

# Which story has more effect on the reader and why

Literature



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The Superstitious Mans Story uses the paranormal in a superstitious way as the title suggests. It is set in a small isolated village that is perhaps not the most original location for a ghost story. This creates a superstitious atmosphere however as the villagers are cut off. The story suggests that the few people who live there are cautious and wary, as if they have been troubled by the supernatural before. Night Fears on the other hand uses the supernatural in a different way. It concerns a night watchman whose job involves being alone for long stretches of time.

After a while his mind plays with him, the story focusing on a psychological theme. His mind generates an image of a man who taunt and teases him, bringing out his weaknesses. The Superstitious Mans Story was written in the late 18th century, which may be the reason why the story is not extremely convincing. With it focusing on superstition it is difficult to believe in the story, as it is tricky to relate to. In our modern society superstition is considered by most as being fantastical.

However we can accept that Night Fears is accurate, as people have been notorious to have these kinds of experiences. People hallucinate after lengthy periods of time on their own which convinces the readers. The story forms an image of the hallucination in the readers' mind, which allows us to believe in the supernatural elements. Whether the characters in ghost stories are credible or not depends upon how much information the reader is supplied with. In my opinion it is easier to believe in a character such as the night watchman. Someone experiencing phantasms and seeing things is more convincing.

In contrast the characters in *The Superstitious Mans Story* have a few credible moments. It is easy to believe in the tale when for example the wife thinks her husband exits the house after she hears the door close when in fact he is still in bed. An error of this nature could without doubt happen to anyone. Both stories are written in a third person perspective. In *The Superstitious Mans Story* at the start the first sentence creates a tension immediately as it mentions a 'curious, silent man'. It is plausible and easy to imagine this mysterious figure.

Another believable and significant part is when young Nancy says, " We were frightened enough my what we saw". It forms an image in the reader's mind of a group of kids out late distressed by something and keeps them reading. The story is from the ladies point of view but it focuses on William although he is not brought into the spotlight greatly. When the stranger in *Night Fears* appears the reader can almost suspect what the problem is going to be. Early in the story the night watchman's wife says to him, " This night work doesn't suit you I'm sure.

This shows that he has been affected by his work in some way already. It is easy to believe that the night watchman will have delusions, as he is tired working at night. It says, " The night watchman yawned for the twentieth time. " It is easy to imagine what the stranger looks like as the story doesn't describe him in great depth allowing the reader to let their imagination run wild. A line that stands out is, " A change came over the night watchman's outlook. " This indicates that his level of madness has reached new heights.

A clue to the fact that the watchman is imagining is when it says, "The night watchman had not mention a contract." This shows that this 'stranger' is somewhat unusual to say the least and is either psychic or a figment of the night watchman's imagination. In the end Night Fears is more pragmatic as it is more about psychology whereas The Superstitious Mans Story is about superstition. It is concerns the fictional supernatural but Night fears is more realistic, concerning mentality. Going psychologically mad is a surprisingly common occurrence if a person is left alone for a long stretch of time.