

19th-century literature at Key Stage 3

Teaching resources to help you develop the confidence of your Key Stage 3 students when reading 19th-century literature.



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Introducing 19th-century literature at Key Stage 3

Teaching resources

This is a resource to help you develop the confidence of your Key Stage 3 students when reading 19th-century literature. It will introduce skills that will be relevant to the study of literature at Key Stage 4, and help your students develop their understanding of contexts, as well as some of the conventions established in literary genres.

The resource includes:

- three sections: Childhood, Adventure and Mystery, and C19th Settings
- extracts of texts, providing satisfying reading, and plenty of opportunity for discussion and exploration
- suggestions for further reading of whole books, including both 19th century and modern texts.

Within each topic, we've provided suggestions for the learning focus, with activities for reading, discussion and sometimes for writing. You'll have plenty of material to adapt and use over a number of sessions.

Links to GCSE Literature

Understanding and responding	AO1 Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response• use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.
Closer reading	AO2 Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.
Researching context	AO3 Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.
Comparison	Candidates are required to show the abilities described in AO1, AO2 and AO3 through tasks which require them to make comparisons across texts.

Childhood and family 1: motherless children

Aims:

- to understand family relationships in 19th-century literature
- to understand aspects of the social and historical context of the 19th century
- to understand the use of orphans and vulnerable children as a literary device.

Suggestions for starter or hook

- Share examples from modern literature and films of vulnerable or orphaned child characters.
- Consider news stories about children and the ways in which they are presented.
- Discuss how we respond to such stories in real life and in fiction.

Researching the 19th-century context

- Mother and infant mortality rates.
- Workhouses and other provision for destitute people in your local area.

Texts

Dombey and Son by Charles Dickens (1848)

Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens (1838)

Silas Marner by George Eliot (1861)

Understanding and responding

Extract 1

***Dombey and Son* by Charles Dickens (1848)**

This scene at the birth of Dombey's second child reminds us that childbirth in the 19th century was dangerous for both women and their babies. Identify the details that suggest that Mrs Dombey will die.

What are the reader's impressions of Dombey? What are his main concerns? How can we tell that he takes great pride in his family name and business? Does he have the same pride in all the members of his family?

Florence, aged six, is Dombey's first child. What do you notice about the way in which she is treated by the adults in this passage? What do you understand about her relationship with her father? And her mother?

What does Dombey's sister, Louisa, bring to our understanding of characters and the Dombey family?

Discuss what this passage shows about men, women and marriage in the 19th century.

What does this opening chapter show us about the business of Dombey and Son, and its reputation in society?

By the end of the chapter a mother has died leaving her new baby and a young daughter. A businessman has been widowed and is left with the care of two young children. Where does your sympathy lie? What do you think will happen next with the family?

Closer reading

1. Examine the structure of the sentences in the first three paragraphs. What pattern has the author used? How does this pattern introduce us to the characters and the business of Dombey and Son?
2. Examine the nouns and noun phrases that Dickens has used for characters in this passage, and consider how they contribute to our understanding of the characters, their relationships and their values.
 - The baby is referred to as 'Son' with a capital letter.
 - Later, we learn that he will be given the name Paul.
 - Dombey addresses his wife as 'Mrs Dombey' and only hesitatingly, and only once, uses the term of endearment 'my dear'.
 - Florence is described as 'a piece of base coin' and 'a bad Boy'. Her father refers to her as 'the person'.

- The only utterances that Florence makes address her mother as ‘Mama’.
3. Read this paragraph again:
- Those three words conveyed the one idea of Mr Dombey’s life. The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships; rainbows gave them promise of fair weather; winds blew for or against their enterprises; stars and planets circled in their orbits, to preserve inviolate a system of which they were the centre.

Underline the details that refer to the natural world. What impression do these details convey of Dombey’s attitude and business?

Consider the number of times that the pronouns ‘their’ and ‘them’ are used. What effect is created?

4. Read again the section in which Dombey’s sister, Louisa Chick, talks about the baby and its mother. How would you describe her attitude towards Mrs Dombey? Why does she say “If dear Fanny were a Dombey!”?
5. Dickens describes Mrs Dombey’s death at the end of the chapter by using a metaphor based on the sea. Which words has he used to create this metaphor? Do you think this is an appropriate metaphor for death? In particular, how does it suit the death of Mrs Dombey of Dombey and Son? Which other metaphors may be used to describe death?

Extract 2

From chapter 2 of *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens

In this account of Oliver’s early life, Dickens is criticising the authorities responsible for the care of orphans.

1. Explain what is meant by ‘treachery and deception’. How do they apply to what happens to Oliver Twist?
2. There are two authorities at work in this passage: the workhouse and the parish. Use a dictionary and discuss your understanding of the words ‘dignity’, ‘humility’, ‘magnanimously’, and ‘humanely’. What does the author’s use of these words suggest about his view of how the authorities behaved? How does the language suggest that the authorities cared little about Oliver?

3. Oliver, and other babies in the same position as him, are referred to in this passage as ‘juvenile offenders against the poor-laws’ and ‘culprits’. What do these phrases suggest about how the children were regarded?
4. How did the woman who looked after the babies cheat them?
5. How might readers respond to this description of Oliver’s situation?
6. What impression does Dickens create of the conditions in the workhouse?
7. What is Charles Dickens’s tone when he describes the scene as ‘this festive composition’?
8. Why has Dickens made the master of the workhouse ‘fat and healthy’?
9. Why does the gentleman in the white waistcoat predict that Oliver Twist “will be hung”?

Extract 3

From *Silas Marner* by George Eliot

1. Consider George Eliot’s presentation of Molly. What is her motivation in making this journey? George Eliot shows that Godfrey Cass was wrong to leave her, and shows that Molly too has faults. What are they? Did she intend to leave her child?
2. Read the description of Silas before he finds the child. How does George Eliot create a sense of his loneliness and despair? What does the description of the snowy night contribute to our understanding of his isolation?
3. What is his reaction to finding the child on his hearth?
4. How does George Eliot show us at the end of the passage that Molly is dead?
5. What is your prediction for what will happen to Molly’s child?

Closer reading

1. Identify the words and phrases where the author personifies opium, and explain how this helps us to understand Molly’s predicament.
2. Explore the symbolism of the extract
 - Underline the references to light and dark in this extract. How are they used to create the atmosphere, and what symbolic effect do they convey?
 - What do you think is the significance of these events happening on New Year’s Eve?
 - Silas mistakes the child’s golden hair for the return of his stolen money.

Understanding and responding to the three texts together

1. How does the reader respond to each of these motherless children? What do they have in common, and how are they different?
2. Why might stories about children have been popular with 19th century readers? Why are they still popular?
3. Each passage might help us to understand something more about human nature and the society in which we live. What do you think each one shows us?
4. We see that the children in two of these extracts still have fathers, but it does not seem that that will be enough to secure their happiness. Has the role of fathers changed over time?
5. What do these passages say about the innocence of children and their need for love?
6. What do the extracts from *Dombey and Son* and *Silas Marner* suggest that children may bring into people's lives?

Dombey and Son

by Charles Dickens (published as a complete novel in 1848)

Extract from chapter 1

Dombey sat in the corner of the darkened room in the great arm-chair by the bedside, and Son lay tucked up warm in a little basket bedstead, carefully disposed on a low settee immediately in front of the fire and close to it, as if his constitution were analogous to that of a muffin, and it was essential to toast him brown while he was very new.

Dombey was about eight-and-forty years of age. Son about eight-and-forty minutes. Dombey was rather bald, rather red, and though a handsome well-made man, too stern and pompous in appearance, to be prepossessing. Son was very bald, and very red, and though (of course) an undeniably fine infant, somewhat crushed and spotty in his general effect, as yet.

Dombey, exulting in the long-looked-for event, jingled and jingled the heavy gold watch-chain that depended from below his trim blue coat, whereof the buttons sparkled phosphorescently in the feeble rays of the distant fire. Son, with his little fists curled up and clenched, seemed, in his feeble way, to be squaring at existence for having come upon him so unexpectedly.

'The House will once again, Mrs Dombey,' said Mr

Dombey, 'be not only in name but in fact Dombey and Son;' and he added, in a tone of luxurious satisfaction, with his eyes half-closed as if he were reading the name in a device of flowers, and inhaling their fragrance at the same time; 'Dombey and Son!'

The words had such a softening influence, that he appended a term of endearment to Mrs Dombey's name (though not without some hesitation, as being a man but little used to that form of address): and said, 'Mrs Dombey, my—my dear.'

A transient flush of faint surprise overspread the sick lady's face as she raised her eyes towards him.

'He will be christened Paul, my—Mrs Dombey—of course.'

She feebly echoed, 'Of course,' or rather expressed it by the motion of her lips, and closed her eyes again.

'His father's name, Mrs Dombey, and his grandfather's! I wish his grandfather were alive this day! There is some inconvenience in the necessity of writing Junior,' said Mr Dombey, making a fictitious autograph on his knee; 'but it is merely

of a private and personal complexion. It doesn't enter into the correspondence of the House. Its signature remains the same.' And again he said 'Dombey and Son,' in exactly the same tone as before.

Those three words conveyed the one idea of Mr Dombey's life. The earth was made for Dombey and Son to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships; rainbows gave them promise of fair weather; winds blew for or against their enterprises; stars and planets circled in their orbits, to preserve inviolate a system of which they were the centre.

He had risen, as his father had before him, in the course of life and death, from Son to Dombey, and for nearly twenty years had been the sole representative of the Firm. Of those years he had been married, ten—married, as some said, to a lady with no heart to give him; whose happiness was in the past, and who was content to bind her broken spirit to the dutiful and meek endurance of the present. Dombey and Son had often dealt in hides, but never in hearts. They left that fancy ware to boys and girls, and boarding-schools and books. Mr Dombey would have reasoned: That a matrimonial alliance with himself must, in the nature of things, be gratifying and honourable to any woman of common sense. That the hope of giving birth to a new partner in such a House, could not fail to awaken a glorious and stirring ambition in the breast of the least ambitious of her sex. That Mrs Dombey had entered on that social contract of matrimony: almost necessarily part of a genteel and wealthy station, even without reference to the perpetuation of family Firms: with her eyes fully open to these advantages. That Mrs Dombey had had daily practical knowledge of his position in society. That Mrs Dombey had always sat at the head of his table, and done the honours of his house in a remarkably lady-like and becoming manner. That Mrs Dombey must have been happy. That she couldn't help it.

They had been married ten years, and until this present day on which Mr Dombey sat jingling and jingling his heavy gold watch-chain in the great arm-chair by the side of the bed, had had no issue.

—To speak of; none worth mentioning. There had been a girl some six years before, and the child,

who had stolen into the chamber unobserved, was now crouching timidly, in a corner whence she could see her mother's face. But what was a girl to Dombey and Son! In the capital of the House's name and dignity, such a child was merely a piece of base coin that couldn't be invested—a bad Boy—nothing more.

Mr Dombey's cup of satisfaction was so full at this moment, however, that he felt he could afford a drop or two of its contents, even to sprinkle on the dust in the by-path of his little daughter.

So he said, 'Florence, you may go and look at your pretty brother, if you like, I daresay. Don't touch him!'

The child glanced keenly at the blue coat and stiff white cravat, which, with a pair of creaking boots and a very loud ticking watch, embodied her idea of a father; but her eyes returned to her mother's face immediately, and she neither moved nor answered.

Next moment, the lady had opened her eyes and seen the child; and the child had run towards her; and, standing on tiptoe, the better to hide her face in her embrace, had clung about her with a desperate affection very much at variance with her years.

'Oh Lord bless me!' said Mr Dombey, rising testily. 'A very ill-advised and feverish proceeding this, I am sure. Please to ring there for Miss Florence's nurse. Really the person should be more care-'

'Wait! I—had better ask Doctor Peps if he'll have the goodness to step upstairs again perhaps. I'll go down. I'll go down. I needn't beg you,' he added, pausing for a moment at the settee before the fire, 'to take particular care of this young gentleman, Mrs — —'

'Blockitt, Sir?' suggested the nurse, a simpering piece of faded gentility, who did not presume to state her name as a fact, but merely offered it as a mild suggestion.

'Of this young gentleman, Mrs Blockitt.'

'No, Sir, indeed. I remember when Miss Florence was born—'

'Ay, ay, ay,' said Mr Dombey, bending over the

basket bedstead, and slightly bending his brows at the same time. 'Miss Florence was all very well, but this is another matter. This young gentleman has to accomplish a destiny. A destiny, little fellow!' As he thus apostrophised the infant he raised one of his hands to his lips, and kissed it; then, seeming to fear that the action involved some compromise of his dignity, went, awkwardly enough, away.

To record of Mr Dombey that he was not in his way affected by this intelligence, would be to do him an injustice. He was not a man of whom it could properly be said that he was ever startled, or shocked; but he certainly had a sense within him, that if his wife should sicken and decay, he would be very sorry, and that he would find a something gone from among his plate and furniture, and other household possessions, which was well worth the having, and could not be lost without sincere regret. Though it would be a cool, business-like, gentlemanly, self-possessed regret, no doubt.

His meditations on the subject were soon interrupted, first by the rustling of garments on the staircase, and then by the sudden whisking into the room of a lady rather past the middle age than otherwise but dressed in a very juvenile manner, particularly as to the tightness of her bodice, who, running up to him with a kind of screw in her face and carriage, expressive of suppressed emotion,

flung her arms around his neck, and said, in a choking voice,

'My dear Paul! He's quite a Dombey!'

'Well, well!' returned her brother—for Mr Dombey was her brother—'I think he is like the family. Don't agitate yourself, Louisa.'

'It's very foolish of me,' said Louisa, sitting down, and taking out her pocket-handkerchief, 'but he's—he's such a perfect Dombey!'

Mr Dombey coughed.

'It's so extraordinary,' said Louisa; smiling through her tears, which indeed were not overpowering, 'as to be perfectly ridiculous. So completely our family. I never saw anything like it in my life!'

'But what is this about Fanny, herself?' said Mr Dombey. 'How is Fanny?'

'My dear Paul,' returned Louisa, 'it's nothing whatever. Take my word, it's nothing whatever. There is exhaustion, certainly, but nothing like what I underwent myself, either with George or Frederick. An effort is necessary. That's all. If dear Fanny were a Dombey!—But I daresay she'll make it; I have no doubt she'll make it. Knowing it to be required of her, as a duty, of course she'll make it. My dear Paul, it's very weak and silly of me, I



know, to be so trembly and shaky from head to foot; but I am so very queer that I must ask you for a glass of wine and a morsel of that cake.'

Mr Dombey promptly supplied her with these refreshments from a tray on the table.

'I shall not drink my love to you, Paul,' said Louisa: 'I shall drink to the little Dombey. Good gracious me!—it's the most astonishing thing I ever knew in all my days, he's such a perfect Dombey.'

'Why, my dear Paul!' exclaimed his sister, 'you look quite pale! There's nothing the matter?'

'I am sorry to say, Louisa, that they tell me that Fanny—'

'Now, my dear Paul,' returned his sister rising, 'don't believe it ... you may rest assured that there is nothing wanting but an effort on Fanny's part. And that effort,' she continued, taking off her bonnet, and adjusting her cap and gloves, in a business-like manner, 'she must be encouraged, and really, if necessary, urged to make. Now, my dear Paul, come upstairs with me.'

Mr Dombey, who, besides being generally influenced by his sister for the reason already mentioned, had really faith in her as an experienced and bustling matron, acquiesced; and followed her, at once, to the sick chamber.

The lady lay upon her bed as he had left her, clasping her little daughter to her breast. The child clung close about her, with the same intensity as before, and never raised her head, or moved her soft cheek from her mother's face, or looked on those who stood around, or spoke, or moved, or shed a tear.

'Restless without the little girl,' the Doctor whispered Mr Dombey. 'We found it best to have her in again.'

'Can nothing be done?' asked Mr Dombey.

The Doctor shook his head. 'We can do no more.'

The windows stood open, and the twilight was gathering without.

The scent of the restoratives that had been tried was pungent in the room, but had no fragrance in

the dull and languid air the lady breathed.

There was such a solemn stillness round the bed; and the two medical attendants seemed to look on the impassive form with so much compassion and so little hope, that Mrs Chick was for the moment diverted from her purpose. But presently summoning courage, and what she called presence of mind, she sat down by the bedside, and said in the low precise tone of one who endeavours to awaken a sleeper:

'Fanny! Fanny!'

