

The owl who was afraid of the dark

Plop was afraid of the dark.

"You *can't* be afraid of the dark," said his Mummy.

"Owls are *never* afraid of the dark."

"This one is," Plop said.

"But owls are *night* birds," she said.

Plop looked down at his toes. "I don't want to be a night bird," he mumbled. "I want to be a day bird."

"You *are* what you *are*," said Mrs Barn Owl firmly.

"Yes, I know," agreed Plop, "and what I *are* is afraid of the dark."

"Oh dear," said Mrs Barn Owl.

It was clear that she was going to need a lot of patience. She shut her eyes and tried to think how best she could help Plop not be afraid. Plop waited.

His mother opened her eyes again. "Plop, you are only afraid of the dark because you don't know about it. What *do* you know about the dark?"

"It's black," said Plop.

"Well, that's wrong for a start. It can be silver or blue or grey or lots of other colours, but almost never black. What else do you know about it?"

"I don't like it," said Plop. "I do not like it AT ALL."

"That's not *knowing* something," said his mother.

"That's *feeling* something. I don't think you know anything about the dark at all."

"Dark is nasty," Plop said loudly.



Choose the correct answer to each question and write it out.

- 1 What do night birds do at night?
a) Night birds hunt for food at night.
b) Night birds sleep at night.
- 2 How did Mrs Barn Owl feel when she heard that Plop was afraid of the dark?
a) Mrs Barn Owl felt very pleased.
b) Mrs Barn Owl felt very worried.
- 3 What did Mrs Barn Owl mean when she said to Plop, "You *are* what you *are*"?
a) She meant that Plop was a very silly bird.
b) She meant that Plop couldn't stop being a night bird.
- 4 Mrs Barn Owl thought that she was going to need a lot of patience. What does this mean?
a) It means that she would have to try not to get angry.
b) It means that she would have to eat a lot very soon.
- 5 Why did Mrs Barn Owl shut her eyes?
a) Mrs Barn Owl shut her eyes because she was very tired and wanted to sleep.
b) Mrs Barn Owl shut her eyes so that she could think.