scared and tells Malcolm to be very careful. That night, the rats fill the room again while Malcolm is studying. And the giant rat comes and sits in the chair again, staring at him with evil eyes. This time, Malcolm throws his heavy books at the rat. When one of the books hits it on the head, the rat moves up the rope and goes into a hole on one of the old paintings on the wall. A day later, the landlady introduces Malcolm to a doctor. The doctor warns him about the rope in his room. He hopes that Malcolm will pull the rope and sound the alarm bell if he is in danger. And he decides not to sleep that night because if he hears the arm bell, he will wake other men in the town, and they will rescue the young man.

There is a fierce storm outside while Malcolm is studying in his room that night. Malcolm can hear the alarm bell on the roof swinging with the wind. Suddenly, the rope in the room begins to shake, and Malcolm sees the giant rat coming down on it toward him. After scaring the rat away, Malcolm examines the painting that the rat disappeared through the previous night. He is shocked because it is a portrait of the Judge in his room, sitting in a high wooden chair beside a fireplace, and there is a rope hanging down from the ceiling. Malcolm is frightened now because the Judge has the same evil eyes as the huge rat.

An hour later, the giant rat is back in the room and is chewing on the end of the rope. And the damaged part drops down on to the floor. This means that Malcolm won't be able to pull it to sound the alarm bell when he is in danger. Malcolm angrily sends the rat away, and it disappears. Then, Malcolm looks at the painting to see if it is in the hole on it. He gets horrified because the Judge has disappeared from the painting. In fear, Malcolm turns back and sees the Judge sitting in the wooden chair and staring cruelly at him. Malcolm stands frozen in fear; he can't move or shout. And as the clock strikes midnight, the Judge kills Malcolm with the loop he makes from the rope.

Discuss before you begin reading:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 a Do you like ghost stories? Why / Why not? b Do you believe in ghosts? What would you do if you saw a ghost?</p> | <p>2 Are you afraid of rats? What would you do if you saw a rat in your room?</p> |
|--|---|

A This is a paragraph about rats. There are ten missing words in it. Try to find those words in the puzzle, and then, use them to fill in the blanks in the paragraph.

A rat is similar to a mouse, but it is much bigger. It has a long **1** _____, a pointed **2** _____ and long **3** _____ around its mouth. Its strong, sharp **4** _____ allow it to chew through wood, glass and metal. The **5** _____ that covers its body may be brown, grey, black or white. An adult rat can enter your home through a small hole or a **6** _____ in a wall. Rats have a strong sense of **7** _____ and taste, so they can find food in your home very easily. Rats are **8** _____ animals; they cause damage and carry **9** _____. However, some people keep rats as **10** _____ because they are very intelligent and very easy to train.

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

B Match the bold words in the sentences (1-10) with the definitions (a-j).

| | |
|--|--|
| 1 The story is about an evil king who killed many people and treated everyone cruelly. ____ | a to make a sudden loud cry due to fear, pain or a surprise |
| 2 Spiders are usually harmless, but most people fear them. ____ | b to make a short, high noise |
| 3 Some people believe that they are visited by the spirits of their loved ones in their dreams. ____ | c to shake slightly |
| 4 Cockroaches are the most common house pests, and they mostly live in our kitchens and bathrooms. ____ | d very big in size or in amount |
| 5 Some people scream when they see a mouse or a spider. ____ | e the ghost of a dead person who comes back into the world |
| 6 The eyes of cats glitter in the dark. ____ | f to damage a surface with something sharp |
| 7 Cats usually scratch our furniture and carpets. ____ | g to be afraid of something |
| 8 He was so nervous that his hands were trembling. ____ | h very bad; hateful |
| 9 The dining room is enormous, so he studies there. ____ | i a small animal or insect that damages plants or food supply |
| 10 The sound of a door that squeaks is very annoying. ____ | j to shine, to glow brightly |

A Complete the sentences after you finish reading Chapter 1.

- 1 Malcolm's mother suggests that he should stay at _____ and study there.
- 2 Malcolm wants to go to a small town in _____ and study there.
- 3 Malcolm gets on the first _____ that goes to an unknown town.
- 4 Malcolm arrives in the town in the _____ and spends the night in _____.
- 5 Malcolm plans to stay in the town for _____ month(s).
- 6 Malcolm drinks a lot of _____ at night in order to study until the morning.
- 7 Malcolm is not afraid of the _____ that run and play in his room.
- 8 Malcolm sees a huge _____ sitting on the high wooden _____ in the room.
- 9 The rope hanging in one corner of the room is attached to _____ on the roof of the house.
- 10 The giant rat escapes up the rope when Malcolm runs toward it with the _____.