There was no sound in answer but the loud ticking of Mr Dombey's watch and Doctor Parker Peps's watch, which seemed in the silence to be running a race.

'Fanny, my dear,' said Mrs Chick, with assumed lightness, 'here's Mr Dombey come to see you. Won't you speak to him? They want to lay your little boy—the baby, Fanny, you know; you have hardly seen him yet, I think—in bed; but they can't till you rouse yourself a little. Don't you think it's time you roused yourself a little? Eh?'

She bent her ear to the bed, and listened: at the same time looking round at the bystanders, and holding up her finger.

'Eh?' she repeated, 'what was it you said, Fanny? I didn't hear you.'

No word or sound in answer. Mr Dombey's watch and Dr Parker Peps's watch seemed to be racing faster.

'Now, really, Fanny my dear,' said the sister-in-law, altering her position, and speaking less confidently, and more earnestly, in spite of herself, 'I shall have to be quite cross with you, if you don't rouse yourself. It's necessary for you to make an effort, and perhaps a very great and painful effort which you are not disposed to make; but this is a world of effort you know, Fanny, and we must never yield, when so much depends upon us. Come! Try! I must really scold you if you don't!'

The race in the ensuing pause was fierce and furious. The watches seemed to jostle, and to trip each other up.

'Fanny!' said Louisa, glancing round, with a gathering alarm. 'Only look at me. Only open your

eyes to show me that you hear and understand me; will you? Good Heaven, gentlemen, what is to be done!’

The two medical attendants exchanged a look across the bed; and the Physician, stooping down, whispered in the child’s ear. Not having understood the purport of his whisper, the little creature turned her perfectly colourless face and deep dark eyes towards him; but without loosening her hold in the least.

The whisper was repeated.

‘Mama!’ said the child.

The little voice, familiar and dearly loved, awakened some show of consciousness, even at that ebb. For a moment, the closed eye lids trembled, and the nostril quivered, and the faintest shadow of a smile was seen.

‘Mama!’ cried the child sobbing aloud. ‘Oh dear Mama! oh dear Mama!’

The Doctor gently brushed the scattered ringlets of the child, aside from the face and mouth of the mother. Alas how calm they lay there; how little breath there was to stir them!

Thus, clinging fast to that slight spar within her arms, the mother drifted out upon the dark and unknown sea that rolls round all the world.

Glossary

Issue: children

Mrs Louisa Chick: Dombey’s sister

Spar: a thick, strong pole used as a mast on a ship

Oliver Twist

by Charles Dickens (1838)

Introduction

Oliver’s unmarried mother gave birth to him in a workhouse house after she had been found lying in the street. She died after giving birth, and since no-one knew who she was, her baby was left in the care of the charitable institutions in the parish.

Extract 1

For the next eight or ten months, Oliver was the victim of a systematic course of treachery and deception. He was brought up by hand. The hungry and destitute situation of the infant orphan was duly reported by the workhouse authorities to the parish authorities. The parish

authorities inquired with dignity of the workhouse authorities, whether there was no female then domiciled in ‘the house’ who was in a situation to impart to Oliver Twist, the consolation and nourishment of which he stood in need. The workhouse authorities replied with humility, that there was not. Upon this, the parish authorities magnanimously and humanely resolved, that Oliver should be ‘farmed,’ or, in other words, that he should be dispatched to a branch-workhouse some three miles off, where twenty or thirty other juvenile offenders against the poor-laws, rolled about the floor all day, without the inconvenience of too much food or too much clothing, under the parental superintendence of an elderly female, who received the culprits at and for the

consideration of sevenpence-halfpenny per small head per week. Sevenpence-halfpenny's worth per week is a good round diet for a child; a great deal may be got for sevenpence-halfpenny, quite enough to overload its stomach, and make it uncomfortable. The elderly female was a woman of wisdom and experience; she knew what was good for children; and she had a very accurate perception of what was good for herself. So, she appropriated the greater part of the weekly stipend to her own use, and consigned the rising parochial generation to even a shorter allowance than was originally provided for them.

Extract 2

On his ninth birthday, Oliver Twist is taken to the workhouse where he will be put to work to earn his keep in very harsh conditions. The following, very well-known passage, shows Oliver challenging the system.

The room in which the boys were fed, was a large stone hall, with a copper at one end: out of which the master, dressed in an apron for the purpose, and assisted by one or two women, ladled the gruel at mealtimes. Of this festive composition each boy had one porringer, and no more—except on occasions of great public rejoicing, when he had two ounces and a quarter of bread besides.

The bowls never wanted washing. The boys polished them with their spoons till they shone again; and when they had performed this operation (which never took very long, the spoons being nearly as large as the bowls), they would sit staring at the copper, with such eager eyes, as if they could have devoured the very bricks of which it was composed; employing themselves, meanwhile, in sucking their fingers most assiduously, with the view of catching up any stray splashes of gruel that might have been cast thereon. Boys have generally excellent appetites. Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months: at last they got so voracious and wild with hunger, that one boy, who was tall for his age, and hadn't been used to that sort of thing (for his father had kept a small cook-shop), hinted darkly to his companions, that unless he had another basin of gruel per diem, he was afraid he might some night happen to eat the boy who slept next him, who happened to be a weakly youth of tender age. He had a wild, hungry eye; and they implicitly

believed him. A council was held; lots were cast who should walk up to the master after supper that evening, and ask for more; and it fell to Oliver Twist.

The evening arrived; the boys took their places. The master, in his cook's uniform, stationed himself at the copper; his pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him; the gruel was served out; and a long grace was said over the short commons. The gruel disappeared; the boys whispered each other, and winked at Oliver; while his next neighbors nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said: somewhat alarmed at his own temerity: 'Please, sir, I want some more.'

The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralysed with wonder; the boys with fear.

'What!' said the master at length, in a faint voice. 'Please, sir,' replied Oliver, 'I want some more.'

The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle; pinioned him in his arm; and shrieked aloud for the beadle.

The board were sitting in solemn conclave, when Mr. Bumble rushed into the room in great excitement, and addressing the gentleman in the high chair, said, 'Mr. Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir! Oliver Twist has asked for more!'

There was a general start. Horror was depicted on every countenance.

'For more!' said Mr. Limbkins. 'Compose yourself, Bumble, and answer me distinctly. Do I understand that he asked for more, after he had eaten the supper allotted by the dietary?'

'He did, sir,' replied Bumble.

'That boy will be hung,' said the gentleman in the white waistcoat. 'I know that boy will be hung.'

Nobody controverted the prophetic gentleman's opinion. An animated discussion took place. Oliver was ordered into instant confinement; and a

bill was next morning pasted on the outside of the gate, offering a reward of five pounds to anybody who would take Oliver Twist off the hands of the parish. In other words, five pounds and Oliver

Twist were offered to any man or woman who wanted an apprentice to any trade, business, or calling.

Glossary

Per diem: for each day

Assiduously: persevering with care and effort

Voraciously: hungrily or greedily

Gruel: a type of thin porridge associated with poverty

Temerity: rashness or boldness

Beadle: an officer in a church or parish

The bill was pasted: the notice was put up

Silas Marner

by George Eliot (1861)

Introduction

Silas Marner is a weaver who lives alone, isolated from the society around him after being wrongly accused of theft in the village where he grew up. Over the years he has accumulated a fortune from his work, and his pleasure in life has been to count his gold and see his fortune grow. One night, though, his hoard of money is stolen, and he feels that he has nothing left in the world. Godfrey Cass, the son of the wealthy squire of Raveloe, has secretly married a poor woman called Molly and then left her because he is ashamed to tell his family about their relationship. He would like instead to be free to marry Nancy. On New Year's Eve, Molly has decided to bring their baby to the party at the Squire's house to confront her husband and reveal the secret.

Extract from Chapter 12

Molly's journey

While Godfrey Cass was taking draughts of forgetfulness from the sweet presence of Nancy,

willingly losing all sense of that hidden bond which at other moments galled and fretted him so as to mingle irritation with the very sunshine, Godfrey's wife was walking with slow uncertain steps through the snow-covered Raveloe lanes, carrying her child in her arms.

This journey on New Year's Eve was a premeditated act of vengeance which she had kept in her heart ever since Godfrey, in a fit of passion, had told her he would sooner die than acknowledge her as his wife. There would be a great party at the Red House on New Year's Eve, she knew: her husband would be smiling and smiled upon, hiding her existence in the darkest corner of his heart. But she would mar his pleasure: she would go in her dingy rags, with her faded face, once as handsome as the best, with her little child that had its father's hair and eyes, and disclose herself to the Squire as his eldest son's wife. It is seldom that the miserable can help regarding their misery as a wrong inflicted by those who are less miserable. Molly knew that the cause of her dingy rags was not

her husband's neglect, but the demon Opium to whom she was enslaved, body and soul, except in the lingering mother's tenderness that refused to give him her hungry child. She knew this well; and yet, in the moments of wretched unbenumbed consciousness, the sense of her want and degradation transformed itself continually into bitterness towards Godfrey. He was well off; and if she had her rights she would be well off too. The belief that he repented his marriage, and suffered from it, only aggravated her vindictiveness. Just and self-reproving thoughts do not come to us too thickly, even in the purest air, and with the best lessons of heaven and earth; how should those white-winged delicate messengers make their way to Molly's poisoned chamber, inhabited by no higher memories than those of a barmaid's paradise of pink ribbons and gentlemen's jokes?

She had set out at an early hour, but had lingered on the road, inclined by her indolence to believe that if she waited under a warm shed the snow would cease to fall. She had waited longer than she knew, and now that she found herself belated

in the snow-hidden ruggedness of the long lanes, even the animation of a vindictive purpose could not keep her spirit from failing. It was seven o'clock, and by this time she was not very far from Raveloe, but she was not familiar enough with those monotonous lanes to know how near she was to her journey's end.

Molly's addiction overcomes her

She needed comfort, and she knew but one comforter—the familiar demon in her bosom; but she hesitated a moment, after drawing out the black remnant, before she raised it to her lips. In that moment the mother's love pleaded for painful consciousness rather than oblivion—pleaded to be left in aching weariness, rather than to have the encircling arms benumbed so that they could not feel the dear burden. In another moment Molly had flung something away, but it was not the black remnant—it was an empty phial. And she walked on again under the breaking cloud, from which there came now and then the light of a quickly veiled star, for a freezing wind had sprung up since the snowing had ceased. But she walked always more and more drowsily, and clutched more and more automatically the sleeping child at her bosom.

Slowly the demon was working his will, and cold and weariness were his helpers. Soon she felt nothing but a supreme immediate longing that curtained off all futurity—the longing to lie down and sleep. She had arrived at a spot where her footsteps were no longer checked by a hedgerow, and she had wandered vaguely, unable to distinguish any objects, notwithstanding the wide whiteness around her, and the growing starlight. She sank down against a straggling furze bush, an easy pillow enough; and the bed of snow, too, was soft. She did not feel that the bed was cold, and did not heed whether the child would wake and cry for her. But her arms had not yet relaxed their instinctive clutch; and the little one slumbered on as gently as if it had been rocked in a lace-trimmed cradle.

A baby left alone

But the complete torpor came at last: the fingers lost their tension, the arms unbent; then the little head fell away from the bosom, and the blue eyes opened wide on the cold starlight. At first there was a little peevish cry of "mammy", and an effort to regain the pillowing arm and bosom; but mammy's ear was deaf, and the pillow seemed



to be slipping away backward. Suddenly, as the child rolled downward on its mother's knees, all wet with snow, its eyes were caught by a bright glancing light on the white ground, and, with the ready transition of infancy, it was immediately absorbed in watching the bright living thing running towards it, yet never arriving. That bright living thing must be caught; and in an instant the child had slipped on all-fours, and held out one little hand to catch the gleam. But the gleam would not be caught in that way, and now the head was held up to see where the cunning gleam came from. It came from a very bright place; and the little one, rising on its legs, toddled through the snow, the old grimy shawl in which it was wrapped trailing behind it, and the queer little bonnet dangling at its back—toddled on to the open door of Silas Marner's cottage, and right up to the warm hearth, where there was a bright fire of logs and sticks, which had thoroughly warmed the old sack (Silas's greatcoat) spread out on the bricks to dry. The little one, accustomed to be left to itself for long hours without notice from its mother, squatted down on the sack, and spread its tiny hands towards the blaze, in perfect contentment, gurgling and making many inarticulate communications to the cheerful fire, like a new-hatched gosling beginning to find itself comfortable. But presently the warmth had a lulling effect, and the little golden head sank down on the old sack, and the blue eyes were veiled by their delicate half-transparent lids.

Silas Marner finds the child

But where was Silas Marner while this strange visitor had come to his hearth? He was in the cottage, but he did not see the child. During the last few weeks, since he had lost his money, he had contracted the habit of opening his door and looking out from time to time, as if he thought that his money might be somehow coming back to him, or that some trace, some news of it, might be mysteriously on the road, and be caught by the listening ear or the straining eye. It was chiefly at night, when he was not occupied in his loom, that he fell into this repetition of an act for which he could have assigned no definite purpose, and which can hardly be understood except by those who have undergone a bewildering separation from a supremely loved object. In the evening twilight, and later whenever the night was not dark, Silas looked out on that narrow prospect round the Stone-pits, listening and gazing, not with hope, but with mere yearning and unrest.

This morning he had been told by some of his neighbours that it was New Year's Eve, and that he must sit up and hear the old year rung out and the new rung in, because that was good luck, and might bring his money back again. This was only a friendly Raveloe-way of jesting with the half-crazy oddities of a miser, but it had perhaps helped to throw Silas into a more than usually excited state. Since the on-coming of twilight he had opened his door again and again, though only to shut it immediately at seeing all distance veiled by the falling snow. But the last time he opened it the snow had ceased, and the clouds were parting here and there. He stood and listened, and gazed for a long while—there was really something on the road coming towards him then, but he caught no sign of it; and the stillness and the wide trackless snow seemed to narrow his solitude, and touched his yearning with the chill of despair. He went in again, and put his right hand on the latch of the door to close it—but he did not close it: he was arrested, as he had been already since his loss, by the invisible wand of catalepsy, and stood like a graven image, with wide but sightless eyes, holding open his door, powerless to resist either the good or the evil that might enter there.

When Marner's sensibility returned, he continued the action which had been arrested, and closed his door, unaware of the chasm in his consciousness, unaware of any intermediate change, except that the light had grown dim, and that he was chilled and faint. He thought he had been too long standing at the door and looking out. Turning towards the hearth, where the two logs had fallen apart, and sent forth only a red uncertain glimmer, he seated himself on his fireside chair, and was stooping to push his logs together, when, to his blurred vision, it seemed as if there were gold on the floor in front of the hearth. Gold!—his own gold—brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away! He felt his heart begin to beat violently, and for a few moments he was unable to stretch out his hand and grasp the restored treasure. The heap of gold seemed to glow and get larger beneath his agitated gaze. He leaned forward at last, and stretched forth his hand; but instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline, his fingers encountered soft warm curls. In utter amazement, Silas fell on his knees and bent his head low to examine the marvel: it was a sleeping child—a round, fair thing, with soft yellow rings all over its head. Could this be his little sister come back

to him in a dream—his little sister whom he had carried about in his arms for a year before she died, when he was a small boy without shoes or stockings? That was the first thought that darted across Silas's blank wonderment. Was it a dream? He rose to his feet again, pushed his logs together, and, throwing on some dried leaves and sticks, raised a flame; but the flame did not disperse the vision—it only lit up more distinctly the little round form of the child, and its shabby clothing. It was very much like his little sister. Silas sank into his chair powerless, under the double presence of an inexplicable surprise and a hurrying influx of memories. How and when had the child come in without his knowledge? He had never been beyond the door. But along with that question, and almost thrusting it away, there was a vision of the old home and the old streets leading to Lantern Yard—and within that vision another, of the thoughts which had been present with him in those far-off scenes. The thoughts were strange to him now, like old friendships impossible to revive; and yet he had a dreamy feeling that this child was somehow a message come to him from that far-off life: it stirred fibres that had never been moved in Raveloe—old quiverings of tenderness—old impressions of awe at the presentiment of some Power presiding over his life; for his imagination had not yet extricated itself from the sense of mystery in the child's sudden presence, and had formed no conjectures of ordinary natural means by which the event could have been brought about.

Silas takes care of the child

But there was a cry on the hearth: the child had awaked, and Marner stooped to lift it on his knee. It clung round his neck, and burst louder and louder into that mingling of inarticulate cries with “mammy” by which little children express the bewilderment of waking. Silas pressed it to him, and almost unconsciously uttered sounds of hushing tenderness, while he bethought himself that some of his porridge, which had got cool by

the dying fire, would do to feed the child with if it were only warmed up a little.

