

Let Me In

A bedroom at night. A large window with white curtains is open, showing a full moon and dark trees outside. A lamp with a white shade is lit on a wooden nightstand. A bed with white linens is in the foreground.

a short story for English
reading and speaking

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Let Me In.....	4
Reading Comprehension Questions.....	11
Essential Vocabulary.....	13
True or False?.....	16
What is the Correct Synonym?.....	18
What is the Correct Antonym?.....	19
Words and Meanings.....	20
Missing Words.....	23
Discussion Questions.....	25
Role Play.....	28
What Are Vampires Anyway?.....	34
Writing.....	37
True or False — Answers.....	39
What is the Correct Synonym — Answers.....	42
What is the Correct Antonym — Answers.....	43
Words and Meanings — Answers.....	44
Missing Words — Answers.....	46
Credits.....	48

Introduction

Do you believe in vampires?

What is the law about allowing vampires into our homes?

Why should we not do this?

If we didn't allow the vampire permission to come in,
could they not enter our home?

Let Me In

Cherise stirred in her sleep.

Two nights ago, a branch had tapped on her window. It had freaked her out at the time.

But then she saw it was just a tree.

She mentioned it to her father the next morning and, without looking up at her; he told her he would take care of it.

He didn't.

Cherise never mentioned it again. There was no point.

Breakfast was a time for staring into space and waiting for the day ahead. No one spoke to each other.

And on the rare occasions when Cherise, her mother and father ate dinner together at the same time, it was done in a sullen, agreed silence.

Everyone too exhausted to talk. No one looked at each other.

Then, after dinner, they all went to their separate rooms to

stare at their phones.

The tapping on the window continued.

Finally, knowing that unless she tried to do something about it she would not get any sleep, Cherise pulled the covers away and went to the window.

She yanked at the blind and staggered back in disbelief.

Outside the window, a figure floated in the air. A woman. Outstandingly beautiful with pale, almost translucent, skin. And long flowing black hair that floated around the woman's shoulders as if she were underwater.

The woman smiled at her.

She had a beautiful smile.

“Cherise. I want to talk to you.”

Cherise stared at the woman through the glass in the window, unable to comprehend what she was seeing.

A woman floating in thin air outside her window? How was this possible?

She was unable to respond. Could not move.

“I know this must look very strange to you,” said the woman. “But I must talk with you.”

Cherise stepped back.

Everything about this looked wrong to her. But she couldn't stop herself from staring at the woman.

The woman came closer to the window and leaned against the glass. Her pale blue eyes shone with a kind of soft sadness.

"I know," she whispered, nodding her head and giving Cherise a sympathetic smile. "I know what it's like."

Cherise finally found her voice.

"You know what what is like?"

"With your parents," said the woman.

A small rush of anxiety surged into Cherise's veins.

The lack of communication, followed by intense arguments, then the icy atmosphere in the house as all three of them tried to avoid each other.

No family trips anywhere. No lunch or dinner outside.

Barely any gifts exchanged.

The worst part was open day at school. They were all obliged to put on a fake smile and pretend they were all one big, happy family.

Smiling at the teachers and nodding their heads in agreement with other parents.

Then, at the end, they would get in the car and drive home in silence.

Get home and go to their own rooms. The house in silence.

The woman pressed her pale fingers against the glass.

“I know what it’s like, Cherise. I know.”

Cherise choked back a sob that rose up from her throat. Suppressed the urge to allow it to come out of her mouth, in case a flood of tears should follow.

She was so tired of crying.

“I don’t know what’s wrong with them,” she said. “I talk to my friends and their families seem... They seem normal. But mine...”

Her voice trailed off, unable to finish the sentence.

“I know exactly how you feel,” said the woman. “Let me in. We can talk about it.”

And at that point, Cherise realised that was exactly what she needed to do.

She wanted to talk to someone. To let all the pent-up

feelings flood out. To just tell someone who actually cares.

She reached out to the latch on the window.

But something stopped her. This woman just floating around outside. It was totally unnatural.

Where had she come from? Who was she?

She pulled her hand down in a rapid motion.

“I think it’s better if we just talk like this,” she said.

The woman gave Cherise a tense smile.

“We can,” she said. “But wouldn’t you like to just talk with someone that understands? To talk with someone that has gone through the same thing?”

Cherise stared through the misty glass at her.

“Has this happened to you? With your parents?”

The woman held her icy-white fingertips to the glass. She nodded.

“I went through this for years,” she said. “When I finally realised what was happening, I had to leave them.”

“You left your family?” asked Cherise.

