


Name: ..... Date:.....

Cut out the verses of the poem 'A Palace Mystery' by Trevor Millum. Arrange the verses into, what you think is, the best order. Be prepared to explain why you have chosen that order.

<p>And in the morning the robber is found: but of the ghost and the queen there's no sight...and no sound.</p>	<p>There's a shout. There's a scuffle. There's a cry from the queen. Through the old window three figures are seen.</p>	<p>Turn off the telly. Turn off the light. Let's make up a story before bed tonight.</p>	<p>Let's start with a robber. Let's start with a queen. Let's start with a ghost that only I've seen</p>
<p>The robber is coming to steal the queen's crown, and the ghost is wearing the old king's gown.</p>	<p>Three shadows were noticed by eyes half asleep. But out of the room two shadows did creep...</p>	<p>The robber is outside. The queen is in bed. The ghost is twirling A long silken thread</p>	

'A Palace Mystery'

Turn off the telly.  
Turn off the light.  
Let's make up a story  
before bed tonight.

Let's start with a robber.  
Let's start with a queen.  
Let's start with a ghost  
that only I've seen

The robber is outside.  
The queen is in bed.  
The ghost is twirling  
a long silken thread

The robber is coming  
to steal the queen's crown,  
and the ghost is wearing  
the old king's gown.

There's a shout.  
There's a scuffle.  
There's a cry from the queen.  
Through the old window  
three figures are seen.

Three shadows were noticed  
by eyes half asleep.  
But out of the room  
two shadows did creep...

And in the morning  
the robber is found:  
but of the ghost and the queen  
there's no sight...and no sound.



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Complete the following police report based around the poem. Consider who the witness could have been: servants, a guard or perhaps a guest in another room? For each witness think about not only what they could have seen or heard but also they response to it; how did it make them feel?

<b>Police Report</b>		
<b>Location of incident</b> (write a description of where the robbery took place using clues from the poem)		
<b>Description of incident</b> (write down the facts about what have taken place)		
		
<b>Witness statements</b> (think about what each person might have seen or heard)		
<b>Further actions</b> (what do you think the police need to do next?)		

## Teaching notes

### Starting things off

Within this seemingly simple poem which lurks a mystery! Before they see the poem, give the children a version where the verses have been shuffled. In pairs or small groups, they should decide on the best order for the verses. The original version can then be displayed. If there is a discrepancy between it and any of the children's versions, discuss why this might be so.

### Discussion: What happened that night?

Here are some questions prompts to lead through a discussion about the poem.

- Who is the 'I' in the poem?
- Is the ghost the ghost of the old king or just pretending to be him – or is there some other explanation?
- What is the silken thread for?
- What causes the shout and the cry?
- Whose eyes were half asleep?
- What happened to the third shadow?
- Where was the robber found?
- What has happened to the ghost and the queen?

These, and questions raised by the children, are to encourage imagination and develop alternative possibilities. There are no right answers. The poet has deliberately not given any 'explanation'. When asked, he said, 'I'm not sure what happened. It's a bit of a mystery.'

### The police investigation

What does the police investigation reveal? Let the class decide who could be questioned, e.g. servants, a guard, a guest sleeping in another bedroom...

In groups of three, children could take on the roles of police interviewer, a witness and a scribe. The interviewer needs to think up a range of questions and the witness needs to imagine where they were and what they saw or heard. The scribe makes quick notes of the questions and the answers.

To help less able children, here are some questions which might be asked. Alternatively the class could brainstorm their own list of questions from which interviewers can pick a selection.

- Where were you last night?
- Did you hear anything unusual?
- How well did you know the queen?
- Do you remember the king? What was he like?
- Have you seen ghosts in the palace?
- Where is the king's crown kept?

Explain that a good questioner follows up on answers. For example, if the witness replies 'I was on guard at the south gate' to 'Where were you last night?' the interviewer might ask, 'From what time? When did you come off duty? Where did you go then?' and so on.

### Writing activities

- Write the police report. This is a difficult task as the official tone of the writing may be hard for most pupils to get right. Some guidance is provided which can be adapted to suit different abilities.
- Write an account of what happened from the point of view of the robber, the queen or the ghost.
- Write one or two additional verses. These could be inserted within the poem or continue the story further.