He had plenty to do through the next hour. The porridge, sweetened with some dry brown sugar from an old store which he had refrained from using for himself, stopped the cries of the little one, and made her lift her blue eyes with a wide quiet gaze at Silas, as he put the spoon into her mouth. Presently she slipped from his knee and began to toddle about, but with a pretty stagger that made Silas jump up and follow her lest she should fall against anything that would hurt her. But she only fell in a sitting posture on the ground, and began to pull at her boots, looking up at him with a crying face as if the boots hurt her. He took her on his knee again, but it was some time before it occurred to Silas's dull bachelor mind that the wet boots were the grievance, pressing on her warm ankles. He got them off with difficulty, and baby was at once happily occupied with the primary mystery of her own toes, inviting Silas, with much chuckling, to consider the mystery too. But the wet boots had at last suggested to Silas that the child had been walking on the snow, and this roused him from his entire oblivion of any ordinary means by which it could have entered or been brought into his house. Under the prompting of this new idea, and without waiting to form conjectures, he raised the child in his arms, and went to the door. As soon as he had opened it, there was the cry of “mammy” again, which Silas had not heard since the child's first hungry waking. Bending forward, he could just discern the marks made by the little feet on the virgin snow, and he followed their track to the furze bushes. “Mammy!” the little one cried again and again, stretching itself forward so as almost to escape from Silas's arms, before he himself was aware that there was something more than the bush before him—that there was a human body, with the head sunk low in the furze, and half-covered with the shaken snow.

Glossary

Indolence: laziness

Vindictiveness: spiteful or seeking revenge

Catalepsy: a trance-like state, a fixed position, loss of sensation

Childhood and family 2: education

Aims:

- to understand the nature of education during the 19th century
- to be able to discuss the issues raised in literary texts about the treatment of children
- to be able to compare different authors' presentation of education in literature.

Starter or hook

Discuss modern stories and films set in schools. Why are they popular? Which stock characters do we recognise in them: the cruel teacher? The bully? The nervous new pupil?

Researching the 19th-century context

- The history of education.
- Students might interview older friends and relatives to compare their school experiences.
- Look at the prospectuses or websites of boarding schools. What is their appeal and what reassurances do they offer to parents and families? Would day school students like to attend boarding school?

Texts

Conditions

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë (1847) – extract 1 describing Jane's experience on arrival at Lowood School

Nicholas Nickleby by Charles Dickens (1839) – extract 1

Teachers

Jane Eyre – extract 2 describing Miss Temple

David Copperfield by Charles Dickens (1850) – description of Mr Creakle

Curriculum

Nicholas Nickleby – extract 2

Hard Times by Charles Dickens (1854)

Punishment

Jane Eyre – extract 3

Understanding and responding

Conditions

1. List all the features that show the harsh conditions for pupils at Lowood School and Dotheboys Hall. What is their effect on the children there?
2. Who has the power in these schools? Why are the children powerless to change things? Consider how some of the differences between the 19th and 21st centuries such as communications and transport and the legal framework might be relevant.
3. Lowood School is a Christian charity institution. How are its Christian values shown?

Teachers

1. Which of the teachers in these extracts is the most liked and respected? Why?
2. Analyse the names that authors have given to these teachers. What associations do they suggest? How far do their names match their personalities?

Curriculum

1. Compare the range of subjects in your own education with those covered in the schools in these extracts. What determines the school curriculum? Which subjects do you think should be studied? What is the balance in your education between learning facts and developing the imagination and wider skills? Is the balance the right one?
2. What do you think is Charles Dickens's view of the curriculum on offer in this school?

Punishment

1. Only thirty years ago, corporal punishment was still used in schools. The death penalty was abolished in the UK only in 1998, though the last hanging of a criminal was in 1965. What was your response to the corporal punishment of children in these extracts?
2. Do you think your response will be different from that of contemporary readers?

Jane Eyre

by Charlotte Bronte (1847)

Introduction

In this passage Jane Eyre, aged ten, describes her introduction to Lowood School, which is a charitable, boarding institution for orphaned girls.

Extract 1

The night passed rapidly. I was too tired even to dream; I only once awoke to hear the wind rave in furious gusts, and the rain fall in torrents, and to be sensible that Miss Miller had taken her place by my side. When I again unclosed my eyes, a loud bell was ringing; the girls were up and dressing; day had not yet begun to dawn, and a rushlight or two burned in the room. I too rose reluctantly; it was bitter cold, and I dressed as well as I could for shivering, and washed when there was a basin at liberty, which did not occur soon, as there was but one basin to six girls, on the stands down the middle of the room. Again the bell rang: all formed in file, two and two, and in that order descended the stairs and entered the cold and dimly lit schoolroom: here prayers were read by Miss Miller; afterwards she called out—

“Form classes!”

A great tumult succeeded for some minutes, during which Miss Miller repeatedly exclaimed, “Silence!” and “Order!” When it subsided, I saw them all drawn up in four semicircles, before four chairs, placed at the four tables; all held books in their hands, and a great book, like a Bible, lay on each table, before the vacant seat. A pause of some seconds succeeded, filled up by the low, vague hum of numbers; Miss Miller walked from class to class, hushing this indefinite sound.

A distant bell tinkled: immediately three ladies entered the room, each walked to a table and took her seat. Miss Miller assumed the fourth vacant chair, which was that nearest the door, and around which the smallest of the children were assembled: to this inferior class I was called, and placed at the bottom of it.

Business now began, the day’s Collect was

repeated, then certain texts of Scripture were said, and to these succeeded a protracted reading of chapters in the Bible, which lasted an hour. By the time that exercise was terminated, day had fully dawned. The indefatigable bell now sounded for the fourth time: the classes were marshalled and marched into another room to breakfast: how glad I was to behold a prospect of getting something to eat! I was now nearly sick from inanition, having taken so little the day before.

In the following passage, Mr Brocklehurst, a clergyman and benefactor of Lowood has come to inspect the school.

Meantime, Mr. Brocklehurst, standing on the hearth with his hands behind his back, majestically surveyed the whole school. Suddenly his eye gave a blink, as if it had met something that either dazzled or shocked its pupil; turning, he said in more rapid accents than he had hitherto used— “Miss Temple, Miss Temple, what—what is that girl with curled hair? Red hair, ma’am, curled—curled all over?” And extending his cane he pointed to the awful object, his hand shaking as he did so.

“It is Julia Severn,” replied Miss Temple, very quietly.

“Julia Severn, ma’am! And why has she, or any other, curled hair? Why, in defiance of every precept and principle of this house, does she conform to the world so openly—here in an evangelical, charitable establishment—as to wear her hair one mass of curls?”

“Julia’s hair curls naturally,” returned Miss Temple, still more quietly.

“Naturally! Yes, but we are not to conform to nature; I wish these girls to be the children of Grace: and why that abundance? I have again and again intimated that I desire the hair to be arranged closely, modestly, plainly. Miss Temple, that girl’s hair must be cut off entirely; I will send a barber to-morrow: and I see others who have far too much of the excrescence—that tall girl, tell her to turn round. Tell all the first form to rise up and direct their faces to the wall.”

He scrutinised the reverse of these living medals some five minutes, then pronounced sentence.

These words fell like the knell of doom—“All those top-knots must be cut off.”

Nicholas Nickleby

by Charles Dickens (1839)

Extract 1

This passage describes the conditions in a school called Dotheboys Hall

It was such a crowded scene, and there were so many objects to attract attention, that, at first, Nicholas stared about him, really without seeing anything at all. By degrees, however, the place resolved itself into a bare and dirty room, with a couple of windows, whereof a tenth part might be of glass, the remainder being stopped up with old copy-books and paper. There were a couple of long old rickety desks, cut and notched, and inked, and damaged, in every possible way; two or three forms; a detached desk for Squeers; and another for his assistant. The ceiling was supported, like that of a barn, by cross-beams and rafters; and the walls were so stained and discoloured, that it was impossible to tell whether they had ever been touched with paint or whitewash.

But the pupils - the young noblemen! How the last faint traces of hope, the remotest glimmering of any good to be derived from his efforts in this den, faded from the mind of Nicholas as he looked in dismay around! Pale and haggard faces, lank and bony figures, children with the countenances of old men, deformities with irons upon their limbs, boys of stunted growth, and others whose long meagre legs would hardly bear their stooping bodies, all crowded on the view together; there were the bleared eye, the hare-lip, the crooked foot, and every ugliness or distortion that told of unnatural aversion conceived by parents for their offspring, or of young lives which, from the earliest dawn of infancy, had been one horrible endurance of cruelty and neglect. There were little faces which should have been handsome, darkened with the scowl of sullen, dogged suffering;

there was childhood with the light of its eye quenched, its beauty gone, and its helplessness alone remaining; there were vicious-faced boys, brooding, with leaden eyes, like malefactors in a jail; and there were young creatures on whom the sins of their frail parents had descended, weeping even for the mercenary nurses they had known, and lonesome even in their loneliness. With every kindly sympathy and affection blasted in its birth, with every young and healthy feeling flogged and starved down, with every revengeful passion that can fester in swollen hearts, eating its evil way to their core in silence, what an incipient Hell was breeding here!



Jane Eyre

by Charlotte Bronte (1847)

Extract 2

Jane Eyre describes Miss Temple, superintendent of Lowood School

I suppose I have a considerable organ of veneration, for I retain yet the sense of admiring awe with which my eyes traced her steps. Seen now, in broad daylight, she looked tall, fair, and shapely; brown eyes with a benignant light in their irids, and a fine pencilling of long lashes round, relieved the whiteness of her large front; on each of her temples her hair, of a very dark brown, was clustered in round curls, according to the fashion of those times, when neither smooth bands nor long ringlets were in vogue; her dress, also in the mode of the day, was of purple cloth, relieved by a sort of Spanish trimming of black velvet; a gold watch (watches were not so common then as now) shone at her girdle. Let the reader add, to complete the picture, refined features; a complexion, if pale, clear; and a stately air and carriage, and he will have, at least, as clearly as words can give it, a correct idea of the exterior of Miss Temple—Maria Temple, as I afterwards saw the name written in a prayer-book intrusted to me to carry to church.

The superintendent of Lowood (for such was this lady) having taken her seat before a pair of globes placed on one of the tables, summoned the first class round her, and commenced giving a lesson on geography; the lower classes were called by the teachers: repetitions in history, grammar, &c., went on for an hour; writing and arithmetic succeeded, and music lessons were given by Miss Temple to some of the elder girls. The duration of each lesson was measured by the clock, which at last struck twelve. The superintendent rose—

“I have a word to address to the pupils,” said she.

The tumult of cessation from lessons was already breaking forth, but it sank at her voice. She went on—

“You had this morning a breakfast which you could not eat; you must be hungry:—I have ordered that a lunch of bread and cheese shall be served to all.”

The teachers looked at her with a sort of surprise.

“It is to be done on my responsibility,” she added, in an explanatory tone to them, and immediately afterwards left the room.

David Copperfield

by Charles Dickens (1850)

David Copperfield describes his teacher, Mr Creakle.

School began in earnest next day. A profound impression was made upon me, I remember, by the roar of voices in the schoolroom suddenly becoming hushed as death when Mr. Creakle entered after breakfast, and stood in the doorway looking round upon us like a giant in a story-book surveying his captives.

Tungay stood at Mr. Creakle’s elbow. He had no occasion, I thought, to cry out ‘Silence!’ so ferociously, for the boys were all struck speechless and motionless.

Mr. Creakle was seen to speak, and Tungay was heard, to this effect.

‘Now, boys, this is a new half. Take care what you’re about, in this new half. Come fresh up to

the lessons, I advise you, for I come fresh up to the punishment. I won't flinch. It will be of no use your rubbing yourselves; you won't rub the marks out that I shall give you. Now get to work, every boy!

When this dreadful exordium was over, and Tungay had stumped out again, Mr. Creakle came to where I sat, and told me that if I were famous for biting, he was famous for biting, too. He then showed me the cane, and asked me what I thought of THAT, for a tooth? Was it a sharp tooth, hey? Was it a double tooth, hey? Had it a deep prong, hey? Did it bite, hey? Did it bite? At every question he gave me a fleshy cut with it that made me writhe; so I was very soon made free of Salem House (as Steerforth said), and was very soon in tears also.

Not that I mean to say these were special marks of distinction, which only I received. On the contrary, a large majority of the boys (especially the smaller ones) were visited with similar instances of notice, as Mr. Creakle made the round of the schoolroom. Half the establishment was writhing and crying,

before the day's work began; and how much of it had writhed and cried before the day's work was over, I am really afraid to recollect, lest I should seem to exaggerate.

I should think there never can have been a man who enjoyed his profession more than Mr. Creakle did. He had a delight in cutting at the boys, which was like the satisfaction of a craving appetite. I am confident that he couldn't resist a chubby boy, especially; that there was a fascination in such a subject, which made him restless in his mind, until he had scored and marked him for the day. I was chubby myself, and ought to know. I am sure when I think of the fellow now, my blood rises against him with the disinterested indignation I should feel if I could have known all about him without having ever been in his power; but it rises hotly, because I know him to have been an incapable brute, who had no more right to be possessed of the great trust he held, than to be Lord High Admiral, or Commander-in-Chief – in either of which capacities it is probable that he would have done infinitely less mischief.

Nicholas Nickleby

by Charles Dickens (1839)

Extract 2

Nicholas Nickleby joins the school as an assistant teacher and hears about the curriculum.

'This is the first class in English spelling and philosophy, Nickleby,' said Squeers, beckoning Nicholas to stand beside him. 'We'll get up a Latin one, and hand that over to you. Now, then, where's the first boy?'

'Please, sir, he's cleaning the back-parlour window,' said the temporary head of the philosophical class.

'So he is, to be sure,' rejoined Squeers. 'We go upon the practical mode of teaching, Nickleby; the regular education system. C-l-e-a- n, clean, verb

active, to make bright, to scour. W-i-n, win, d-e-r, der, winder, a casement. When the boy knows this out of book, he goes and does it. It's just the same principle as the use of the globes. Where's the second boy?'

'Please, sir, he's weeding the garden,' replied a small voice.

'To be sure,' said Squeers, by no means disconcerted. 'So he is. B-o-t, bot, t-i-n, tin, bottin, n-e-y, ney, bottinney, noun substantive, a knowledge of plants. When he has learned that bottinney means a knowledge of plants, he goes and knows 'em. That's our system, Nickleby: what do you think of it?'

'It's very useful one, at any rate,' answered Nicholas.

'I believe you,' rejoined Squeers, not remarking the emphasis of his usher. 'Third boy, what's a horse?'

'A beast, sir,' replied the boy.

'So it is,' said Squeers. 'Ain't it, Nickleby?'

'I believe there is no doubt of that, sir,' answered Nicholas.

'Of course there isn't,' said Squeers. 'A horse is a quadruped, and quadruped's Latin for beast, as everybody that's gone through the grammar knows, or else where's the use of having grammars at all?'

'Where, indeed!' said Nicholas abstractedly.

'As you're perfect in that,' resumed Squeers, turning to the boy, 'go and look after MY horse, and rub him down well, or I'll rub you down. The rest of the class go and draw water up, till somebody tells you to leave off, for it's washing-day tomorrow, and they want the coppers filled.'

So saying, he dismissed the first class to their experiments in practical philosophy, and eyed Nicholas with a look, half cunning and half doubtful, as if he were not altogether certain what he might think of him by this time.

'That's the way we do it, Nickleby,' he said, after a pause.

Nicholas shrugged his shoulders in a manner that was scarcely perceptible, and said he saw it was.

'And a very good way it is, too,' said Squeers. 'Now, just take them fourteen little boys and hear them some reading, because, you know, you must begin to be useful. Idling about here won't do.'

Mr Squeers said this, as if it had suddenly occurred to him, either that he must not say too much to his assistant, or that his assistant did not say enough to him in praise of the establishment. The children were arranged in a semicircle round the new master, and he was soon listening to their dull, drawling, hesitating recital of those stories of engrossing interest which are to be found in the more antiquated spelling-books.

Hard Times

by Charles Dickens (1854)

Chapter 2 Murdering the Innocents

In this passage a teacher called Thomas Gradgrind introduces himself and his teaching methods. He is accompanied at the school by an important gentleman who shares his view of education.

'Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of realities. A man of fact and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, sir - peremptorily Thomas - Thomas Gradgrind. With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you

exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case simple arithmetic.'

In such terms Mr. Gradgrind always mentally introduced himself, whether to his private circle of acquaintance, or to the public in general.

'Girl number twenty,' said Mr. Gradgrind, squarely pointing with his square forefinger, 'I don't know that girl. Who is that girl?'

'Sissy Jupe, sir,' explained number twenty, blushing, standing up, and curtseying.

'Sissy is not a name,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'Don't call yourself Sissy. Call yourself Cecilia.'

'My father as calls me Sissy, sir,' returned the young girl in a trembling voice, and with another curtsy.

'Then he has no business to do it,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'Tell him he mustn't. Cecilia Jupe. Let me see. What is your father?'

'He belongs to the horse-riding, if you please, sir.'

Mr. Gradgrind frowned, and waved off the objectionable calling with his hand.

'We don't want to know anything about that, here. You mustn't tell us about that, here. Your father breaks horses, does he?'

'If you please, sir, when they can get any to break, they do break horses in the ring, sir.'

'You mustn't tell us about the ring, here. Very well, then Describe your father as a horsebreaker. He doctors sick horses, I dare say?'

'Oh yes, sir.'

'Very well, then. He is a veterinary surgeon, a farrier and horsebreaker. Give me your definition of a horse.'

(Sissy Jupe thrown into the greatest alarm by this demand.)

'Girl number twenty unable to define a horse!' said Mr. Gradgrind, for the general behoof of all the little pitchers. 'Girl number twenty possessed of no facts, in reference to one of the commonest of animals! Some boy's definition of a horse. Bitzer, yours.'

The square finger, moving here and there, lighted suddenly on Bitzer, perhaps because he chanced to sit in the same ray of sunlight which, darting in at one of the bare windows of the intensely whitewashed room, irradiated Sissy.

'Bitzer,' said Thomas Gradgrind. 'Your definition of a horse.'

'Quadruped. Graminivorous. Forty teeth, namely twenty-four grinders, four eye-teeth, and twelve incisive. Sheds coat in the spring; in marshy countries, sheds hoofs, too. Hoofs hard, but requiring to be shod with iron. Age known by marks in mouth.' Thus (and much more) Bitzer.

'Now girl number twenty,' said Mr. Gradgrind. 'You know what a horse is.'

The gentleman now stepped forth.

'Very well,' said this gentleman, briskly smiling and folding his arms. 'That's a horse. Now, let me ask you girls and boys, would you paper a room with representations of horses?'

A pause.

"I'll explain to you, then," said the gentleman, after another and a dismal pause, 'why you wouldn't paper a room with representations of horses. Do you ever see horses walking up and down the sides of rooms in reality – in fact? Do you?'

'Yes, sir!' from one half. 'No, sir!' from the other.

'Of course no,' said the gentleman, with an indignant look at the wrong half. 'Why, then, you are not to see anywhere, what you don't see in fact; you are not to have anywhere, what you don't have in fact. What is called Taste, is only another name for Fact.'

Thomas Gradgrind nodded his approbation.

'This is a new principle, a discovery, a great discovery,' said the gentleman. 'Now, I'll try you again. Suppose you were going to carpet a room. Would you use a carpet having a representation of flowers upon it?'

There being a general conviction by this time that 'No, sir!' was always the right answer to this gentleman, the chorus of No was very strong. Only a few feeble stragglers said Yes; among them Sissy Jupe.

'Girl number twenty,' said the gentleman, smiling in the calm strength of knowledge.

Sissy blushed, and stood up.

'So you would carpet your room – or your husband's room, if you were a grown woman, and had a husband – with representations of flowers, would you,' said the gentleman. 'Why would you?'

'If you please, sir, I am very fond of flowers,' returned the girl.

'And is that why you would put tables and chairs upon them, and have people walking over them with heavy boots?'

'It wouldn't hurt them, sir. They wouldn't crush and wither if you please, sir. They would be the pictures of what was very pretty and pleasant, and I would fancy --'

'Ay, ay, ay! But you mustn't fancy,' cried the gentleman, quite elated by coming so happily to his point. 'That's it! You are never to fancy.' 'You are not, Cecilia Jupe,' Thomas Gradgrind solemnly repeated, 'to do anything of that kind.'

'Fact, fact, fact!' said the gentleman. And 'Fact, fact, fact!' repeated Thomas Gradgrind.

'You are to be in all things regulated and governed,' said the gentleman, 'by fact. We hope to have, before long, a board of fact, composed of

commissioners of fact, who will force the people to be a people of fact, and of nothing but fact. You must discard the word Fancy altogether. You have nothing to do with it. You are not to have, in any object of use or ornament, what would be a contradiction in fact. You don't walk upon flowers in fact; you cannot be allowed to walk upon flowers in carpets. You don't find that foreign birds and butterflies come and perch upon your crockery. You never meet with quadrupeds going up and down walls; you must not have quadrupeds represented upon walls. You must use,' said the gentleman, 'for all these purposes, combinations and modifications (in primary colours) of mathematical figures which are susceptible of proof and demonstration. This is the new discovery. This is fact. This is taste.'

The girl curtsied, and sat down. She was very young, and she looked as if she were frightened by the matter of fact prospect the world afforded.

Jane Eyre

by Charlotte Bronte (1847)

Extract 3

Punishment at Lowood School

At first, being little accustomed to learn by heart, the lessons appeared to me both long and difficult; the frequent change from task to task, too, bewildered me; and I was glad when, about three o'clock in the afternoon, Miss Smith put into my hands a border of muslin two yards long, together with needle, thimble, &c., and sent me to sit in a quiet corner of the schoolroom, with directions to hem the same. At that hour most of the others were sewing likewise; but one class still stood round Miss Scatcherd's chair reading, and as all was quiet, the subject of their lessons could be heard, together with the manner in which each girl acquitted herself, and the animadversions or commendations of Miss Scatcherd on the performance. It was English history: among the readers I observed my acquaintance of the verandah: at the commencement of the lesson, her place had been at the top of the class, but for

some error of pronunciation, or some inattention to stops, she was suddenly sent to the very bottom. Even in that obscure position, Miss Scatcherd continued to make her an object of constant notice: she was continually addressing to her such phrases as the following:—

"Burns" (such it seems was her name: the girls here were all called by their surnames, as boys are elsewhere), "Burns, you are standing on the side of your shoe; turn your toes out immediately." "Burns, you poke your chin most unpleasantly; draw it in." "Burns, I insist on your holding your head up; I will not have you before me in that attitude," &c. &c.

A chapter having been read through twice, the books were closed and the girls examined. The lesson had comprised part of the reign of Charles I., and there were sundry questions about tonnage and poundage and ship-money, which most of them appeared unable to answer; still, every little

difficulty was solved instantly when it reached Burns: her memory seemed to have retained the substance of the whole lesson, and she was ready with answers on every point. I kept expecting that Miss Scatcherd would praise her attention; but, instead of that, she suddenly cried out—

“You dirty, disagreeable girl! you have never cleaned your nails this morning!”

Burns made no answer: I wondered at her silence. “Why,” thought I, “does she not explain that she could neither clean her nails nor wash her face, as the water was frozen?”

My attention was now called off by Miss Smith desiring me to hold a skein of thread: while she was winding it, she talked to me from time to time, asking whether I had ever been at school before, whether I could mark, stitch, knit, &c.; till she dismissed me, I could not pursue my observations on Miss Scatcherd’s movements. When I returned to my seat, that lady was just delivering an order of which I did not catch the import; but Burns

immediately left the class, and going into the small inner room where the books were kept, returned in half a minute, carrying in her hand a bundle of twigs tied together at one end. This ominous tool she presented to Miss Scatcherd with a respectful curtsey; then she quietly, and without being told, unloosed her pinafore, and the teacher instantly and sharply inflicted on her neck a dozen strokes with the bunch of twigs. Not a tear rose to Burns’ eye; and, while I paused from my sewing, because my fingers quivered at this spectacle with a sentiment of unavailing and impotent anger, not a feature of her pensive face altered its ordinary expression.

“Hardened girl!” exclaimed Miss Scatcherd; “nothing can correct you of your slatternly habits: carry the rod away.”

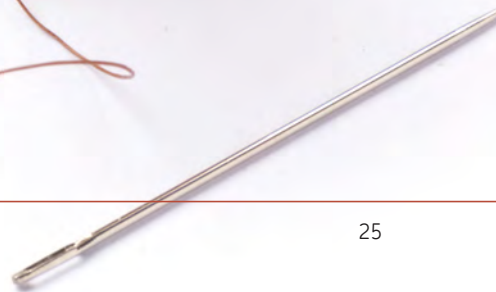
Burns obeyed: I looked at her narrowly as she emerged from the book-closet; she was just putting back her handkerchief into her pocket, and the trace of a tear glistened on her thin cheek.

Glossary

Collect: a prayer

Indefatigable: never tiring

Inanition: exhaustion caused by lack of food



Childhood and family 3: girls and boys

Aims:

- to explore the presentation of relationships between young people in literature
- to understand aspects 19th century conventions of courtship and marriage
- to be able to reflect on the ways in which authors help us to understand aspects of the human condition.

Starter or hook

Share examples of family trees to explore the complexity and variety of family relationships.

Use clips of films or TV to show sibling rivalry and relationships.

Compare students' experiences with siblings, and with other groups of siblings from other families.

- Discuss sibling relationships and students' experiences of sharing good times and having arguments.
- How do siblings regard their older and younger brothers and sisters?
- How do our relationships with brothers and sisters differ from those with friends?

Texts

1. **Children from different families**
Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte (1847)
2. **A big brother and little sister**
The Mill on the Floss by George Eliot – extract from chapter 5 (1860)
3. **Boy meets girl**
Northanger Abbey by Jane Austen (1817) – extract from chapter 7
4. **Unwanted attention**
Tess of the D'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy (1891) – extract from chapter 8

Understanding and responding

Children from different families

Read the extract from *Wuthering Heights*.

1. The novel deals with parallels and contrasts. Make two columns under the headings *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange* and then list details from the passage that show parallels or contrasts between them.
2. *Wuthering Heights* is set in the wild moors of Yorkshire. Identify the details from the passage that describe the natural world. What atmosphere has Emily Bronte created? How do you think that Catherine and Heathcliff respond to the natural world?
3. The Linton family is of a high social class. Which details show their wealth and status?
4. There are two pairs of children in this passage: Catherine and Heathcliff from *Wuthering Heights*, and Edgar and Isabella Linton at *Thrushcross Grange*. How are they presented and how do you respond to them?
5. Why do the Lintons treat Catherine differently from Heathcliff?
6. This is Heathcliff's account of the events that happened. What feelings does he express towards Catherine and towards the Lintons?
7. How does Emily Bronte create a realistic impression of the characters in this passage?

A big brother and a little sister

Read the extract from Chapter 5 of *The Mill on the Floss*.

1. How does Maggie feel towards Tom?
2. How does Tom feel towards Maggie?
3. The passage starts happily. What is the turning point when things start to go wrong?
4. Do you sympathise more with Maggie or with Tom in this extract?
5. Is this a realistic portrayal of how sisters and brothers behave?
6. Read again the final paragraph. What does George Eliot tell us here about sibling relationships?

Boy meets girl

Read extract 1 from chapter 7 of *Northanger Abbey*.

1. Which details does the author use to suggest romantic interest between Isabella Thorpe and James Morland?
2. Identify the assertions that John Thorpe makes about his horse and his carriage. Does Jane Austen show him to be accurate? What aspects of his character does she reveal through this conversation?
3. Judging from how he speaks, do you consider John Thorpe to be an attractive character?
4. A modern day equivalent of John Thorpe's boastfulness about his horse and carriage might be showing off about a car. What is the appeal of speed and high performance? How do young people use such things to impress members of the opposite sex?

5. Jane Austen tells us that Catherine Morland doubted the propriety of accepting John Thorpe's offer of a ride in his carriage. What does this show us about the behaviour expected of young men and women at the time? How is it different now?

Unwanted attention

Extract 1 from *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* chapter 8.

1. What is Alec D'Urberville's reason for driving recklessly fast in this extract?
2. How does Tess respond?
3. Identify the details that Hardy has used to create an impression of speed and danger.
4. Tess is a naive girl from a lower class than Alec. Compare the two characters and identify the details that show her to be innocent and him to be dangerous.
5. How does Tess manage to escape Alec's attentions?

Wuthering Heights

by Emily Bronte (1847)

Introduction

Heathcliff was adopted as a young child by the Earnshaw family whose daughter Catherine came to love him as a brother and friend. When her parents died, her older brother Hindley returned with his wife to take over the house, Wuthering Heights, where they live together. Jealous of the place he had gained in the family, Hindley held a longstanding resentment and dislike of Heathcliff, whom he treated cruelly and tried to separate from Catherine. This part of the story is told by the housekeeper, Nellie Dean. Thrushcross Grange is a grand house a little distance away from Wuthering Heights where the Linton family lives.

They both promised fair to grow up as rude as savages; the young master being entirely negligent how they behaved, and what they did, so they kept clear of him. He would not even

have seen after their going to church on Sundays, only Joseph and the curate reprimanded his carelessness when they absented themselves; and that reminded him to order Heathcliff a flogging, and Catherine a fast from dinner or supper. But it was one of their chief amusements to run away to the moors in the morning and remain there all day, and the after punishment grew a mere thing to laugh at. The curate might set as many chapters as he pleased for Catherine to get by heart, and Joseph might thrash Heathcliff till his arm ached; they forgot everything the minute they were together again: at least the minute they had contrived some naughty plan of revenge; and many a time I've cried to myself to watch them growing more reckless daily, and I not daring to speak a syllable, for fear of losing the small power I still retained over the unfriended creatures. One Sunday evening, it chanced that they were banished from the sitting-room, for making a noise, or a light offence of the kind; and when I went to call them to supper, I could

discover them nowhere. We searched the house, above and below, and the yard and stables; they were invisible: and, at last, Hindley in a passion told us to bolt the doors, and swore nobody should let them in that night. The household went to bed; and I, too, anxious to lie down, opened my lattice and put my head out to hearken, though it rained: determined to admit them in spite of the prohibition, should they return. In a while, I distinguished steps coming up the road, and the light of a lantern glimmered through the gate. I threw a shawl over my head and ran to prevent them from waking Mr. Earnshaw by knocking. There was Heathcliff, by himself: it gave me a start to see him alone.

‘Where is Miss Catherine?’ I cried hurriedly. ‘No accident, I hope?’ ‘At Thrushcross Grange,’ he answered; ‘and I would have been there too, but they had not the manners to ask me to stay.’ ‘Well, you will catch it!’ I said: ‘you’ll never be content till you’re sent about your business. What in the world led you wandering to Thrushcross Grange?’ ‘Let me get off my wet clothes, and I’ll tell you all about it, Nelly,’ he replied. I bid him beware of rousing the master, and while he undressed and I waited to put out the candle, he continued—‘Cathy and I escaped from the wash-house to have a ramble at liberty, and getting a glimpse of the Grange lights, we thought we would just go and see whether the Lintons passed their Sunday evenings standing shivering in corners, while their father and mother sat eating and drinking, and singing and laughing, and burning their eyes out before the fire. Do you think they do? Or reading sermons, and being catechised by their manservant, and set to learn a column of Scripture names, if they don’t answer properly?’ ‘Probably not,’ I responded. ‘They are good children, no doubt, and don’t deserve the treatment you receive, for your bad conduct.’ ‘Don’t cant, Nelly,’ he said: ‘nonsense! We ran from the top of the Heights to the park, without stopping—Catherine completely beaten in the race, because she was barefoot. You’ll have to seek for her shoes in the bog to-morrow. We crept through a broken hedge, groped our way up the path, and planted ourselves on a flower-plot under the drawing-room window. The light came from thence; they had not put up the shutters, and the curtains were only half closed. Both of us were able to look in by standing on the basement, and clinging to the ledge, and we saw—ah! it was beautiful—a splendid place carpeted with

crimson, and crimson-covered chairs and tables, and a pure white ceiling bordered by gold, a shower of glass-drops hanging in silver chains from the centre, and shimmering with little soft tapers. Old Mr. and Mrs. Linton were not there; Edgar and his sisters had it entirely to themselves. Shouldn’t they have been happy? We should have thought ourselves in heaven! And now, guess what your good children were doing? Isabella—I believe she is eleven, a year younger than Cathy—lay screaming at the farther end of the room, shrieking as if witches were running red-hot needles into her. Edgar stood on the hearth weeping silently, and in the middle of the table sat a little dog, shaking its paw and yelping; which, from their mutual accusations, we understood they had nearly pulled in two between them. The idiots! That was their pleasure! to quarrel who should hold a heap of warm hair, and each begin to cry because both, after struggling to get it, refused to take it. We laughed outright at the petted things; we did despise them! When would you catch me wishing to have what Catherine wanted? or find us by ourselves, seeking entertainment in yelling, and sobbing, and rolling on the ground, divided by the whole room? I’d not exchange, for a thousand lives, my condition here, for Edgar Linton’s at Thrushcross Grange—not if I might have the privilege of flinging Joseph off the highest gable, and painting the house-front with Hindley’s blood!’