“Yes.” The woman stared at Cherise. “For many years now. But I am not alone. I have a new family.”

She came closer to the glass. An expression of longing on her face.

“Let me in, Cherise. Let me in. We can talk.”

But still, Cherise had that nagging doubt.

“I think maybe I need to find my mother...”

“No!”

The woman’s face was practically touching the glass.

“You need to talk with me. You can trust me. Just let me in.”

Just then, the door opened to Cherise’s room. Her mother standing by the doorway.

“Cherise, who are you talking to?”

Her mother, all sleepy-eyed, squinting at her daughter in the dimly lit room.

Then her eyes focused on the pale, ghost-like figure floating outside the window.

“Cherise, get away from the window!” she called out.

“I need to talk to someone,” said Cherise. “Someone who understands me.”

Let me in.....

Cherise's hand on the latch of the window. Her fingers prising open the lever.

Let me in Cherise...

Her mother rushed towards her in a panic.

"No, Cherise! Don't open the window! Get away from there!"

Cherise now in a daze as she pulled the lever open.

"You never talk to me. You or Dad. All we do is shout at each other."

The pale woman outside, her arms open wide, two small fangs appearing at the sides of her mouth.

Then Cherise slid the window open.

"Come in," she said.

Reading Comprehension Questions

How does the story begin?

Which character is introduced and where are they?

What does Cherise hear that wakes her up?

Had she told her father about this? What did he do about it?

How is the feeling in Cherise's family? Do her mother and father engage with her very often?

How do they eat dinner?

What do they do after dinner?

What does Cherise do when the tapping on the window continues?

What does she see outside the window?

Describe the woman.

What does the woman want?

What colour are the woman's eyes?

What similarity is there between Cherise's life and the woman's life?

Does Cherise go on vacation or on holiday with her parents?

Does she receive anything from them?

Describe open day at the school?

Do her parents behave any differently?

How does Cherise react when the woman expresses empathy towards her?

How does Cherise describe her friends' families?

Does Cherise want to talk to someone?

What initially stops her from opening the window?

How long has the woman been separated from her own family?

Who appears at the doorway?

What does this person tell Cherise to do?

Does Cherise open the window?

What strange things appear on the woman's face?

Essential Vocabulary

stirred	sympathetic	rapid
freaked	anxiety	unnatural
branch	communication	stopped
tapped	intense	tense
mention	arguments	understands
staring	atmosphere	misty
rare	avoided	nagging
sullen	barely	doubt
exhausted	exchanged	finally
continued	obliged	leave
yanked	pretend	expression
blind	fake	longing
staggered	nodding	trust
disbelief	urge	sleepy-eyed
figure	flood	squinting
floating	tired	dimly lit
translucent	crying	focused
comprehend	exactly	ghost-like
unable	realised	panic
respond	pent-up	lever

move	flood	prizing
soft	actually	daze
sadness		

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Stirred — *To cause an emotion or reaction to be felt or noticed.*

Sympathetic — *Showing or expressing compassion or understanding for someone else's feelings or situation.*

Then write a sentence of your own that uses the new word or phrase correctly.

As John looked at the old photographs from his

childhood, it stirred feelings from the past that he had not felt for a long time.

I listened to my colleague as he complained about his workload and tried to lend a sympathetic ear.

Do this with all the vocabulary and, over time, this will help improve all your English skills — reading, writing, speaking and listening.

True or False?

Take a look at all the statements below about the story.
Say whether each statement is true or false.
If it is false, then correct it and make it true.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan.

Cherise's father took care of the branch tapping on her window.

The family often had cheerful and lively meals together.

Cherise's family communicated well with each other.

Cherise felt lonely and misunderstood by her parents.

The woman outside Cherise's window had long, flowing black hair.

The woman outside the window was floating in the air.

Cherise immediately opened the window when she saw the woman.

The woman claimed to understand Cherise's feelings about her family.

Cherise's mother interrupted the conversation between Cherise and the woman.

Cherise's mother was angry when she saw her daughter talking to the woman.

The woman outside the window had pale blue eyes.

The woman had an aggressive appearance throughout the story.

Cherise's father warned her about the woman before.

The story ends with Cherise refusing to open the window.

The woman outside the window had fangs that became visible towards the end of the story.

What is the Correct Synonym?

Look at the table below.

Match all the words on the left with the correct synonyms on the right.

A synonym is a word of similar meaning.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan.

Stirred	Strained
Intense	Weary
Tense	Complaining
Atmosphere	Peering
Rare	Craving
Nagging	Aroused
Sullen	Jerked
Exhausted	Ambience
Continued	Morose
Yanked	Severe
Longing	Persisted
Squinting	Infrequent

What is the Correct Antonym?

