

Authors Evoke Mood

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Authors evoke mood through vibrant descriptions with rich word choice. What kind of mood does the author evoke through the highlighted word choices below? These excerpts are from one of my novels, *Etola's Keeper*.

Ten-year old MacAlister Shilling does not have anyone in his life who supports him—not his teacher, classmates, or even his own family. His only refuge is a sketchbook where he invented a land named “Etola”. His inconsiderate archenemy, Eric Rollins, somehow got his hands on his sketchbook and ripped out a page one day. Not long after, Mac encounters a strange man on the street who tells him he will be “going on an inconceivable quest to a mysterious place” after hearing startling sounds from his basement in the middle of the night. The excerpts below are from his time in the basement and entering Etola within his subconscious. In Etola, the situation is dire and he is being called to save the kingdom.

See how I evoke mood through the highlighted phrases and both excerpts.

Remember, authors do not just evoke one mood through word choice, so write down as many moods as possible through analyzing the word choice.

In the Middle of the Night

Mac headed to his bedroom very agitated and exhausted that evening. His mind was inundated with thoughts of the visitation and the mysterious individual who stopped him at Rosh's Grocer. He could not forget the **tattered clothing, piercing blue eyes, and stares that literally pierced through his soul**. He heard the croaking, crackling voice over and over again: *When you lay down tonight in your bed, you will be awoken by a startling sound. The noise will not stop until you are led to it, and then you will discover you are going on an inconceivable quest to a mysterious place.*

The soles of Mac's feet burned from utter exhaustion, and **the corneas of his eyes felt like they were being incinerated**. The bed with its fleece, plaid comforter was more welcoming than usual. Within minutes, he entered the mystical world of his subconscious.

His mind led him to a complicated maze of tunnels. He was obviously in a deep, nearly pitch-black, underground place, and he felt as if he was racing against time. This

dream had a threatening, pulsating aura- he heard a discomfoting tick-tick-tick in the background. Looking down, he saw dodging feet to his right, yet he was unable to turn his head either way. He was never able to turn around. Suddenly, he approached a rounded, thick set of stone doors with intricate carvings. On the doors, he noticed a carving that was extremely familiar to him, yet his mind was not able to identify what it exactly was. It was as if this dream was limiting his abilities to actually... think. He felt as if he had been... brainwashed.

Suddenly something terrifying woke him up, and he felt as if his body were being pierced with thousands of pins and needles. He almost had this feeling he was being watched and he was still dwelling somewhere within his subconscious, that he was not completely awake.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! He heard deafening noises from the basement. Sometimes, the washer and dryer made extremely loud sounds when they were on, but his parents would never put in a load of laundry in the middle of the night. He checked his clock: 2:00. Something about that time sent even more discomfoting chills up his spine.

He crept down the stairs to the basement, one at a time. Every time he thought he heard the tiniest bit of creaking, he paused and prayed he would not be heard. The basement had always been known as his father's workshop, where he did his extensive locksmith work and kept his incredible array of keys. Mac had asked time and time again about checking out his father's key collection, but he always limited him from heading down there.

It seemed like it took millenniums to head down the stairs to the basement, but it had only taken about five minutes. When he finally approached the bottom, he glanced around to discover the basement was a "treasure trove". He felt like a prospector from the Gold Rush coming across glistening deposits of gold that would give him so much money he would never have to work a day in his life.

The resounding booms got louder and louder until he noticed a glistening box. Blinded by the piercing light, he completely tripped over the box. Keys of all different shapes, sizes, and configurations scattered all over the place.

Great, Mac thought to himself. What if his father heard the clanking from the keys scattering all over the floor? Yet after about thirty seconds, he felt certain his father had not heard anything at all. Kneeling, he noticed about 30 keys. There were ordinary keys as well as narrow keys with curlicue tops that seemed to be about four inches long. He held onto one that was particularly fascinating. When the resounding booms began to intensify again, he happened to look in the direction of the slate gray wall to his right. Feeling anxious, his hand let go of the one fascinating key. The key flung towards the bottom part of the wall, which suddenly crumbled.

Revealed behind the wall was a two-foot tall door with a small keyhole. He headed over to the door and stared at the configuration of the keyhole. He then wanted to head

back in the other direction to grab the box of keys to attempt to open the door, yet the box hovered towards him instead.

I would say what just happened was magic, but that thought is absolute bogus, Mac thought to himself. Magic only occurred in incredible places like Etola. He pinched himself to determine whether he was still asleep, but he wasn't. Of course it was a telltale sign you were dreaming if you could get in a successful pinch.