‘Hush, hush!’ I interrupted. ‘Still you have not told me, Heathcliff, how Catherine is left behind?’

‘I told you we laughed,’ he answered. ‘The Lintons heard us, and with one accord they shot like arrows to the door; there was silence, and then a cry, “Oh, mamma, mamma! Oh, papa! Oh, mamma, come here. Oh, papa, oh!” They really did howl out something in that way. We made frightful noises to terrify them still more, and then we dropped off the ledge, because somebody was drawing the bars, and we felt we had better flee. I had Cathy by the hand, and was urging her on, when all at once she fell down. “Run, Heathcliff, run!” she whispered. “They have let the bull-dog loose, and he holds me!” The devil had seized her ankle, Nelly: I heard his abominable snorting. She did not yell out—no! she would have scorned to do it, if she had been spitted on the horns of a mad cow. I did, though: I vociferated curses enough to annihilate any fiend in Christendom; and I got a stone and thrust it between his jaws, and tried

with all my might to cram it down his throat. A beast of a servant came up with a lantern, at last, shouting—“Keep fast, Skulker, keep fast!” He changed his note, however, when he saw Skulker’s game. The dog was throttled off; his huge, purple tongue hanging half a foot out of his mouth, and his pendent lips streaming with bloody slaver. The man took Cathy up; she was sick: not from fear, I’m certain, but from pain. He carried her in; I followed, grumbling execrations and vengeance. “What prey, Robert?” hallooed Linton from the entrance. “Skulker has caught a little girl, sir,” he replied; “and there’s a lad here,” he added, making a clutch at me, “who looks an out-and-outer! Very like the robbers were for putting them through the window to open the doors to the gang after all were asleep, that they might murder us at their ease. Hold your tongue, you foul-mouthed thief, you! You shall go to the gallows for this. Mr. Linton, sir, don’t lay by your gun.”

He pulled me under the chandelier, and Mrs. Linton placed her spectacles on her nose and raised her hands in horror. The cowardly children crept nearer also, Isabella lisping—“Frightful thing! Put him in the cellar, papa. He’s exactly like the son of the fortune-teller that stole my tame pheasant. Isn’t he, Edgar?”

“While they examined me, Cathy came round; she heard the last speech, and laughed. Edgar Linton, after an inquisitive stare, collected sufficient wit to recognise her. They see us at church, you know, though we seldom meet them elsewhere. “That’s Miss Earnshaw?” he whispered to his mother, “and look how Skulker has bitten her—how her foot bleeds!”

““Miss Earnshaw? Nonsense!” cried the dame; “Miss Earnshaw scouring the country with a gipsy! And yet, my dear, the child is in mourning—surely it is—and she may be lamed for life!”

““What culpable carelessness in her brother!” exclaimed Mr. Linton, turning from me to

Catherine. “I’ve understood from Shielders” (that was the curate, sir) “that he lets her grow up in absolute heathenism. But who is this? Where did she pick up this companion? Oho! I declare he is that strange acquisition my late neighbour made, in his journey to Liverpool—a little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway.”

““A wicked boy, at all events,” remarked the old lady, “and quite unfit for a decent house! Did you notice his language, Linton? I’m shocked that my children should have heard it.”

‘I recommenced cursing—don’t be angry, Nelly—and so Robert was ordered to take me off. I refused to go without Cathy; he dragged me into the garden, pushed the lantern into my hand, assured me that Mr. Earnshaw should be informed of my behaviour, and, bidding me march directly, secured the door again. The curtains were still looped up at one corner, and I resumed my station as spy; because, if Catherine had wished to return, I intended shattering their great glass panes to a million of fragments, unless they let her out. She sat on the sofa quietly. Mrs. Linton took off the grey cloak of the dairy-maid which we had borrowed for our excursion, shaking her head and expostulating with her, I suppose: she was a young lady, and they made a distinction between her treatment and mine. Then the woman-servant brought a basin of warm water, and washed her feet; and Mr. Linton mixed a tumbler of negus, and Isabella emptied a plateful of cakes into her lap, and Edgar stood gaping at a distance. Afterwards, they dried and combed her beautiful hair, and gave her a pair of enormous slippers, and wheeled her to the fire; and I left her, as merry as she could be, dividing her food between the little dog and Skulker, whose nose she pinched as he ate; and kindling a spark of spirit in the vacant blue eyes of the Lintons—a dim reflection from her own enchanting face. I saw they were full of stupid admiration; she is so immeasurably superior to them—to everybody on earth, is she not, Nelly?’

Glossary

Joseph: a miserable and deeply religious old man who is the chief servant at Wuthering Heights

Negus: a hot drink of port, sugar, lemon and spice

The Mill on the Floss

by George Eliot (1860)

Introduction

Tom Tulliver has been away at school. His mother and nine year old sister, Maggie, are ready to welcome him home.

Extract from Chapter 5

Tom Comes Home

Mrs. Tulliver stood with her arms open; Maggie jumped first on one leg and then on the other; while Tom descended from the gig, and said, with masculine reticence as to the tender emotions, "Hallo! Yap—what! are you there?"

Nevertheless he submitted to be kissed willingly enough, though Maggie hung on his neck in rather a strangling fashion, while his blue-gray eyes wandered toward the croft and the lambs and the river, where he promised himself that he would begin to fish the first thing to-morrow morning.

"Maggie," said Tom, confidentially, taking her into a corner, as soon as his mother was gone out to

examine his box and the warm parlor had taken off the chill he had felt from the long drive, "you don't know what I've got in my pockets," nodding his head up and down as a means of rousing her sense of mystery.

"No," said Maggie. "How stodgy they look, Tom! Is it marls (marbles) or cobnuts?" Maggie's heart sank a little, because Tom always said it was "no good" playing with her at those games, she played so badly.

"Marls! no; I've swopped all my marls with the little fellows, and cobnuts are no fun, you silly, only when the nuts are green. But see here!" He drew something half out of his right-hand pocket.

"What is it?" said Maggie, in a whisper. "I can see nothing but a bit of yellow."

"Why, it's—a-new—guess, Maggie!"

"Oh, I can't guess, Tom," said Maggie, impatiently.



“Don’t be a spitfire, else I won’t tell you,” said Tom, thrusting his hand back into his pocket and looking determined.

“No, Tom,” said Maggie, imploringly, laying hold of the arm that was held stiffly in the pocket. “I’m not cross, Tom; it was only because I can’t bear guessing. Please be good to me.”

Tom’s arm slowly relaxed, and he said, “Well, then, it’s a new fish-line—two new uns,—one for you, Maggie, all to yourself. I wouldn’t go halves in the toffee and gingerbread on purpose to save the money; and Gibson and Spouncer fought with me because I wouldn’t. And here’s hooks; see here—I say, won’t we go and fish to-morrow down by the Round Pool? And you shall catch your own fish, Maggie and put the worms on, and everything; won’t it be fun?”

Maggie’s answer was to throw her arms round Tom’s neck and hug him, and hold her cheek against his without speaking, while he slowly unwound some of the line, saying, after a pause,—

“Wasn’t I a good brother, now, to buy you a line all to yourself? You know, I needn’t have bought it, if I hadn’t liked.”

“Yes, very, very good—I do love you, Tom.”

Tom had put the line back in his pocket, and was looking at the hooks one by one, before he spoke again.

“And the fellows fought me, because I wouldn’t give in about the toffee.”

“Oh, dear! I wish they wouldn’t fight at your school, Tom. Didn’t it hurt you?”

“Hurt me? no,” said Tom, putting up the hooks again, taking out a large pocket-knife, and slowly opening the largest blade, which he looked at meditatively as he rubbed his finger along it. Then he added,—

“I gave Spouncer a black eye, I know; that’s what he got by wanting to leather me; I wasn’t going to go halves because anybody leathered me.”

“Oh, how brave you are, Tom! I think you’re like Samson. If there came a lion roaring at me, I think you’d fight him, wouldn’t you, Tom?”

“How can a lion come roaring at you, you silly thing? There’s no lions, only in the shows.”

“No; but if we were in the lion countries—I mean in Africa, where it’s very hot; the lions eat people there. I can show it you in the book where I read it.”

“Well, I should get a gun and shoot him.”

“But if you hadn’t got a gun,—we might have gone out, you know, not thinking, just as we go fishing; and then a great lion might run toward us roaring, and we couldn’t get away from him. What should you do, Tom?”

Tom paused, and at last turned away contemptuously, saying, “But the lion isn’t coming. What’s the use of talking?”

“But I like to fancy how it would be,” said Maggie, following him. “Just think what you would do, Tom.”

“Oh, don’t bother, Maggie! you’re such a silly. I shall go and see my rabbits.”

Maggie’s heart began to flutter with fear. She dared not tell the sad truth at once, but she walked after Tom in trembling silence as he went out, thinking how she could tell him the news so as to soften at once his sorrow and his anger; for Maggie dreaded Tom’s anger of all things; it was quite a different anger from her own.

“Tom,” she said, timidly, when they were out of doors, “how much money did you give for your rabbits?”

“Two half-crowns and a sixpence,” said Tom, promptly.

“I think I’ve got a great deal more than that in my steel purse upstairs. I’ll ask mother to give it you.”

“What for?” said Tom. “I don’t want your money, you silly thing. I’ve got a great deal more money than you, because I’m a boy. I always have half-sovereigns and sovereigns for my Christmas boxes because I shall be a man, and you only have five-shilling pieces, because you’re only a girl.”

“Well, but, Tom—if mother would let me give you two half-crowns and a sixpence out of my purse

to put into your pocket and spend, you know, and buy some more rabbits with it?"

"More rabbits? I don't want any more."

"Oh, but, Tom, they're all dead."

Tom stopped immediately in his walk and turned round toward Maggie. "You forgot to feed 'em, then, and Harry forgot?" he said, his colour heightening for a moment, but soon subsiding. "I'll pitch into Harry. I'll have him turned away. And I don't love you, Maggie. You sha'n't go fishing with me to-morrow. I told you to go and see the rabbits every day." He walked on again.

"Yes, but I forgot—and I couldn't help it, indeed, Tom. I'm so very sorry," said Maggie, while the tears rushed fast.

"You're a naughty girl," said Tom, severely, "and I'm sorry I bought you the fish-line. I don't love you."

"Oh, Tom, it's very cruel," sobbed Maggie. "I'd forgive you, if you forgot anything—I wouldn't mind what you did—I'd forgive you and love you."

"Yes, you're silly; but I never do forget things, I don't."

"Oh, please forgive me, Tom; my heart will break," said Maggie, shaking with sobs, clinging to Tom's arm, and laying her wet cheek on his shoulder.

Tom shook her off, and stopped again, saying in a peremptory tone, "Now, Maggie, you just listen. Aren't I a good brother to you?"

"Ye-ye-es," sobbed Maggie, her chin rising and falling convulsedly.

"Didn't I think about your fish-line all this quarter, and mean to buy it, and saved my money o' purpose, and wouldn't go halves in the toffee, and Spouncer fought me because I wouldn't?"

"Ye-ye-es—and I-lo-lo-love you so, Tom."

"But you're a naughty girl. Last holidays you licked the paint off my lozenge-box, and the holidays before that you let the boat drag my fish-line down when I'd set you to watch it, and you pushed your head through my kite, all for nothing."

"But I didn't mean," said Maggie; "I couldn't help it."

"Yes, you could," said Tom, "if you'd minded what you were doing. And you're a naughty girl, and you sha'n't go fishing with me to-morrow."

With this terrible conclusion, Tom ran away from Maggie toward the mill, meaning to greet Luke there, and complain to him of Harry.

Maggie stood motionless, except from her sobs, for a minute or two; then she turned round and ran into the house, and up to her attic, where she sat on the floor and laid her head against the worm-eaten shelf, with a crushing sense of misery. Tom was come home, and she had thought how happy she should be; and now he was cruel to her. What use was anything if Tom didn't love her? Oh, he was very cruel! Hadn't she wanted to give him the money, and said how very sorry she was? She knew she was naughty to her mother, but she had never been naughty to Tom—had never meant to be naughty to him.

"Oh, he is cruel!" Maggie sobbed aloud, finding a wretched pleasure in the hollow resonance that came through the long empty space of the attic.

These bitter sorrows of childhood! when sorrow is all new and strange, when hope has not yet got wings to fly beyond the days and weeks, and the space from summer to summer seems measureless.

Maggie soon thought she had been hours in the attic, and it must be tea-time, and they were all having their tea, and not thinking of her. Well, then, she would stay up there and starve herself,—hide herself behind the tub, and stay there all night,—and then they would all be frightened, and Tom would be sorry. Thus Maggie thought in the pride of her heart, as she crept behind the tub; but presently she began to cry again at the idea that they didn't mind her being there. If she went down again to Tom now—would he forgive her? Perhaps her father would be there, and he would take her part. But then she wanted Tom to forgive her because he loved her, not because his father told him. No, she would never go down if Tom didn't come to fetch her. This resolution lasted in great intensity for five dark minutes behind the tub; but then the need of being loved—the strongest need in poor Maggie's nature—began to wrestle with her

pride, and soon threw it. She crept from behind her tub into the twilight of the long attic, but just then she heard a quick foot-step on the stairs.

Tom had been too much interested in his talk with Luke, in going the round of the premises, walking in and out where he pleased, and whittling sticks without any particular reason,—except that he didn't whittle sticks at school,—to think of Maggie and the effect his anger had produced on her. He meant to punish her, and that business having been performed, he occupied himself with other matters, like a practical person. But when he had been called in to tea, his father said, "Why, where's the little wench?" and Mrs. Tulliver, almost at the same moment, said, "Where's your little sister?"—both of them having supposed that Maggie and Tom had been together all the afternoon.

"I don't know," said Tom. He didn't want to "tell" of Maggie, though he was angry with her; for Tom Tulliver was a lad of honor.

"What! hasn't she been playing with you all this while?" said the father. "She'd been thinking o' nothing but your coming home."

"I haven't seen her this two hours," says Tom, commencing on the plumcake.

"Goodness heart; she's got drowned!" exclaimed Mrs. Tulliver, rising from her seat and running to the window.

"How could you let her do so?" she added, as became a fearful woman, accusing she didn't know whom of she didn't know what.

"Nay, nay, she's none drowned," said Mr. Tulliver. "You've been naughty to her, I doubt, Tom?"

"I'm sure I haven't, father," said Tom, indignantly. "I think she's in the house."

"Perhaps up in that attic," said Mrs. Tulliver, "a-singing and talking to herself, and forgetting all about meal-times."

"You go and fetch her down, Tom," said Mr. Tulliver, rather sharply,—his perspicacity or his fatherly fondness for Maggie making him suspect that the lad had been hard upon "the little un," else she would never have left his side. "And be

good to her, do you hear? Else I'll let you know better."

Tom never disobeyed his father, for Mr. Tulliver was a peremptory man, and, as he said, would never let anybody get hold of his whip-hand; but he went out rather sullenly, carrying his piece of plumcake, and not intending to relieve Maggie's punishment, which was no more than she deserved. Tom was only thirteen, and had no decided views in grammar and arithmetic, regarding them for the most part as open questions, but he was particularly clear and positive on one point,—namely, that he would punish everybody who deserved it. Why, he wouldn't have minded being punished himself if he deserved it; but, then, he never did deserve it.

It was Tom's step, then, that Maggie heard on the stairs, when her need of love had triumphed over her pride, and she was going down with her swollen eyes and dishevelled hair to beg for pity. At least her father would stroke her head and say, "Never mind, my wench." It is a wonderful subduer, this need of love,—this hunger of the heart,—as peremptory as that other hunger by which Nature forces us to submit to the yoke, and change the face of the world.

But she knew Tom's step, and her heart began to beat violently with the sudden shock of hope. He only stood still at the top of the stairs and said, "Maggie, you're to come down." But she rushed to him and clung round his neck, sobbing, "Oh, Tom, please forgive me—I can't bear it—I will always be good—always remember things—do love me—please, dear Tom!"