B Who is who? When you have read up to page 24, match the names and the descriptions (a-f).

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Benchurch ____ | a the old cleaning woman |
| Carnford ____ | b the doctor; the landlady's friend |
| Dempster ____ | c the lawyer; agent of the house |
| Malcolmson ____ | d a small, quiet town in the country |
| Thornhill ____ | e the landlady; rents rooms at the inn |
| Witham ____ | f a young man; has just arrived in the town |

C When you finish reading Chapter 4, guess what will happen in the next chapter. Write YES or NO. Check your answers when you finish the book.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Malcolm will kill the giant rat. | | |
| Malcolm will forget to look into the hole on the painting. | | |
| The giant rat will attack Malcolm. | | |
| The spirit of the Judge will come to visit Malcolm. | | |
| The Judge in the painting will come alive and kill Malcolm. | | |
| When Malcolm hits the giant rat, it will turn into the Judge. | | |

A Who is who? Read each sentence in the chart and put its number next to the correct name below.

Mrs Dempster: 1, 7, _____

Mr Carnford: _____

Mrs Whitman: _____

Mr Thornhill: _____

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 serves Malcolm's breakfast in the mornings | 2 tells Malcolm what the rope is used for | 3 tells Malcolm that the house belonged to the Judge | 4 runs to the Judge's house with a group of people |
| 5 thinks the huge rat is the devil | 6 tells Malcolm to take care of himself and be careful about his health | 7 cleans Malcolm's room and lights the fire | 8 thinks it is normal to hear strange sounds in the old house |
| 9 finds a cleaning lady for Malcolm | 10 does not believe the stories about the house | 11 introduces the doctor to Malcolm | 12 decides to stay awake that night |
| 13 is surprised that someone wants to rent the old house | 14 is worried about Malcolm's health | 15 expects something bad to happen in the house that night | 16 thinks Malcolm still looks healthy and is clever |
| 17 looks into each room together with Malcolm | 18 is not afraid of strange things | 19 gives Malcolm the keys to the house | 20 says the devil will kill Malcolm |

B These paragraphs are about what happens between Malcolm and the giant rat. Put them in the correct order (as they appear in the story). Write the numbers under the letters (a-f).

| | |
|---|---|
| a 1 | On his first morning in the house, just as he is going to bed at dawn, Malcolm sees a big rat sitting in the chair by the fire. He throws a thick book at the rat, and when the book misses it, he runs toward it with the iron fire poker. The rat jumps down from the chair, goes up the rope and disappears. |
| b — | The rat comes down from the hole and sits on the chair again, staring at Malcolm with its evil eyes. Malcolm decides to forget about the rat, and he focuses on his book. An hour later, while he is still studying, Malcolm hears a squeak from the corner of the room where the rope is hanging. This time, the rat is gnawing the lower part of the rope. |
| c — | Malcolm begins throwing the books in the pile at the rat one by one; the fourth book he throws hits the rat. The rat is hurt and climbs back up the rope. It goes into a hole in the corner of one of the paintings on the wall. Malcolm decides to look at that painting more closely in daylight and goes to bed. |
| d — | Late at night that day, while Malcolm is studying at the table, the rat sits on the high chair again. Malcolm throws a book at it and then runs toward it with the fire poker. The rat escapes up the rope, the way it did the first time. So, Malcolm makes a plan on what to do next time it appears. He places a pile of books on the table according to the plan. Ten minutes later, the rat comes down the rope and sits on the high chair. |
| e — | The part of the rope that the rat chewed on drops to the floor. Malcolm furiously tries to hit the rat with his book and then runs after it. But the rat escapes. Determined to catch the rat, Malcolm searches the room to find it. He looks into the hole on the painting, thinking it might be hiding there. But he gets shocked and terrified because the Judge is not in the picture anymore. |
| f — | Late at night the next day, there is a storm outside, so the rope is shaking a little. Malcolm takes the rope in his hand to examine it. Suddenly, the rope begins to shake. The rat is on it and is coming towards Malcolm. So, Malcolm drops the rope immediately, and the rat climbs back on it and disappears. Then, Malcolm looks at the painting on the wall and sees that it is a picture of the Judge in the same room. Meanwhile, the rat is looking at Malcolm from the hole in the painting. |
| AND... Malcolm turns around in fear and sees the Judge himself sitting on the chair in the room! | |

