

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Exploring Mood

Mood is the feeling you get from reading a piece of writing. Another way to describe mood is *atmosphere*. When you walk into a place, it has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way; when you “walk into” a story, it too has an atmosphere that creates a feeling. Writers create mood through word choice, imagery, dialogue, setting, and plot.

In this activity, you will consider the mood during the Whites’ visit with Sergeant Major Morris in Scene 1 of *The Monkey’s Paw* by playwright Jennifer Dignan.

Here is a word that could be used to describe the mood of the scene:

**ominous**

Now let’s look at what creates this mood.

Psst!  
*Ominous*  
means “feeling like something bad or evil will happen; threatening.”

## The Setting

The very beginning of Scene contains some information about the setting. The questions below ask you about this information and how the setting helps create an ominous mood.

**1. The description says that the scene takes place in the evening. Choose the statement that explains how a night-time setting helps create an ominous mood.**

- Night is often thought of as the part of the day when scary or bad things can happen. People feel less safe in the dark than in the light. So a nighttime setting helps create an ominous mood.
- Nighttime is when people eat dinner and relax by a fire before going to sleep. So a nighttime setting helps create an ominous mood.

**2. The Stage Directors describe that as the play starts, sounds of a storm rise up in the dark theater. Explain how setting the scene during a storm helps create an ominous mood.**

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## The Dialogue

The dialogue, or conversation between characters, also helps create an ominous mood.

3. We've listed one thing that Sergeant Major Morris says about the monkey's paw that helps create an ominous mood. On the lines, list two more.

MORRIS: "No . . . no, it's best we leave that alone."

MORRIS: \_\_\_\_\_

MORRIS: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Explain how Morris's remarks about the paw help create an ominous mood.

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## Morris's Tone and Body Language

It's not just *what* Sergeant Major Morris says that helps create an ominous mood. *How* he speaks and his body language also add to the feeling that something bad might happen.

5. We've listed two details about how Morris speaks or moves that help create an ominous mood. On the lines, list four more.

He speaks gravely. \_\_\_\_\_

He stares into the fire for a long moment. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Explain how Morris's tone and behavior help create an ominous mood.

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