

Girls: 9 - 10 years

Suggestion One

The Borrowers Mary Norton

The time has come for ARRIETTY to be warned about the human 'beans' and how dangerous it is to venture upstairs alone. Her parents tell her how her cousin Egglestina - who had never been warned about the dangers of 'upstairs' - had climbed up there on her own and was never seen again. Her father was broken-hearted and the family soon emigrated. It was thought that the cat had got Egglestina.

ARRIETTY

Why did you tell me this? Now? Tonight? ... You think they'll get a cat?
(*She sets down her cup of soup*) Couldn't we emigrate? ... Supposing that I went out, like Egglestina did, and the cat ate *me*. Then you and papa would emigrate. Wouldn't you? (*Her voice falters*) Wouldn't you? (*Her eyes fill with tears*) I was only thinking that I'd like to be there - to emigrate too. Uneaten ... It's not that I'm afraid. (*Angrily*) I like cats. I bet the cat didn't eat Egglestina. I bet she just ran away because she hated being cooped up ... day after day ... week after week ... year after year ... like I do! (*A sob*) ... Oh, I know papa is a wonderful Borrower. I know we've managed to stay when all the others have gone. But what has it done for us, in the end? I don't think it's so clever to live alone, for ever and ever, in a great, big, half-empty house, under the floor, with no one to talk to, no one to play with, nothing to see but dust and passages, no light but candlelight and firelight and what comes through the cracks. Egglestina had brothers and Egglestina had half-brothers; Egglestina had a tame mouse; Egglestina had yellow boots with jet buttons and Egglestina did get out - just once!

Suggestion Two

The Demon Headmaster Gillian Cross

In this scene DINAH is being questioned by her brothers (Lloyd and Harvey) about what has happened in the school assemblies that she attends - she says that they were watching a film, but they know that this is not true. Gradually she begins to realise that she and the rest of the school are being hypnotised.

DINAH

That's it! The first day, when I went into Assembly, I didn't look at the Headmaster's eyes when the other's did. I closed mine. And I heard him hypnotise everyone else. But then he caught me. I just had time to think *remember it, remember it* - and then I was hypnotised and I forgot. Until Harvey brought it back. *The Headmaster hypnotises everyone in Assembly ...* It's a good way to keep everyone in order. And you know how he likes order. While they're hypnotised, he tells them what to do when they wake up. And they can't help doing it. Like me saying those things. And I think - I think he probably makes us learn things, parrot-fashion, while we're hypnotised ... He's very, very clever. He's got a whole school full of children who will do precisely what he wants. He must feel very powerful. Very powerful. If I were him, I don't think I'd be satisfied with having one measly school in my power! ... Think of it. He's got a whole army of people - people like me - who'll do and say exactly what he wants. Why should he stop there? Sooner or later. He's going to 'want to do something with his army'.