Piercing cold air eluded him as he began trying out keys. Starting with the most ancient-looking key, he attempted to unlock this door that may have held incredible secrets behind it. Or at least it could become an ideal hiding place if he ever felt deceived by his family. He analyzed the jagged bottoms of the keys, the curved bottoms, the squared-off, straighter looking bottoms.

After trying half the keys, he felt incredibly discouraged. He had used most of the unusual, beautiful keys that he absolutely thought would fit in the keyhole. Finally, he was down to one ordinary key, the most ordinary of keys he had ever seen. It was a dull silver color, and Mac was hoping, praying this was the one that would open the door.

As soon as he was going to attempt the key, the key machine mysteriously turned on. The four-inch long curlicue key then began glowing. Heading over with the ordinary key in one hand, he reached over to snag the fancy one. The two then magnetized together, which he had never noticed with keys before.

It was 2:22. Dazed, he stuck the magnetized keys in the machine. The gears turning, the machine whirred with delight for about three minutes. Then as if on cue, this key, half silver, half copper, half ordinary, half extraordinary popped out. The machine turned off, and the hybrid key began gleaming on its own. The resounding booms also came to an end.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to predict what happened next...

Welcome to Your Subconscious

Stumbling through the secret passage, Mac suddenly came across an oval-shaped room, decorated lavishly. It was the epitome of luxury: plush velvet carpeting, massive crystal chandelier, and glistening floor-to-ceiling windows. Standing before him was a young man with curly brown hair with a pleasant face. Whoever he was, he looked extremely relieved to see him.

"Goodness! *There you are!*" the young man exclaimed, yet halted when he stepped closer. "What *happened* to you?"

Mac gave him a fake grin and stared down at his grungy granite-colored sneakers with the tattered laces, which was an absolutely disgusting sight all of a sudden as they pressed into the carpeting. Mac thought that he hadn't worn them recently, yet he guessed he somehow got them on his feet before arriving at that... place. He still had no idea where he

was.

“I don’t know who you are from Adam,” Mac stated simply. “Who are you?”

“Oh my goodness, *memory loss!* Do you even know who *you* are?” the face looked concerned, yet he kept grinning. His accent was incredibly strange and fascinating to Mac, almost that of a New Zealander.

“I am MacAlister Shilling, a ten-year old boy,” Mac responded simply. “And you are...?”

“I am Brendon, the King’s loyal servant-” he began with confidence, yet his voice lowered quickly. “Yet we have been left without a King.”

The name Brendon didn’t even register in Mac’s mind at first, yet it sounded vaguely familiar. “What happened to the King?”

“You’re in denial. Well, that’s understandable, I guess, if your father was just murdered,” he consoled.

“My *father* has been murdered?” A look of horror must have overtaken Mac’s face.

“Well, your father here, the King,” Brendon nodded. “And- I do not know who MacAlister Shilling is, but I know you at least *resemble* the Prince of Etola... Goodness, I hope your mind wasn’t wiped out by that evil... I don’t even want to say his name... you know who I am talking about. He could have erased your memory-”

Brendon suddenly let out a loud gasp because Mac had passed out at his feet.

“Hey!” Brendon shouted. “Are you conscious? Oh my goodness, did you just *die?*” He leaned before Mac and pressed his head on his heart.

Mac’s eyelids fluttered. **His mind was spinning like he had just ridden the Tilt-a-Whirl at the county fair.** “I’m- I’m all right... I think,” Mac gasped slightly. “Where am I again?”

“Welcome to your subconscious,” Brendon said in a friendly tone.

“My *subconscious?*” Mac managed to choke. “What is my subconscious? Even better, *what* is a subconscious?”

“You are currently in the most precious location in Etola,” Brendon explained. “King Ny’ole’s palace.”

“Shut... up!” Mac gasped. “This is where I wake up, right? I know I am not in Etola. There is no prince of Etola, by the way, so... I am right and you are wrong.”

“No, I am right and *you* are wrong,” Brendon stated in a pretentious tone.

“No, when it comes to Etola, *I* am the only one who can be correct,” Mac smirked back. “Etola is mine... *mine!*”

Brendon glanced at Mac like he was insane. “No, Mac, I am sorry to inform you, but Etola is not *yours*. It is the honorable kingdom of King Ny’ole. If Etola is indeed yours and not his, which I cannot fathom, can you explain the fact he was murdered?”

Mac felt glum and defeated. “F-f-figures i-it’s n-n-n-”

Brendon glared at Mac like he just committed a horrid act. “*Don’t!* *Stutter!* I know the

circumstances where you stutter. Whenever you feel threatened, you stutter, which is quite often.”