TEST YOURSELF

TOTAL

THE JUDGE'S HOUSE by Bram Stoker

A1 - Level 1

A Write down *who* says these and *to whom* they say them. (5x4=20 pts)

Malcolm / Mr Thornhill / Mrs Whitman / Mrs Dempster

- 1 'You will definitely be alone here. Don't worry.'
_____ to _____
- 2 'Oh, an old devil! It's trying to tell you something.'
_____ to _____
- 3 'It is the rope of the alarm bell on the roof, I suppose. It is very strong but soft.'
_____ to _____
- 4 'Why do you tell such a horrible thing? The young man has enough problems.'
_____ to _____
- 5 'Perhaps we will hear the alarm bell from the judge's house tonight.'
_____ to _____

B Mark the sentences as True (T) or False (F). (10x2=20 pts)

- ___ 1 Malcolm could not decide which town to go to.
- ___ 2 Malcolm tells his parents where exactly he is going to.
- ___ 3 Malcolm's father promises not to tell any of his friends where he is.
- ___ 4 Malcolm is very disappointed when he finds himself in a very small town.
- ___ 5 Malcolm pays the lawyer one month's rent.
- ___ 6 Malcolm is not interested in the strange things people say about the house.
- ___ 7 No one in the town knows that the house belonged to a hanging judge.
- ___ 8 The Judge died 100 years ago.
- ___ 9 Malcolm goes to a park to study on his first day in the house.
- ___ 10 Malcolm wishes he had found a better house.

C Mark the correct answers. (10x3=30 pts)

- 1 Mrs Whitman helps Malcolm - - - .
a buy a new bed
b clean the house
c buy some groceries
- 2 Why does Malcolm want to live in the dining room of the house?
a It has a big comfortable wooden chair by the fire.
b There is a long table and a fireplace in it.
c It has a beautiful view of the park.
- 3 Why is Mrs Whitman worried about Malcolm?
a She thinks the cleaning woman may harm him.
b He studies too hard and sleeps very little.
c She fears that the rats will attack him at night.
- 4 Malcolm's room is very quiet - - - .
a when the cleaning woman leaves
b after the evil rat leaves
c when the evil rat comes

5 Where does Malcolm put the end of the rope?

- a on the big wooden chair
- b under the lamp on his table
- c on top of the pile of books

6 Why does Doctor Thornhill come to the inn?

- a Mrs Whitman wanted him to see Malcolm.
- b He wanted to see Mrs Whitman.
- c He wants to become friends with Malcolm.

7 Why does Malcolm place a lamp on the floor near the rope?

- a He thinks the rat will be scared of the light and go back.
- b He wants to see the painting more clearly.
- c He wants to see the rat coming down the rope.

8 We can understand from the story that - - - .

- a black was the evil Judge's favourite colour
- b judges used to wear a black cap when they gave a death sentence
- c judges had to wear a black cap outside the court

9 Why does the bell on the roof make a faint sound while the Judge is trying to kill Malcolm?

- a The giant rat is climbing it to escape to the ceiling.
- b There are hundreds of rats on the upper half of the rope.
- c The wind outside is making it swing.

10 How does the Judge kill Malcolm?

- a He makes the evil rat bite him.
- b He strikes him with the rope.
- c He hangs him with the rope.

D Match the two halves of the sentences (1-5 with a-e). (5x4=20 pts)

- ___ 1 Malcolm does not care about the rats' noise ...
- ___ 2 Malcolm drinks a lot of tea at nights ...
- ___ 3 The rats hide in the holes ...
- ___ 4 Malcolm wants more and more rats to come down on the rope ...
- ___ 5 Everyone, along with the doctor, runs to the house when they hear the alarm bell ...

- a ... when the evil rat appears.
- b ... but they are too late.
- c ... because he wants to be awake and study.
- d ... because he is very tired and sleepy.
- e ... so that the alarm bell will ring more loudly.

E Write short answers to the questions. (5x2=10 pts)

- 1 What colour is the Judge's robe? _____
- 2 How many lamps does Malcolm have in his room? _____
- 3 What does the Judge put around Malcolm's neck? _____
- 4 What do the people have in their hands when they come to the Judge's house? _____
- 5 Where is the Judge when people arrive? _____

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PALLADIUM TOWER

Barbaros Mah. Kardelen Sk. No: 2 Kat: 22 34746 Ataşehir / İstanbul

Tel: 0850 288 35 00 • Faks: 0850 288 35 09

www.ydspublishing.com • info@ydspublishing.com