We learn to restrain ourselves as we get older. We keep apart when we have quarrelled, express ourselves in well-bred phrases, and in this way preserve a dignified alienation, showing much firmness on one side, and swallowing much grief on the other. We no longer approximate in our behaviour to the mere impulsiveness of the lower animals, but conduct ourselves in every respect like members of a highly civilized society. Maggie and Tom were still very much like young animals, and so she could rub her cheek against his, and kiss his ear in a random sobbing way; and there were tender fibres in the lad that had been used to answer to Maggie's fondling, so that he behaved with a weakness quite inconsistent with his resolution to punish her as much as she

deserved. He actually began to kiss her in return, and say,—

“Don’t cry, then, Magsie; here, eat a bit o’ cake.”

Maggie’s sobs began to subside, and she put out her mouth for the cake and bit a piece; and then Tom bit a piece, just for company, and they ate together and rubbed each other’s cheeks and brows and noses together, while they ate, with a humiliating resemblance to two friendly ponies.

“Come along, Magsie, and have tea,” said Tom at last, when there was no more cake except what was down-stairs.

So ended the sorrows of this day, and the next morning Maggie was trotting with her own fishing-rod in one hand and a handle of the basket in the other, stepping always, by a peculiar gift, in the muddiest places, and looking darkly radiant from under her beaver-bonnet because Tom was good to her. She had told Tom, however, that she should like him to put the worms on the hook for her, although she accepted his word when he assured her that worms couldn’t feel (it was Tom’s private opinion that it didn’t much matter if they did). He knew all about worms, and fish, and those things; and what birds were mischievous, and how padlocks opened, and which way the handles of the gates were to be lifted. Maggie thought this sort of knowledge was very wonderful,—much more difficult than remembering what was in the books; and she was rather in awe of Tom’s superiority, for he was the only person who called her knowledge “stuff,” and did not feel surprised at her cleverness. Tom, indeed, was of opinion that Maggie was a silly little thing; all girls were silly,—they couldn’t throw a stone so as to hit anything, couldn’t do anything with a pocket-knife, and were frightened at frogs. Still, he was

very fond of his sister, and meant always to take care of her, make her his housekeeper, and punish her when she did wrong.

It was one of their happy mornings. They trotted along and sat down together, with no thought that life would ever change much for them; they would only get bigger and not go to school, and it would always be like the holidays; they would always live together and be fond of each other. And the mill with its booming; the great chestnut-tree under which they played at houses; their own little river, the Ripple, where the banks seemed like home, and Tom was always seeing the water-rats, while Maggie gathered the purple plummy tops of the reeds, which she forgot and dropped afterward; above all, the great Floss, along which they wandered with a sense of travel, to see the rushing spring-tide, the awful Eagle, come up like a hungry monster, or to see the Great Ash which had once wailed and groaned like a man, these things would always be just the same to them. Tom thought people were at a disadvantage who lived on any other spot of the globe; and Maggie, when she read about Christiana passing “the river over which there is no bridge,” always saw the Floss between the green pastures by the Great Ash.

Life did change for Tom and Maggie; and yet they were not wrong in believing that the thoughts and loves of these first years would always make part of their lives. We could never have loved the earth so well if we had had no childhood in it,—if it were not the earth where the same flowers come up again every spring that we used to gather with our tiny fingers as we sat lipping to ourselves on the grass; the same hips and haws on the autumn’s hedgerows; the same redbreasts that we used to call “God’s birds,” because they did no harm to the precious crops. What novelty is worth that sweet monotony where everything is known, and loved because it is known?

Glossary

Gig: a light, two-wheeled carriage pulled by one horse

Peremptory: bossy or commanding

Whittling: carving

Perspicacity: insight or shrewd perception

Northanger Abbey

by Jane Austen (1817)

Introduction

Seventeen year old Catherine Morland, the heroine of the story, is walking through the busy streets of Bath with her new friend Isabella Thorpe when they unexpectedly meet Catherine's brother James travelling with Isabella's brother John Thorpe.

Extract 1 from chapter 7

"Oh, these odious gigs!" said Isabella, looking up. "How I detest them." But this detestation, though so just, was of short duration, for she looked again and exclaimed, "Delightful! Mr. Morland and my brother!"

"Good heaven! 'Tis James!" was uttered at the same moment by Catherine; and, on catching the young men's eyes, the horse was immediately checked with a violence which almost threw him on his haunches, and the servant having now scampered up, the gentlemen jumped out, and the equipage was delivered to his care.

Catherine, by whom this meeting was wholly unexpected, received her brother with the liveliest pleasure; and he, being of a very amiable disposition, and sincerely attached to her, gave every proof on his side of equal satisfaction, which he could have leisure to do, while the bright eyes of Miss Thorpe were incessantly challenging his notice; and to her his devoirs were speedily paid, with a mixture of joy and embarrassment which might have informed Catherine, had she been more expert in the development of other people's feelings, and less simply engrossed by her own, that her brother thought her friend quite as pretty as she could do herself.

John Thorpe, who in the meantime had been giving orders about the horses, soon joined them, and from him she directly received the amends which were her due; for while he slightly and carelessly touched the hand of Isabella, on her he bestowed a whole scrape and half a short bow. He was a stout young man of middling height, who, with a plain face and ungraceful form, seemed fearful of being too handsome unless he wore the dress of a groom, and too much like a

gentleman unless he were easy where he ought to be civil, and impudent where he might be allowed to be easy. He took out his watch: "How long do you think we have been running it from Tetbury, Miss Morland?"

"I do not know the distance." Her brother told her that it was twenty-three miles.

"Three and twenty!" cried Thorpe. "Five and twenty if it is an inch." Morland remonstrated, pleaded the authority of road-books, innkeepers, and milestones; but his friend disregarded them all; he had a surer test of distance. "I know it must be five and twenty," said he, "by the time we have been doing it. It is now half after one; we drove out of the inn-yard at Tetbury as the town clock struck eleven; and I defy any man in England to make my horse go less than ten miles an hour in harness; that makes it exactly twenty-five."

"You have lost an hour," said Morland; "it was only ten o'clock when we came from Tetbury."

"Ten o'clock! It was eleven, upon my soul! I counted every stroke. This brother of yours would persuade me out of my senses, Miss Morland; do but look at my horse; did you ever see an animal so made for speed in your life?" (The servant had just mounted the carriage and was driving off.)

"Such true blood! Three hours and a half indeed coming only three and twenty miles! Look at that creature, and suppose it possible if you can."

"He does look very hot, to be sure."

"Hot! He had not turned a hair till we came to Walcot Church; but look at his forehead; look at his loins; only see how he moves; that horse cannot go less than ten miles an hour: tie his legs and he will get on. What do you think of my gig, Miss Morland? A neat one, is not it? Well hung; town-built; I have not had it a month. It was built for a Christchurch man, a friend of mine, a very good sort of fellow; he ran it a few weeks, till, I believe, it was convenient to have done with it. I happened just then to be looking out for some light thing of the kind, though I had pretty well

determined on a curricle too; but I chanced to meet him on Magdalen Bridge, as he was driving into Oxford, last term: 'Ah! Thorpe,' said he, 'do you happen to want such a little thing as this? It is a capital one of the kind, but I am cursed tired of it.' 'Oh! D—,' said I; 'I am your man; what do you ask?' And how much do you think he did, Miss Morland?"

"I am sure I cannot guess at all."

"Curricle-hung, you see; seat, trunk, sword-case, splashing-board, lamps, silver moulding, all you see complete; the iron-work as good as new, or better. He asked fifty guineas; I closed with him directly, threw down the money, and the carriage was mine."

"And I am sure," said Catherine, "I know so little of such things that I cannot judge whether it was cheap or dear."

"Neither one nor t'other; I might have got it for less, I dare say; but I hate haggling, and poor Freeman wanted cash."

"That was very good-natured of you," said Catherine, quite pleased.

"Oh! D— — it, when one has the means of doing a kind thing by a friend, I hate to be pitiful."

An inquiry now took place into the intended movements of the young ladies; and, on finding whither they were going, it was decided that the gentlemen should accompany them to Edgar's Buildings, and pay their respects to Mrs. Thorpe.

John Thorpe kept of course with Catherine, and, after a few minutes' silence, renewed the conversation about his gig. "You will find, however, Miss Morland, it would be reckoned a cheap thing by some people, for I might have sold it for ten guineas more the next day; Jackson, of

Oriel, bid me sixty at once; Morland was with me at the time."

"Yes," said Morland, who overheard this; "but you forget that your horse was included."

"My horse! Oh, d— — it! I would not sell my horse for a hundred. Are you fond of an open carriage, Miss Morland?"

"Yes, very; I have hardly ever an opportunity of being in one; but I am particularly fond of it."

"I am glad of it; I will drive you out in mine every day."

"Thank you," said Catherine, in some distress, from a doubt of the propriety of accepting such an offer.

"I will drive you up Lansdown Hill tomorrow."

"Thank you; but will not your horse want rest?"

"Rest! He has only come three and twenty miles today; all nonsense; nothing ruins horses so much as rest; nothing knocks them up so soon. No, no; I shall exercise mine at the average of four hours every day while I am here."

"Shall you indeed!" said Catherine very seriously. "That will be forty miles a day."

"Forty! Aye, fifty, for what I care. Well, I will drive you up Lansdown tomorrow; mind, I am engaged."

"How delightful that will be!" cried Isabella, turning round. "My dearest Catherine, I quite envy you; but I am afraid, brother, you will not have room for a third."

"A third indeed! No, no; I did not come to Bath to drive my sisters about; that would be a good joke, faith! Morland must take care of you."

Glossary

Gigs: a light, two-wheeled carriage pulled by one horse

Equipage: the combination of horse and carriage and attendants

Curricle: a light two-wheeled carriage pulled by two horses side by side

Propriety: good behaviour according to accepted standards

Tess of the D'Urbervilles

by Thomas Hardy (1891)

Introduction

In this passage Tess is travelling to Trantridge to take up a job as a poultry keeper for a wealthy woman called Mrs D'Urberville. Alec D'Urberville, the wealthy woman's son, has offered Tess a lift in his dog-cart (a lightweight horse-drawn carriage).

Extract from chapter 8

Having mounted beside her, Alec d'Urberville drove rapidly along the crest of the first hill, chatting compliments to Tess as they went, the cart with her box being left far behind. Rising still, an immense landscape stretched around them on every side; behind, the green valley of her birth, before, a gray country of which she knew nothing except from her first brief visit to Trantridge. Thus they reached the verge of an incline down which the road stretched in a long straight descent of nearly a mile.

Ever since the accident with her father's horse Tess Durbeyfield, courageous as she naturally was, had been exceedingly timid on wheels; the least irregularity of motion startled her. She began to get uneasy at a certain recklessness in her conductor's driving.

"You will go down slow, sir, I suppose?" she said with attempted unconcern.

D'Urberville looked round upon her, nipped his cigar with the tips of his large white centre-teeth, and allowed his lips to smile slowly of themselves.

"Why, Tess," he answered, after another whiff or two, "it isn't a brave bouncing girl like you who asks that? Why, I always go down at full gallop. There's nothing like it for raising your spirits."

"But perhaps you need not now?"

"Ah," he said, shaking his head, "there are two to be reckoned with. It is not me alone. Tib has to be considered, and she has a very queer temper."

"Who?"

"Why, this mare. I fancy she looked round at me in a very grim way just then. Didn't you notice it?"
"Don't try to frighten me, sir," said Tess stiffly.

"Well, I don't. If any living man can manage this horse I can: I won't say any living man can do it—but if such has the power, I am he."

"Why do you have such a horse?"

"Ah, well may you ask it! It was my fate, I suppose. Tib has killed one chap; and just after I bought her she nearly killed me. And then, take my word for it, I nearly killed her. But she's touchy still, very touchy; and one's life is hardly safe behind her sometimes."

They were just beginning to descend; and it was evident that the horse, whether of her own will or of his (the latter being the more likely), knew so well the reckless performance expected of her that she hardly required a hint from behind.

Down, down, they sped, the wheels humming like a top, the dog-cart rocking right and left, its axis acquiring a slightly oblique set in relation to the line of progress; the figure of the horse rising and falling in undulations before them. Sometimes a wheel was off the ground, it seemed, for many yards; sometimes a stone was sent spinning over the hedge, and flinty sparks from the horse's hoofs outshone the daylight. The aspect of the straight road enlarged with their advance, the two banks dividing like a splitting stick; one rushing past at each shoulder.

The wind blew through Tess's white muslin to her very skin, and her washed hair flew out behind. She was determined to show no open fear, but she clutched d'Urberville's rein-arm.

"Don't touch my arm! We shall be thrown out if you do! Hold on round my waist!"

She grasped his waist, and so they reached the bottom.

"Safe, thank God, in spite of your fooling!" said

she, her face on fire.

“Tess—fie! that’s temper!” said d’Urberville.

“’Tis truth.”

“Well, you need not let go your hold of me so thanklessly the moment you feel yourself out of danger.”

She had not considered what she had been doing; whether he were man or woman, stick or stone, in her involuntary hold on him. Recovering her reserve, she sat without replying, and thus they reached the summit of another declivity.

“Now then, again!” said d’Urberville.

“No, no!” said Tess. “Show more sense, do, please.”

“But when people find themselves on one of the highest points in the county, they must get down again,” he retorted.

He loosened rein, and away they went a second time. D’Urberville turned his face to her as they rocked, and said, in playful raillery: “Now then, put your arms round my waist again, as you did before, my Beauty.”

“Never!” said Tess independently, holding on as well as she could without touching him.

“Let me put one little kiss on those holmberry lips, Tess, or even on that warmed cheek, and I’ll stop—on my honour, I will!”

Tess, surprised beyond measure, slid farther back still on her seat, at which he urged the horse anew, and rocked her the more.

“Will nothing else do?” she cried at length, in desperation, her large eyes staring at him like those of a wild animal. This dressing her up so prettily by her mother had apparently been to lamentable purpose.

“Nothing, dear Tess,” he replied.

“Oh, I don’t know—very well; I don’t mind!” she panted miserably.

He drew rein, and as they slowed he was on

the point of imprinting the desired salute, when, as if hardly yet aware of her own modesty, she dodged aside. His arms being occupied with the reins there was left him no power to prevent her manoeuvre.

“Now, damn it—I’ll break both our necks!” swore her capriciously passionate companion. “So you can go from your word like that, you young witch, can you?”

“Very well,” said Tess, “I’ll not move since you be so determined! But I—thought you would be kind to me, and protect me, as my kinsman!”

“Kinsman be hanged! Now!”

“But I don’t want anybody to kiss me, sir!” she implored, a big tear beginning to roll down her face, and the corners of her mouth trembling in her attempts not to cry. “And I wouldn’t ha’ come if I had known!”

He was inexorable, and she sat still, and d’Urberville gave her the kiss of mastery. No sooner had he done so than she flushed with shame, took out her handkerchief, and wiped the spot on her cheek that had been touched by his lips. His ardour was nettled at the sight, for the act on her part had been unconsciously done.

“You are mighty sensitive for a cottage girl!” said the young man.

Tess made no reply to this remark, of which, indeed, she did not quite comprehend the drift, unheeding the snub she had administered by her instinctive rub upon her cheek. She had, in fact, undone the kiss, as far as such a thing was physically possible. With a dim sense that he was vexed she looked steadily ahead as they trotted on near Melbury Down and Wingreen, till she saw, to her consternation, that there was yet another descent to be undergone.

“You shall be made sorry for that!” he resumed, his injured tone still remaining, as he flourished the whip anew. “Unless, that is, you agree willingly to let me do it again, and no handkerchief.” She sighed. “Very well, sir!” she said. “Oh—let me get my hat!”

At the moment of speaking her hat had blown off into the road, their present speed on the upland

being by no means slow. D'Urberville pulled up, and said he would get it for her, but Tess was down on the other side.

She turned back and picked up the article.

"You look prettier with it off, upon my soul, if that's possible," he said, contemplating her over the back of the vehicle. "Now then, up again! What's the matter?"

The hat was in place and tied, but Tess had not stepped forward.

"No, sir," she said, revealing the red and ivory of her mouth as her eye lit in defiant triumph; "not again, if I know it!"

"What—you won't get up beside me?"

"No; I shall walk."

"'Tis five or six miles yet to Trantridge."