Look at the table below.

Match all the words on the left with the correct antonyms on the right.

An antonym is a word of similar meaning.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan.

Sympathetic	Genuine
Tense	Glancing
Staring	Opaque
Misty	Confronted
Rare	Serenity
Avoided	Focus
Sullen	Energized
Fake	Indifferent
Tired	Clear
Translucent	Calm
Panic	Cheerful
Daze	Common

Words and Meanings

Look at the table of words below.

Now match each of the words with the correct meaning below the table.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan.

Sympathetic	Pretend	Panic
Anxiety	Trust	Dimly lit
Stirred	Disbelief	Nagging
Tense	Translucent	Obliged
Exchanged	Comprehend	Flood

To affect or move someone's emotions or thoughts.

A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.

To make believe or act as if something is true when it is not.

A space or environment that is poorly illuminated with low or soft lighting.

To understand or grasp the meaning of something.

A large amount of water covering an area that is usually dry, or a sudden overwhelming flow or outpouring of something.

A firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something.

The inability or refusal to accept that something is true or real.

Showing understanding and compassion towards someone else's feelings.

A sudden overwhelming fear or anxiety that often leads to unthinking or irrational behaviour.

To be required or compelled to do something, often out of a sense of duty or necessity.

Allowing light to pass through, but not detailed shapes, so that objects on the other side are not clearly visible.

Persistently annoying or bothersome, especially with constant complaints or demands.

Feeling or showing nervousness, stress, or strain.

To give something and receive something of the same kind in return.

Missing Words

Look at the table of words below.

Now use each of the words in the table and fill in the gaps of the missing words in the sentences below the table.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan.

Stirred	Tense
Staring	Rare
Exhausted	Misty
Disbelief	Panic
Float	Comprehend

It's _____ to find someone who understands the complexities of quantum physics without extensive study.

Her eyes widened in _____ when she saw the final score of the game; it was beyond anything she had imagined.

The balloon began to _____ gently upwards, carried by a light breeze through the park.

The atmosphere in the room was incredibly _____ as the two sides prepared to discuss the contract.

After the marathon, he felt totally _____, collapsing into bed without even changing out of his running clothes.

The news about the missing child _____ a wave of concern across the community.

It took him a while to fully _____ the depth of her feelings, even though she had been open about them.

The early morning fog made the landscape look _____ and ethereal, like something out of a dream.

As the fire alarm blared, _____ spread through the crowd, and people rushed to find the nearest exit.

She caught him _____ out the window, lost in thought, as if searching for answers in the clouds.

Discussion Questions

What do you think of this story?

What is the story about?

What exactly is the woman outside the window?

Why does she continue to ask Cherise to let her in? What is the significance of this?

How does Cherise's poor relationship with her family add to the story?

Why do you think Cherise's family is like this? What could have caused such a bad feeling between all three of them?

How does the woman outside the window know about Cherise's family life?

Do you think the woman wants to help Cherise? Or something else?

What could it be?

If you were in Cherise's situation, how would you respond to seeing the woman floating outside the window?

Do you think Cherise should have called her parents?

Why didn't she?

What does Cherise see in the woman?

The woman's appearance is described as pale with black hair. What does this say about her?

Why do you think Cherise is reluctant to let the woman in initially? What stops her from opening the window?

Do you think Cherise's mother wants to protect her?

Do you think that Cherise's mother has seen the woman before?

If her father was awake, how might he respond?

How old do you think Cherise could be in the story?

Does this influence her decision to open the window?

What do you think the woman does after Cherise opens the window at the end of the story?

How is the woman able to control the feelings of Cherise? Is this possible?

Do vampires exist?

Are there any vampire stories in your culture?

What is a vampire?

What do they do?

Where do they live?

Would you like to be a vampire?

Vampires are often portrayed as romantic figures. Why is this?

Are vampires beautiful? Or ugly?

If vampires exist, do you think they have a happy life? Or sad?

Why?

Role Play

This is a role play activity.

Get into groups of three and act out the following play. The play is based on the short story you read at the beginning of the lesson.

In your groups, take some time to practice and prepare your role play performance.

Then, when you are ready, show your role play to the class.

Your classmates and teacher can give you feedback.

Title: Let Me In

Characters:

- Cherise: A young girl, a teenager, feeling isolated.
- The Woman: A ghostly figure with a pale, ethereal

appearance.

- Mother: Cherise's tired and anxious mother.

Setting:

Cherise's Bedroom: A small, dimly lit room with a window at the centre. The outside is dark and eerie.