Mac glared back at him. “Fine. Etola is not mine. Want a tour of the place, Brendon? I can show you around.”

“No, you can’t, Mac. You don’t know every nook and cranny of your subconscious. There are parts you don’t know you have *invented* yet.” Brendon was getting somewhat agitated as well.

“Well, if it’s *in* my subconscious, shouldn’t I *know* it?” Mac shot back. “I should know this entire kingdom like the back of my hand. I should be able to navigate without failure!”

“Want to go out there and explore?” Brendon stood with his arms folded. He dragged Mac over to a curtain and parted it open.

Mac gasped at the overwhelming sight. There were rolling hills, *miles of subconscious “wasteland”*, if you will.

He drew back the drapes and *humbled himself before Brendon*. “Fine. I surrender. Explain to me why I am here. Explain to me why I do not understand my subconscious.”

“I’ll answer the first question as precisely as possible. You were summoned here because *you are the only one who can save Etola*. I can put forth my most gallant efforts, but my mind is not your mind and I will never know every nook and cranny of this place. Neither will you, until you discover those crannies. You will realize every experience you have ever had has shaped this entire kingdom. Etola is like a never-ending Renaissance. We have the greatest books here, and most everyone speaks eloquently. People are encouraged to be inventive and focus on their inner strengths. The architecture is intricate. When you came up with Etola, you were discovering and focusing on your passions,” Brendon began.

“You mentioned I have to save Etola. Why?” Mac was listening intently and taking endless mental notes.

“Etola has been threatened by evil, by Diomore, who symbolizes greed, cruelty, and vindictiveness. Diomore is not a king, nor is he royalty in any way. However, he has acquired so much power over time and is building a stronger and stronger army. Whenever someone is weak or hurting, Diomore seems to know it and feed off of it. He then gets people to *join his ranks and bring others down. Diomore focuses on how easily it is to give up, and he derives immense joy from it. If you even call that joy, obviously*,” Brendon continued.

“Though I came up with Diomore’s character,” Mac began, “Then why don’t I understand what has made him so undesirable?”

“When Diomore was a little boy, about or even your age, tragedy struck. Apparently, his family lived in a nice dwelling in Etola. His parents were kind and humble, bringing him up to be kind and humble as well—”

“Do you know why I named him Diomore?” Mac interrupted. “Because I don’t remember that, either. I think the word just came to my mind like a dream... or something.”

He rubbed his eyes.

“You thought of two words. Your teacher, Mrs. Morris, was reading a book one day that had the word diabolic in it, and you wrote it down in your vocabulary book. Diabolic is another word for *evil*. As more situations occur that please him, as his desires expand, he wants it more. So I believe that was the explanation your subconscious had for coming up with the name Diomore.”

Mac let out a gentle sigh. “Was his name always Diomore?”

“No, but nobody knows what his name originally was,” Brendon frowned.

“Please tell me what happened to him, Brendon, that caused him to be struck by evil,” Mac’s voice was even.

“The tragedy I was going to explain occurred when Diomore was your age, probably ten or so. He mistakenly set his family’s home on fire when he was trying to prove to his parents he could cook a delicious gourmet meal for them. He was always out to please them, apparently. He wanted to show them how talented and brilliant he was. Any chance he had. When he escaped the smolder, he was thankful, but his family, including his older brother, was in the house. They all perished in the fire, and Diomore felt guilty. He withdrew more by the day, feeling completely devastated that he convinced himself he was the sole cause of his family’s death. Suddenly, he did not want anyone to feel joy in their heart, so he began to acquire these powers he was not supposed to acquire. He was attending Intuitio, our school, and was a brilliant scholar. People started spreading rumors, though, that he was an arsonist. Everyone in Etola takes classes where they acquire powers of sorts, but somehow he got a grasp on all of them and used them against everyone. He manipulated it all, somehow, but nobody knows how. Etola’s *keeper* does, though, in his subconscious. We’ve been searching for our keeper for years, but we couldn’t find him. Now *you’re* here. *You* are Etola’s Keeper.”

By then, Mac was standing in a position where his jaw was scraping the ground. “I thought you said Etola was *not* mine,” he stated in a slightly argumentative tone.

“It’s not,” Brendon responded as quickly as a bolt of lightning.

“Well, you’re certainly making it sound like it,” Mac responded.

“Sorry, I just cannot fathom that anyone standing before me is actually more powerful over this kingdom than Ny’ole,” he whispered. “Well, maybe you’re not more powerful, but at least you are a brilliant, skilled scholar who can find out the answers. Everything in Etola is a puzzle, and you are the only possible being who can solve them.”

