



Sounds in the Attic Set 8 (416 words)

Written by Angela Weeks and illustrated by Dick Weigall

Special words

lived, old, told, where, when, while, there, day, friends, was, sometimes, power, stories, babies, ghost, whose, said, my, reply, down, light, night, saw, heard, could, would, sure, House, are, before, 4pm, to, child, the, floors, clothes, glass, particularly, lady, behind, she, of, me, funeral, we, explored, evening, I, be, asked, no, don't, were, I am, tiptoed, door, together, opened, hatch, aware they

<s> says /z/ in as, used, noises

<le> says /l/ in rattled, huddle, horrible, candle, shuffled, middle

Schwa sound at the beginning of the word - <a> says /u/ in about, around, across, alarm, aware.

Granny, Mum's mum, lived in a big, old house in the north of Scotland where winters are freezing cold and it gets dark before 4pm on the shortest day.

Mum used to tell us about her life as a child in the old house with its five floors and the big attic under the roof where Granny kept trunks of clothes that Mum and her friends used for dress-ups.

She told us that when there was a storm, the roof tiles rattled, the wind moaned and the rain pelted against the glass. Sometimes, the power went off and the family huddled around a log fire, using torches and candles to see. It sounded quite spooky.

We liked Mum's stories about life in the big house. We particularly liked her tales of the ghost that lived in the attic. Mum said she had seen the ghost when

she was a child. It was an old lady whose dress trailed behind her as she shuffled across the floor. Mum and her sister had named the ghost, Elizabeth.

It was the middle of winter when Granny died and Mum took my sister, Penny and me to Scotland for the funeral, and to pack up the contents of the house. Mum spent her time filling boxes with Granny's belongings while we explored the big house and its grounds.

At bedtime on the first evening, Penny and I huddled around Mum on Granny's big bed while she told us ghost stories. That night, Penny and I heard noises in the attic. The next morning, we told Mum.

"Could it be Elizabeth?" we asked, not sure if we hoped the reply would be 'Yes' or 'No'. Mum smiled. "I don't think so," she replied. But we were not satisfied.

The next evening, Penny and I set the alarm clock for 1 am and when it went off, we tiptoed to the attic door, torches in hand. Together, we dragged down the ladder and went up the steps.

As soon as we opened the hatch, we became aware of a horrible smell and, in the light of the torches, we saw animal droppings and babies in a nest. Then we understood. The shuffling sound was not a ghost. It was rats. We quickly closed the hatch and went back to bed.

Seemingly, Granny had not been aware of the family of rats that had made its home in her attic. But it looked as if they had been there for a long time!

Questions

After reading the text, or the relevant page, ask students one or more of the following questions. If students are working in pairs, alternate Partner 1, then Partner 2.

- Do you believe in ghosts? Give a reason for your answer.
- Have you ever had an animal or bird in your roof? Tell me what happened.
- Do you like listening to someone reading a story? What is your favourite story and why is it your favourite? Briefly, tell me what the story is about.
- Have you ever moved house? Tell me how you packed up your belongings and took them to the new house.