Act 1

Scene 1: Cherise's Bedroom

(Cherise is in bed, tossing and turning. A tapping sound on the window disturbs her sleep. She finally gets up and goes to the window.)

Cherise: (mumbling to herself) What is that noise?

(She pulls the curtain aside and gasps as she sees a woman floating outside the window. The woman has a ghostly presence with pale, translucent skin and long, flowing black hair.)

The Woman: (smiling gently) Cherise. I want to talk to you.

Cherise: (staring in disbelief) Who... who are you?

The Woman: (soothingly) I know this must look very strange to you. But I must talk to you.

Cherise: (stepping back) This... this isn't real. How can you be out there?

The Woman: (moving closer to the window) I know, Cherise. It's overwhelming. But I understand what you're going through.

Cherise: (tentatively) You... you know what it's like?

The Woman: (nodding, pressing her fingers against the glass) With your parents. I know.

Cherise: (voice trembling) How do you know?

The Woman: (gently) The lack of communication, the arguments, the cold silence. I know it well.

Cherise: (choking back tears) My friends' families seem so normal. But mine...

The Woman: (sympathetically) I understand exactly how you feel. Let me in. We can talk about it.

Cherise: (hesitating) I... I think it's better if we just talk like this.

The Woman: (pleading) But wouldn't you like to talk with someone who truly understands? Someone who has been through the same thing?

Cherise: (struggling) Has this happened to you? With your family?

The Woman: (earnestly) Yes. For years. I had to leave them to find peace.

Cherise: (concerned) You left your family?

The Woman: (nodding) Yes. But I am not alone now. I have a new family.

(The Woman's expression turns wistful as she floats closer to the glass.)

The Woman: Let me in, Cherise. Let me in. We can talk.

Cherise: (looking conflicted) Maybe I should get my mum...

The Woman: (voice rising in urgency) No, Cherise! You need to talk to me. You can trust me. Just let me in.

(At this moment, the door to Cherise's room creaks open. Her mother, tired and dishevelled, stands in the doorway.)

Mother: (squinting) Cherise, who are you talking to?

(Her eyes widen as she sees the woman outside the window.)

Mother: (panicked) Cherise, get away from the window!

Cherise: (dazed, still staring at the woman) I need to talk to someone. Someone who understands me.

The Woman: (with a menacing edge) Let me in...

Cherise: (reaching for the window latch) You never talk to me. You and Dad. All we do is shout at each other.

Mother: (rushing towards Cherise, horrified) No, Cherise! Don't open the window! Get away from there!

(Cherise, in a trance-like state, pulls the latch open. The woman's arms open wide, revealing two small fangs.)

The Woman: (with a sinister smile) Let me in...

(Cherise slides the window open.)

Cherise: (whispering, almost hypnotized) Come in.

(The woman starts to float inside, her eyes glowing with a predatory light. The mother reaches Cherise just as the woman begins to cross the threshold.)

Mother: (desperately) Cherise, please!

(The stage lights dim, leaving the scene in darkness. The faint sound of the woman's eerie laughter echoes as the curtain falls.)

End of Play

What Are Vampires Anyway?

This is a class discussion activity.

Go through all the vampire legends and terms below and discuss them together in the class.

Bloodsucking

- Vampires only drink the blood of their victims.
- How did this legend begin, do you think?
- What is the relevance of blood?

Immortality

- Vampires can live forever. But why?
- Do you think they really want to live forever?
- And how did this story start?

Fangs

- Vampires have fangs to pierce the skin of their victims.
- But how did this idea begin in vampire folklore?
- Are vampires based on a kind of animal? If so, why?

Pale Skin

- Vampires are known to have very pale skin.
- What is the relevance of this?
- Why are they always pale-skinned?

No Reflection

- In vampire stories, vampires cannot be seen in a mirror or any reflection.
- But why?
- How did this story begin?

Garlic

- One method to protect yourself from vampires is to keep garlic close to your body.
- Why are vampires afraid of garlic?
- What is it about garlic that they don't like?

Fear of The Cross

- To kill a vampire, you can show him or her a cross.
- Why is the cross so powerful against the vampire?
- And how did this story begin?

Sunlight

- Vampires can never come out in sunlight.
- Why not?
- What relevance does the sun have for vampires?

Hypnotic Powers

- In vampire stories, vampires often have hypnotic powers.
- How did this legend begin?
- And how did they gain these hypnotic powers?

Writing

This is a creative writing exercise.

Cherise in the AfterLife

This is a continuation of the short story at the beginning of the lesson plan.