“As Etola’s Keeper-” Mac began, **pins and needles shooting up his spine**- “How many people would know I was the Keeper by just walking down one of those stone streets out there?”

“Absolutely no one,” Brendon stated. “Except me, of course. I know, and Ny’ole knew, and for all I know, Diomore knows as well and you do not want to even think of coming near him because he’d most certainly want to overtake you. Everyone else may

perceive you as the enemy. That brings me to the second thing. And then there will be a third thing.”

“What was that?”

“You will not like the second thing. Someone else has been dragged into your subconscious. Everyone here believes they know who murdered Ny’ole. If they are right, if they are wrong, I don’t know, but I am basically just relaying facts to you.”

Mac felt a pit in his stomach, worms or snakes slithering around in there. He felt nauseous. He was afraid to hear all of a sudden. “It wasn’t Diomore, was it?”

“No, it was Eric Rollins,” Brendon responded in three seconds flat, as if he just wanted to get it all over with.

Mac’s voice boomed the room and reverberated off the walls, though it wasn’t angry. It was hysterical. “ERIC... ROLLINS? As in Eric Rollins in my fifth grade class?”

Brendon clamped his hands over Mac’s mouth. “Shh! Shouting Eric Rollins’ name in Ny’ole’s castle is not exactly what you need to be doing right now. If you want to come out of this castle alive, that is.”

“Shut... up!” Mac echoed what he had let out before, though this time he was in stitches. “Eric Rollins... Eric Rollins... ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.” He then pounded the wall, the floor, the wooden desk, and tripped over the carpeting, dinging himself on the elbow against one of the legs of the chairs in the room.

“When you get done laughing hysterically, I will speak,” Brendon stated simply, sitting in a chair across the room, folding his arms across his chest.

Mac had dinged his funny bone, so he laughed for probably about three more minutes, which was like an eternity to Brendon, who sat impatiently and silently. He then sat down on the carpet. “All right, I am ready,” his laughter subsided. “Do you know how Ny’ole was murdered?”

“No.”

“Then why is everyone suspecting... Er- I mean- you know- *him*?”

“He entered the kingdom that day. He was here a very short time, but he had one mission and one mission only. Yet now that he has seen the kingdom, he is kind of stuck here.”

“I just saw him in class. He never left class,” Mac tried to think as intently as possible.

“Did he do anything out of the ordinary when he was around you, for example?”

Brendon pressed.

“He sometimes says really nasty things to me or shoots me really nasty looks,” Mac tried to think of something particular.

“No, *more* specific,” Brendon pressed.

Mac then remembered the incident with the composition book and explained it to Brendon. Brendon looked appalled and asked when it occurred. It was then confirmed that

the murder and tearing of the pages occurred at the same exact time.

“Well, if Eric tore the page in my composition book to bits, then why wasn’t the *entire* castle destroyed? Obviously, we’re *here*, aren’t we?” Mac questioned suspiciously. “He read the explanation about the grand parlor, dining hall, and library.”

“Oh, it was certainly ransacked and destroyed in parts, almost all at once,” Brendon looked distraught. “I just don’t think you want to see it, not just yet.”

“One last question about that,” Mac began, “Is Eric in this kingdom *now*?”

“Oh, once you enter Etola, you are always a part of it somehow,” Brendon sighed. “Eric is certainly here, but your job is not to capture him. It is to actually protect him because he may have been under the curse of Diomore.”

“That’s *great*, even though he was in class the entire day and I never let him out of my sight,” Mac said in a sarcastic tone. “So you have confirmed Eric Rollins is now in my subconscious. Tell me the last part.”

“I explained you do not *entirely* understand your subconscious. You do not know your destiny or every single one of your hopes and dreams, not just yet. You do not know why you think as you do or why you are sometimes very unfortunate. You do not remember your every fleeting thought or memory, yet your subconscious knows *everything*.”

“Do *you* have a subconscious, Brendon, or do you just exist within my subconscious?” Mac questioned.

Brendon looked pained. “No, Mac, I do not really exist, nor does his castle or anyone in this kingdom, unless *you* exist. I am a mere story character you invented one day for the purpose of entertainment.”

“Are you who I speak to when I lead conversations with myself in my head? Someone always seems to answer my every question.”

“No.”

“Are you a... guardian angel?”

“No. I am simply Ny’ole’s loyal servant, as I was described by you so eloquently, with wavy brown hair and a pleasant face. I guess your mind had to make up more as you went along in this conversation. Amazingly enough, I have never had this much dialogue in one of your stories, so I appreciate your consideration today.”

Mac shrugged. “You’re... welcome?”

“Now, we must be off to transform you into the prince of Etola.”