

The Whispering Library: A Narrative Analysis

Learning objective: To identify and analyse how authors use descriptive language and structure to build atmosphere in a narrative.

Read the story below carefully. Think about how Pip the caterpillar feels as he explores the library. Answer the questions that follow using evidence from the text.

Pip the caterpillar crawled slowly across the mahogany desk, his tiny legs clicking against the polished wood. The library was a cavern of forgotten dreams, where books stood like silent sentinels guarding secrets from centuries past. Dust motes danced in the shafts of golden afternoon light that pierced through the stained-glass windows. Pip reached the centre of the desk and looked up at a towering shelf. He could smell the comforting scent of vanilla and age, a perfume that only old paper can provide. Suddenly, a soft breeze rustled the pages of a nearby atlas, and the sound echoed like a secret whisper. Pip held his breath. Was the room talking back to him, or was the wind simply playing a game with the stories tucked away in their leather bindings?

Word bank: atmosphere · metaphor · personification · suspense · adverbial · narrative

1. Identify one example of personification in the second sentence. Explain how this description changes the mood of the story. (2 marks)

2. Find a simile in the text that describes the books. Why do you think the author chose this specific comparison? (2 marks)

3. What does the phrase 'a cavern of forgotten dreams' suggest about the library? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (2 marks)

4. Identify one adverbial of time used in the passage. (1 mark)

5. How does the author build suspense towards the end of the passage? Refer to the final two sentences. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw your own version of the 'cavern of forgotten dreams' library as described by Pip. Include the shafts of golden light and the towering shelves filled with books.



Extension challenge: Write a short paragraph (4-6 sentences) describing what Pip finds inside the atlas he discovered. Use at least one metaphor and one fronted adverbial.