"I don't care if 'tis dozens. "

"You artful hussy! Now, tell me—didn't you make

that hat blow off on purpose? I'll swear you did!" Her strategic silence confirmed his suspicion.

Then d'Urberville cursed and swore at her, and called her everything he could think of for the trick. Turning the horse suddenly he tried to drive back upon her, and so hem her in between the gig and the hedge. But he could not do this short of injuring her.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself for using such wicked words!" cried Tess with spirit, from the top of the hedge into which she had scrambled. "I don't like 'ee at all! I hate and detest you! I'll go back to mother, I will!"

D'Urberville's bad temper cleared up at sight of hers; and he laughed heartily.

"Well, I like you all the better," he said. "Come, let there be peace. I'll never do it any more against your will. My life upon it now!"

Still Tess could not be induced to remount. She did not, however, object to his keeping his gig alongside her; and in this manner, at a slow pace, they advanced towards the village of Trantridge.

Glossary

Lamentable: regrettable or unfortunate

Kinsman: relative or family member

Inexorable: impossible to stop

Children and family 4: a woman's place

Aims:

- to understand attitudes to women and marriage in the 19th century
- to investigate the presentation and role of women in 19th-century literature.

Suggestions for lesson starters and hooks

- Discuss what young people, and especially women, expect from marriage today.
- Was this always the case?
- Mary Poppins Disney film.

Researching the 19th-century context

- Caroline Norton – feminist, social reformer and author.
- Words of the Anglican marriage service.
- The Married Women's Property Act 1882.
- Look at the history of votes for women: the suffragettes and suffragists
- The Blue Stocking Society.
- Fashions of the period.
- Women writers and their use of pseudonyms: e.g. the Brontes and George Eliot.
- Contemporary responses to authors such as Mary Shelley.

Texts

Pride and Prejudice opening sentence: 'It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.' Jane Austen (1813)

1. *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen (1814)
2. *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens (1861)
3. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy (1886)
4. *Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen (1811)

Reading and Understanding

Read the opening sentence of *Pride and Prejudice*. In whose view is it important for a man to marry?

Extract 1

Mansfield Park by Jane Austen

1. How did their marriages change the lives of the three sisters?
2. Explain how the phrases "good luck to captivate" and "untoward choice" express the different experiences of Maria and Frances. What does this suggest about the level of control that women had over their own prospects in marriage. How did the women's family react to their choice of husbands?
3. What was the cause of the rift between the sisters? What led to their reconciliation?
4. Highlight all the words and phrases in the passage that refer to wealth and status. What does this suggest about attitudes to marriage?

Extract 2

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

The social expectation was that Miss Havisham should marry. When she doesn't, she feels great bitterness and disappointment. However, Dickens shows us the irony that by remaining single, she is able to keep control of all her wealth.

1. Consider the way that Estella treats the boy, Pip. Why is she so harsh towards him? Consider the associations that Dickens may have wanted to suggest through his choice of name, which means star.
2. How does Pip feel when she leaves him outside the door of Miss Havisham's room? What impression does this section create of his character?
3. Study the description of Miss Havisham and her room. Identify the details which we normally associate with beauty. Find words and phrases associated with age and decay. Why are all the clocks stopped?
4. How does Dickens present the character of Miss Havisham? How does Pip respond to

- her? How does the modern reader respond to her?
5. What does Miss Havisham ask Pip about Estella? Why do you think she asks him this? What is his response?
 6. Discuss the roles and relative importance of the woman, the girl and the boy in this passage.

Extract 3

***The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy**

This is from the beginning of the novel, and it shows how vulnerable women were to the whim of a man.

1. How can you tell that the subject of separation had already come up between the couple?
2. What impression does the reader have of Michael Henchard in the first part of the story? Does this change as the episode develops?
3. How do you respond to the woman and the child? Does she accept what happens to her?
4. Trace how the other characters respond to Michael Henchard as the story goes on. Do their responses change?
5. What was your reaction to someone selling his wife? What made him decide to do it?
6. After this dramatic opening, what are your predictions for what will happen next?

Closer reading

1. Find the words which tell the reader that the woman does have some control over her situation. How does she exert this control? What do you think her mood is?
2. What do you understand by the sentence, "She bowed her head with absolute indifference"? What feelings does she show by the end of the passage?
3. Why do you think that the production of the money has such an effect on the spectators? *'The sight of real money in full amount, in answer to a challenge for the same till then deemed slightly hypothetical had a great effect upon the spectators. Their eyes became riveted upon the faces of the chief actors, and then upon the notes as they lay, weighted by the shillings, on the table.'*

4. How is the sailor described? Where has he come from? How do we find out when he arrived?

Extract 4

***Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen**

Trace the progress of John's plans for helping his sisters from the start of this passage to the end of his conversation with his wife. What do you think of the conclusion he reaches? Do you think it fulfils the promise he made to his father?

Closer reading

1. The author does not describe the characters of John Dashwood and his wife, but presents them through what they say. How would you describe them? What do you notice about the length of each character's utterances and how that changes as the discussion continues?
2. Look again at Mrs Dashwood's utterances. What techniques does she use to bring her husband round to her point of view? Consider:
 - the author's use of exclamations and capital letters
 - the author's use of pauses.

Comparing the four texts

Which characters have the most power and influence in these extracts? What do they show us about the relative status of men and women in the 19th century?

How would you describe the tone of the authors of these passages? To what extent do they approve of the situations they describe? Which details suggest that the authors are criticising or mocking the characters involved?

Mansfield Park

by Jane Austen (1814)

About thirty years ago Miss Maria Ward, of Huntingdon, with only seven thousand pounds, had the good luck to captivate Sir Thomas Bertram, of Mansfield Park, in the county of Northampton, and to be thereby raised to the rank of a baronet's lady, with all the comforts and consequences of an handsome house and large income. All Huntingdon exclaimed on the greatness of the match, and her uncle, the lawyer, himself, allowed her to be at least three thousand pounds short of any equitable claim to it. She had two sisters to be benefited by her elevation; and such of their acquaintance as thought Miss Ward and Miss Frances quite as handsome as Miss Maria, did not scruple to predict their marrying with almost equal advantage. But there certainly are not so many men of large fortune in the world as there are pretty women to deserve them. Miss Ward, at the end of half a dozen years, found herself obliged to be attached to the Rev. Mr. Norris, a friend of her brother-in-law, with scarcely any private fortune, and Miss Frances fared yet worse. Miss Ward's match, indeed, when it came to the point, was not contemptible: Sir Thomas being happily able to give his friend an income in the living of Mansfield; and Mr. and Mrs. Norris began their career of conjugal felicity with very little less than a thousand a year. But Miss Frances married, in the common phrase, to disoblige her family, and by fixing on a lieutenant of marines, without education, fortune, or connexions, did it very thoroughly. She could hardly have made a more untoward choice.

Sir Thomas Bertram had interest, which, from principle as well as pride—from a general wish of doing right, and a desire of seeing all that were connected with him in situations of respectability, he would have been glad to exert

for the advantage of Lady Bertram's sister; but her husband's profession was such as no interest could reach; and before he had time to devise any other method of assisting them, an absolute breach between the sisters had taken place. It was the natural result of the conduct of each party, and such as a very imprudent marriage almost always produces. To save herself from useless remonstrance, Mrs. Price never wrote to her family on the subject till actually married. Lady Bertram, who was a woman of very tranquil feelings, and a temper remarkably easy and indolent, would have contented herself with merely giving up her sister, and thinking no more of the matter; but Mrs. Norris had a spirit of activity, which could not be satisfied till she had written a long and angry letter to Fanny, to point out the folly of her conduct, and threaten her with all its possible ill consequences. Mrs. Price, in her turn, was injured and angry; and an answer, which comprehended each sister in its bitterness, and bestowed such very disrespectful reflections on the pride of Sir Thomas as Mrs. Norris could not possibly keep to herself, put an end to all intercourse between them for a considerable period.

By the end of eleven years, however, Mrs. Price could no longer afford to cherish pride or resentment, or to lose one connexion that might possibly assist her. A large and still increasing family, an husband disabled for active service, but not the less equal to company and good liquor, and a very small income to supply their wants, made her eager to regain the friends she had so carelessly sacrificed; and she addressed Lady Bertram in a letter which spoke so much contrition and despondence, such a superfluity of children, and such a want of almost everything else, as could not but dispose them all to a reconciliation.

Glossary

- Baronet:** a man who is a member of the British nobility, given the title 'Sir' before his name
- Equitable:** fair
- Scruple:** hesitate
- Conjugal felicity:** happiness in marriage
- Untoward:** bad or inappropriate
- Remonstrance:** complaint or criticism
- Indolent:** lazy

Great Expectations

by Charles Dickens (1861)

Introduction

The novel is an autobiographical account of the life of an orphan boy, Pip (full name Philip Pirrip).

Miss Havisham is an old lady who, as a young woman, was jilted at the altar by a man called Compyson. She has arranged for Pip to come to her house to play with her ward, Estella. Because of Miss Havisham's own experience, her ambition is to make Estella beloved of men but to hurt and use as many of them as she can.

In this episode Estella greets Pip and takes him into the house where he meets Miss Havisham for the first time.

Extract

My young conductress locked the gate, and we went across the courtyard. It was paved and clean, but grass was growing in every crevice. The brewery buildings had a little lane of communication with it, and the wooden gates of that lane stood open, and all the brewery beyond stood open, away to the high enclosing wall; and all was empty and disused. The cold wind seemed to blow colder there than outside the gate; and it made a shrill noise in howling in and out at the

open sides of the brewery, like the noise of wind in the rigging of a ship at sea.

She saw me looking at it, and she said, "You could drink without hurt all the strong beer that's brewed there now, boy."

"I should think I could, miss," said I, in a shy way. "Better not try to brew beer there now, or it would turn out sour, boy; don't you think so?"

"It looks like it, miss."

"Not that anybody means to try," she added, "for that's all done with, and the place will stand as idle as it is till it falls. As to strong beer, there's enough of it in the cellars already, to drown the Manor House."

"Is that the name of this house, miss?"

"One of its names, boy."

"It has more than one, then, miss?"

"One more. Its other name was Satis; which is Greek, or Latin, or Hebrew, or all three—or all one to me—for enough."

“Enough House,” said I; “that’s a curious name, miss.”

“Yes,” she replied; “but it meant more than it said. It meant, when it was given, that whoever had this house could want nothing else. They must have been easily satisfied in those days, I should think. But don’t loiter, boy.”

Though she called me “boy” so often, and with a carelessness that was far from complimentary, she was of about my own age. She seemed much older than I, of course, being a girl, and beautiful and self-possessed; and she was as scornful of me as if she had been one-and-twenty, and a queen.

We went into the house by a side door, the great front entrance had two chains across it outside, —and the first thing I noticed was, that the passages were all dark, and that she had left a

candle burning there. She took it up, and we went through more passages and up a staircase, and still it was all dark, and only the candle lighted us.

At last we came to the door of a room, and she said, “Go in.”

I answered, more in shyness than politeness, “After you, miss.”

To this she returned: “Don’t be ridiculous, boy; I am not going in.” And scornfully walked away, and—what was worse—took the candle with her.

This was very uncomfortable, and I was half afraid. However, the only thing to be done being to knock at the door, I knocked, and was told from within to enter. I entered, therefore, and found myself in a pretty large room, well lighted with wax candles. No glimpse of daylight was to be seen in it. It was a dressing-room, as I supposed from the furniture, though much of it was of forms and uses then quite unknown to me. But prominent in it was a draped table with a gilded looking-glass, and that I made out at first sight to be a fine lady’s dressing-table.

Whether I should have made out this object so soon if there had been no fine lady sitting at it, I cannot say. In an arm-chair, with an elbow resting on the table and her head leaning on that hand, sat the strangest lady I have ever seen, or shall ever see.

She was dressed in rich materials, —satins, and lace, and silks, —all of white. Her shoes were white. And she had a long white veil dependent from her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was white. Some bright jewels sparkled on her neck and on her hands, and some other jewels lay sparkling on the table. Dresses, less splendid than the dress she wore, and half-packed trunks, were scattered about. She had not quite finished dressing, for she had but one shoe on, —the other was on the table near her hand, —her veil was but half arranged, her watch and chain were not put on, and some lace for her bosom lay with those trinkets, and with her handkerchief, and gloves, and some flowers, and a Prayer-Book all confusedly heaped about the looking-glass.

It was not in the first few moments that I saw all these things, though I saw more of them in the



first moments than might be supposed. But I saw that everything within my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its lustre and was faded and yellow. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes. I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a young woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose had shrunk to skin and bone. Once, I had been taken to see some ghastly waxwork at the Fair, representing I know not what impossible personage lying in state. Once, I had been taken to one of our old marsh churches to see a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement. Now, waxwork and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me. I should have cried out, if I could.

“Who is it?” said the lady at the table.

“Pip, ma’am.”

“Pip?”

“Mr. Pumblechook’s boy, ma’am. Come—to play.”

“Come nearer; let me look at you. Come close.”

It was when I stood before her, avoiding her eyes, that I took note of the surrounding objects in detail, and saw that her watch had stopped at twenty minutes to nine, and that a clock in the room had stopped at twenty minutes to nine.

“Look at me,” said Miss Havisham. “You are not afraid of a woman who has never seen the sun since you were born?”

I regret to state that I was not afraid of telling the enormous lie comprehended in the answer “No.”

“Do you know what I touch here?” she said, laying her hands, one upon the other, on her left side.

“Yes, ma’am.” (It made me think of the young man.)

“What do I touch?”

“Your heart.”

“Broken!”

She uttered the word with an eager look, and with strong emphasis, and with a weird smile that had a kind of boast in it. Afterwards she kept her hands there for a little while, and slowly took them away as if they were heavy.

“I am tired,” said Miss Havisham. “I want diversion, and I have done with men and women. Play.”

I think it will be conceded by my most disputatious reader, that she could hardly have directed an unfortunate boy to do anything in the wide world more difficult to be done under the circumstances.

“I sometimes have sick fancies,” she went on, “and I have a sick fancy that I want to see some play. There, there!” with an impatient movement of the fingers of her right hand; “play, play, play!”

For a moment, with the fear of my sister’s working me before my eyes, I had a desperate idea of starting round the room in the assumed character of Mr. Pumblechook’s chaise-cart. But I felt myself so unequal to the performance that I gave it up, and stood looking at Miss Havisham in what I suppose she took for a dogged manner, inasmuch as she said, when we had taken a good look at each other,—

“Are you sullen and obstinate?”

“No, ma’am, I am very sorry for you, and very sorry I can’t play just now. If you complain of me I shall get into trouble with my sister, so I would do it if I could; but it’s so new here, and so strange, and so fine,—and melancholy—.” I stopped, fearing I might say too much, or had already said it, and we took another look at each other.

Before she spoke again, she turned her eyes from me, and looked at the dress she wore, and at the dressing-table, and finally at herself in the looking-glass.

“So new to him,” she muttered, “so old to me; so strange to him, so familiar to me; so melancholy to both of us! Call Estella.”

As she was still looking at the reflection of herself, I thought she was still talking to herself, and kept quiet.

“Call Estella,” she repeated, flashing a look at me.

*"You can do that. Call Estella. At the door."
To stand in the dark in a mysterious passage of
an unknown house, bawling Estella to a scornful
young lady neither visible nor responsive, and
feeling it a dreadful liberty so to roar out her
name, was almost as bad as playing to order. But
she answered at last, and her light came along the
dark passage like a star.*

*Miss Havisham beckoned her to come close, and
took up a jewel from the table, and tried its effect
upon her fair young bosom and against her pretty
brown hair. "Your own, one day, my dear, and you
will use it well. Let me see you play cards with this
boy."*

*"With this boy? Why, he is a common laboring
boy!"*

*I thought I overheard Miss Havisham answer, —
only it seemed so unlikely, — "Well? You can break
his heart."*

*"What do you play, boy?" asked Estella of myself,
with the greatest disdain.*

"Nothing but beggar my neighbor, miss."