Cherise is now a vampire. The woman outside the window bit her neck and consumed her blood, and now Cherise is one of the vampire family in her hometown.

Write a short story about Cherise the vampire.

Cherise is very happy in her new life. She has a new family consisting entirely of vampires, but she is very close to them.

For once, she feels she is in a close family where people love her and she is wanted.

Write a story about Cherise and her new life as a vampire.

Take some time to write your story.

When you have finished your writing, you should read your story out loud in front of your classmates.

Or, if you prefer, give it to your teacher for a review.

True or False — Answers

These are the correct answers below.

How many did you get right?

Cherise's father took care of the branch tapping on her window.

(False) Her father did not take care of it.

The family often had cheerful and lively meals together.

(False) They usually ate in silence.

Cherise's family communicated well with each other.

(False) They rarely spoke to each other.

Cherise felt lonely and misunderstood by her parents.

(True)

The woman outside Cherise's window had long, flowing black hair.

(True)

The woman outside the window was floating in the air.

(True)

Cherise immediately opened the window when she saw

the woman.

(False) She did not want to open the window at first.

The woman claimed to understand Cherise's feelings about her family.

(True)

Cherise's mother interrupted the conversation between Cherise and the woman.

(True)

Cherise's mother was angry when she saw her daughter talking to the woman.

(False) No, she was very worried about it.

The woman outside the window had pale blue eyes.

(True)

The woman had an aggressive appearance throughout the story.

(False) She had a gentle appearance. Certainly not aggressive.

Cherise's father warned her about the woman before.

(False) No, he didn't know about the woman. At least, he did not mention the woman in the story.

The story ends with Cherise refusing to open the window.

(False) No, she finally opened the window.

The woman outside the window had fangs that became visible towards the end of the story.

(True)

What is the Correct Synonym — Answers

These are the correct answers below.

Were you successful?

Stirred	Aroused
Intense	Severe
Tense	Strained
Atmosphere	Ambience
Rare	Infrequent
Nagging	Complaining
Sullen	Morose
Exhausted	Weary
Continued	Persisted
Yanked	Jerked
Longing	Craving
Squinting	Peering

What is the Correct Antonym — Answers

These are the correct answers below.

Time for a celebration?

Sympathetic	Indifferent
Tense	Calm
Staring	Glancing
Misty	Clear
Rare	Common
Avoided	Confronted
Sullen	Cheerful
Fake	Genuine
Tired	Energized
Translucent	Opaque
Panic	Serenity
Daze	Focus

Words and Meanings — Answers

These are the correct answers below.

Did you win?

Sympathetic: Showing understanding and compassion towards someone else's feelings.

Anxiety: A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome.

Stirred: To affect or move someone's emotions or thoughts.

Tense: Feeling or showing nervousness, stress, or strain.

Exchanged: To give something and receive something of the same kind in return.

Pretend: To make believe or act as if something is true when it is not.

Trust: A firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something.

Disbelief: The inability or refusal to accept that something

is true or real.

Translucent: Allowing light to pass through, but not detailed shapes, so that objects on the other side are not clearly visible.

Comprehend: To understand or grasp the meaning of something.

Panic: A sudden overwhelming fear or anxiety that often leads to unthinking or irrational behaviour.

Dimly lit: A space or environment that is poorly illuminated with low or soft lighting.

Nagging: Persistently annoying or bothersome, especially with constant complaints or demands.

Obligated: To be required or compelled to do something, often out of a sense of duty or necessity.

Flood: A large amount of water covering an area that is usually dry, or a sudden overwhelming flow or outpouring of something.

Missing Words — Answers

These are the correct answers below.

How well did you do?

Stirred: The news about the missing child **stirred** a wave of concern across the community.

Tense: The atmosphere in the room was incredibly **tense** as the two sides prepared to discuss the contract.

Staring: She caught him **staring** out the window, lost in thought, as if searching for answers in the clouds.

Rare: It's **rare** to find someone who understands the complexities of quantum physics without extensive study.

Exhausted: After the marathon, he felt totally **exhausted**, collapsing into bed without even changing out of his running clothes.

Misty: The early morning fog made the landscape look **misty** and ethereal, like something out of a dream.

Disbelief: Her eyes widened in **disbelief** when she saw the final score of the game; it was beyond anything she had imagined.

Panic: As the fire alarm blared, **panic** spread through the crowd, and people rushed to find the nearest exit.

Float: The balloon began to **float** gently upwards, carried by a light breeze through the park.

Comprehend: It took him a while to fully **comprehend** the depth of her feelings, even though she had been open about them.

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