*"Beggar him," said Miss Havisham to Estella. So
we sat down to cards.*

*It was then I began to understand that everything
in the room had stopped, like the watch and
the clock, a long time ago. I noticed that Miss
Havisham put down the jewel exactly on the spot
from which she had taken it up. As Estella dealt
the cards, I glanced at the dressing-table again,
and saw that the shoe upon it, once white, now
yellow, had never been worn. I glanced down at
the foot from which the shoe was absent, and
saw that the silk stocking on it, once white, now
yellow, had been trodden ragged. Without this
arrest of everything, this standing still of all the
pale decayed objects, not even the withered bridal
dress on the collapsed form could have looked so
like grave-clothes, or the long veil so like a shroud.*

*So she sat, corpse-like, as we played at cards; the
frillings and trimmings on her bridal dress, looking
like earthy paper. I knew nothing then of the
discoveries that are occasionally made of bodies
buried in ancient times, which fall to powder in the
moment of being distinctly seen; but, I have often
thought since, that she must have looked as if the*

*admission of the natural light of day would have
struck her to dust.*

*"He calls the knaves Jacks, this boy!" said Estella
with disdain, before our first game was out. "And
what coarse hands he has! And what thick boots!"*

*I had never thought of being ashamed of my
hands before; but I began to consider them a
very indifferent pair. Her contempt for me was so
strong, that it became infectious, and I caught it.
She won the game, and I dealt. I misdealt, as was
only natural, when I knew she was lying in wait
for me to do wrong; and she denounced me for a
stupid, clumsy laboring-boy.*

*"You say nothing of her," remarked Miss Havisham
to me, as she looked on. "She says many hard
things of you, but you say nothing of her. What do
you think of her?"*

"I don't like to say," I stammered.

*"Tell me in my ear," said Miss Havisham, bending
down.*

"I think she is very proud," I replied, in a whisper.

"Anything else?"

"I think she is very pretty."

"Anything else?"

*"I think she is very insulting." (She was looking at
me then with a look of supreme aversion.)*

"Anything else?"

"I think I should like to go home."

*"And never see her again, though she is so
pretty?"*

*"I am not sure that I shouldn't like to see her
again, but I should like to go home now."*

*"You shall go soon," said Miss Havisham, aloud.
"Play the game out."*

*Saving for the one weird smile at first, I should
have felt almost sure that Miss Havisham's face
could not smile. It had dropped into a watchful
and brooding expression, — most likely when all*

the things about her had become transfixed, — and it looked as if nothing could ever lift it up again. Her chest had dropped, so that she stooped; and her voice had dropped, so that she spoke low, and with a dead lull upon her; altogether, she had the appearance of having dropped body and soul, within and without, under the weight of a crushing blow.

I played the game to an end with Estella, and she begged me. She threw the cards down on the table when she had won them all, as if she despised them for having been won of me.

“When shall I have you here again?” said Miss Havisham. “Let me think.”

I was beginning to remind her that to-day was Wednesday, when she checked me with her former impatient movement of the fingers of her right hand.

“There, there! I know nothing of days of the week; I know nothing of weeks of the year. Come again after six days. You hear?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Estella, take him down. Let him have something to eat, and let him roam and look about him while he eats. Go, Pip.”

I followed the candle down, as I had followed the candle up, and she stood it in the place where we had found it. Until she opened the side entrance, I had fancied, without thinking about it, that it must necessarily be night-time. The rush of the daylight quite confounded me, and made me feel as if I had been in the candlelight of the strange room many hours.

“You are to wait here, you boy,” said Estella; and disappeared and closed the door.

I took the opportunity of being alone in the courtyard to look at my coarse hands and my common boots. My opinion of those accessories was not favorable. They had never troubled me before, but they troubled me now, as vulgar appendages. I determined to ask Joe why he had ever taught me to call those picture-cards Jacks, which ought to be called knaves. I wished Joe had been rather more genteelly brought up, and then I should have been so too.

She came back, with some bread and meat and a little mug of beer. She put the mug down on the stones of the yard, and gave me the bread and meat without looking at me, as insolently as if I were a dog in disgrace. I was so humiliated, hurt, spurned, offended, angry, sorry, — I cannot hit upon the right name for the smart — God knows what its name was, — that tears started to my eyes. The moment they sprang there, the girl looked at me with a quick delight in having been the cause of them. This gave me power to keep them back and to look at her: so, she gave a contemptuous toss — but with a sense, I thought, of having made too sure that I was so wounded — and left me.

But when she was gone, I looked about me for a place to hide my face in, and got behind one of the gates in the brewery-lane, and leaned my sleeve against the wall there, and leaned my forehead on it and cried. As I cried, I kicked the wall, and took a hard twist at my hair; so bitter were my feelings, and so sharp was the smart without a name, that needed counteraction.

Glossary

Looking-glass: mirror

Lustre: a brilliant shine

Chaise-cart: a lightweight horse-drawn carriage

Confounded: confused

The Mayor of Casterbridge

by Thomas Hardy (1886)

Introduction

In this extract from chapter 1, Michael Henchard, a hay-trusser by trade, is travelling with his family in search of work.

Extract

One evening of late summer, before the nineteenth century had reached one-third of its span, a young man and woman, the latter carrying a child, were approaching the large village of Weydon-Priors, in Upper Wessex, on foot. They were plainly but not ill clad, though the thick hoar of dust which had accumulated on their shoes and garments from an obviously long journey lent a disadvantageous shabbiness to their appearance just now.

The man was of fine figure, swarthy, and stern in aspect; and he showed in profile a facial angle so slightly inclined as to be almost perpendicular. He wore a short jacket of brown corduroy, newer than the remainder of his suit, which was a fustian waistcoat with white horn buttons, breeches of the same, tanned leggings, and a straw hat overlaid with black glazed canvas. At his back he carried by a looped strap a rush basket, from which protruded at one end the crutch of a hay-knife, a wimble for hay-bonds being also visible in the aperture. His measured, springless walk was the walk of the skilled countryman as distinct from the desultory shamble of the general labourer; while in the turn and plant of each foot there was, further, a dogged and cynical indifference personal to himself, showing its presence even in the regularly interchanging fustian folds, now in the left leg, now in the right, as he paced along.

What was really peculiar, however, in this couple's progress, and would have attracted the attention of any casual observer otherwise disposed to overlook them, was the perfect silence they preserved. Sometimes the man's bent elbow almost touched her shoulder, for she kept as close to his side as was possible without actual contact, but she seemed to have no idea of taking his arm, nor he of offering it; and far from exhibiting surprise at his ignoring silence she appeared to

receive it as a natural thing. If any word at all were uttered by the little group, it was an occasional whisper of the woman to the child—a tiny girl in short clothes and blue boots of knitted yarn—and the murmured babble of the child in reply.

The chief—almost the only—attraction of the young woman's face was its mobility. When she looked down sideways to the girl she became pretty, and even handsome, particularly that in the action her features caught slantwise the rays of the strongly coloured sun, which made transparencies of her eyelids and nostrils and set fire on her lips.

The man and his family proceeded on their way, and soon entered the Fair-field, which showed standing-places and pens where many hundreds of horses and sheep had been exhibited and sold in the forenoon, but were now in great part taken away.

Neither of our pedestrians had much heart for these things, and they looked around for a refreshment tent among the many which dotted the down. Two, which stood nearest to them in the ochreous haze of expiring sunlight, seemed almost equally inviting. One was formed of new, milk-hued canvas, and bore red flags on its summit; it announced "Good Home-brewed Beer, Ale, and Cyder." The other was less new; a little iron stove-pipe came out of it at the back and in front appeared the placard, "Good Furmity Sold Here." The man mentally weighed the two inscriptions and inclined to the former tent.

"No—no—the other one," said the woman. "I always like furmity; and so does Elizabeth-Jane; and so will you. It is nourishing after a long hard day."

"I've never tasted it," said the man. However, he gave way to her representations, and they entered the furmity booth forthwith.

The young man and woman ordered a basin each of the mixture, steaming hot, and sat down to consume it at leisure. This was very well so far, for

furnity, as the woman had said, was nourishing, and as proper a food as could be obtained within the four seas; though, to those not accustomed to it, the grains of wheat swollen as large as lemon-pips, which floated on its surface, might have a deterrent effect at first.

The man finished his basin, and called for another, the rum being signalled for in yet stronger proportion. The effect of it was soon apparent in his manner, and his wife but too sadly perceived that in strenuously steering off the rocks of the licensed liquor-tent she had only got into maelstrom depths here amongst the smugglers.

The child began to prattle impatiently, and the wife more than once said to her husband, "Michael, how about our lodging? You know we may have trouble in getting it if we don't go soon."

But he turned a deaf ear to those bird-like chirpings. He talked loud to the company.

At the end of the first basin the man had risen to serenity; at the second he was jovial; at the third, argumentative, at the fourth, the qualities signified by the shape of his face, the occasional clench of his mouth, and the fiery spark of his dark eye, began to tell in his conduct; he was overbearing—even brilliantly quarrelsome.

The conversation took a high turn, as it often does on such occasions. The ruin of good men by bad wives, and, more particularly, the frustration of many a promising youth's high aims and hopes and the extinction of his energies by an early imprudent marriage, was the theme.

"I did for myself that way thoroughly," he said with a contemplative bitterness that was well-nigh resentful. "I married at eighteen, like the fool that I was; and this is the consequence o't." He pointed at himself and family with a wave of the hand intended to bring out the penuriousness of the exhibition.

The young woman his wife, who seemed accustomed to such remarks, acted as if she did not hear them, and continued her intermittent private words of tender trifles to the sleeping and waking child, who was just big enough to be placed for a moment on the bench beside her when she wished to ease her arms. The man continued—

"For my part I don't see why men who have got wives and don't want 'em, shouldn't get rid of 'em as these gipsy fellows do their old horses," said the man in the tent. "Why shouldn't they put 'em up and sell 'em by auction to men who are in need of such articles? Hey? Why, begad, I'd sell mine this minute if anybody would buy her!"

"There's them that would do that," some of the guests replied, looking at the woman, who was by no means ill-favoured.

"Well, then, now is your chance; I am open to an offer for this gem o' creation."

She turned to her husband and murmured, "Michael, you have talked this nonsense in public places before. A joke is a joke, but you may make it once too often, mind!"



"I know I've said it before; I meant it. All I want is a buyer."

A quarter of an hour later the man, who had gone on lacing his firmity more and more heavily, though he was either so strong-minded or such an intrepid toper that he still appeared fairly sober, recurred to the old strain, as in a musical fantasy the instrument fetches up the original theme. "Here—I am waiting to know about this offer of mine. The woman is no good to me. Who'll have her?"

The company had by this time decidedly degenerated, and the renewed inquiry was received with a laugh of appreciation. The woman whispered; she was imploring and anxious: "Come, come, it is getting dark, and this nonsense won't do. If you don't come along, I shall go without you. Come!"

She waited and waited; yet he did not move. In ten minutes the man broke in upon the desultory conversation of the firmity drinkers with. "I asked this question, and nobody answered to 't. Will any Jack Rag or Tom Straw among ye buy my goods?"

The woman's manner changed, and her face assumed the grim shape and colour of which mention has been made.

"Mike, Mike," she said; "this is getting serious. O!—too serious!"

"Will anybody buy her?" said the man.

"I wish somebody would," said she firmly. "Her present owner is not at all to her liking!"

"Nor you to mine," said he. "So we are agreed about that. Gentlemen, you hear? It's an agreement to part. She shall take the girl if she wants to, and go her ways. I'll take my tools, and go my ways. 'Tis simple as Scripture history. Now then, stand up, Susan, and show yourself."

"Don't, my chiel," whispered a buxom staylace dealer in voluminous petticoats, who sat near the woman; "yer good man don't know what he's saying."

The woman, however, did stand up. "Now, who's auctioneer?" cried the hay-trusser.

"I be," promptly answered a short man, with a nose resembling a copper knob, a damp voice, and eyes like button-holes. "Who'll make an offer for this lady?"

The woman looked on the ground, as if she maintained her position by a supreme effort of will.

"Five shillings," said someone, at which there was a laugh.

"No insults," said the husband. "Who'll say a guinea?"

Nobody answered; and the female dealer in staylaces interposed.

"Behave yerself moral, good man, for Heaven's love! Ah, what a cruelty is the poor soul married to! Bed and board is dear at some figures 'pon my 'vation 'tis!"

"Set it higher, auctioneer," said the trusser.

"Two guineas!" said the auctioneer; and no one replied.

"If they don't take her for that, in ten seconds they'll have to give more," said the husband. "Very well. Now auctioneer, add another."

"Three guineas—going for three guineas!" said the rheumy man.

"No bid?" said the husband. "Good Lord, why she's cost me fifty times the money, if a penny. Go on."

"Four guineas!" cried the auctioneer.

"I'll tell ye what—I won't sell her for less than five," said the husband, bringing down his fist so that the basins danced. "I'll sell her for five guineas to any man that will pay me the money, and treat her well; and he shall have her for ever, and never hear aught o' me. But she shan't go for less. Now then—five guineas—and she's yours. Susan, you agree?"

She bowed her head with absolute indifference. "Five guineas," said the auctioneer, "or she'll be withdrawn. Do anybody give it? The last time. Yes or no?"

"Yes," said a loud voice from the doorway.

All eyes were turned. Standing in the triangular opening which formed the door of the tent was a sailor, who, unobserved by the rest, had arrived there within the last two or three minutes. A dead silence followed his affirmation.

“You say you do?” asked the husband, staring at him.

“I say so,” replied the sailor.

“Saying is one thing, and paying is another. Where’s the money?”

The sailor hesitated a moment, looked anew at the woman, came in, unfolded five crisp pieces of paper, and threw them down upon the tablecloth. They were Bank-of-England notes for five pounds. Upon the face of this he clinked down the shillings severally—one, two, three, four, five.

The sight of real money in full amount, in answer to a challenge for the same till then deemed slightly hypothetical had a great effect upon the spectators. Their eyes became riveted upon the faces of the chief actors, and then upon the notes as they lay, weighted by the shillings, on the table.

Up to this moment it could not positively have been asserted that the man, in spite of his tantalizing declaration, was really in earnest. The spectators had indeed taken the proceedings throughout as a piece of mirthful irony carried to extremes; and had assumed that, being out of work, he was, as a consequence, out of temper with the world, and society, and his nearest kin. But with the demand and response of real cash the jovial frivolity of the scene departed. A lurid colour seemed to fill the tent, and change the aspect of all therein. The mirth-wrinkles left the listeners’ faces, and they waited with parting lips.

“Now,” said the woman, breaking the silence, so that her low dry voice sounded quite loud, “before you go further, Michael, listen to me. If you touch

that money, I and this girl go with the man. Mind, it is a joke no longer.”

“A joke? Of course it is not a joke!” shouted her husband, his resentment rising at her suggestion. “I take the money; the sailor takes you. That’s plain enough. It has been done elsewhere—and why not here?”

“’Tis quite on the understanding that the young woman is willing,” said the sailor blandly. “I wouldn’t hurt her feelings for the world.”

“Faith, nor I,” said her husband. “But she is willing, provided she can have the child. She said so only the other day when I talked o’t!”

“That you swear?” said the sailor to her.

“I do,” said she, after glancing at her husband’s face and seeing no repentance there.

“Very well, she shall have the child, and the bargain’s complete,” said the trusser. He took the sailor’s notes and deliberately folded them, and put them with the shillings in a high remote pocket, with an air of finality.

The sailor looked at the woman and smiled. “Come along!” he said kindly. “The little one too—the more the merrier!” She paused for an instant, with a close glance at him. Then dropping her eyes again, and saying nothing, she took up the child and followed him as he made towards the door. On reaching it, she turned, and pulling off her wedding-ring, flung it across the booth in the hay-trusser’s face.

“Mike,” she said, “I’ve lived with thee a couple of years, and had nothing but temper! Now I’m no more to ‘ee; I’ll try my luck elsewhere. ‘Twill be better for me and Elizabeth-Jane, both. So good-bye!” Seizing the sailor’s arm with her right hand, and mounting the little girl on her left, she went out of the tent sobbing bitterly.

Glossary

Hoar: a light covering like frost

Fustian: a thick cotton cloth

Furmity: a sweet, spicy porridge sometimes laced with rum

Hypothetical: uncertain, not necessarily true

Sense and Sensibility

by Jane Austen (1811)

Introduction

Following the death of the elder Mr Dashwood, his son John, from a previous marriage, inherits the family estate of Norland bringing his wife and child to live there. The widowed Mrs Dashwood and her three daughters must find somewhere else to live. With no income of their own, they are dependent on the help that John promised his father to give them. In the following extract, John Dashwood debates the ways in which he might fulfil this promise and help his half-sisters and their mother.

Extract from chapter two

A Concerned Half-Brother

When he gave his promise to his father, he meditated within himself to increase the fortunes of his sisters by the present of a thousand pounds a-piece. He then really thought himself equal to it. The prospect of four thousand a-year, in addition to his present income, besides the remaining half of his own mother's fortune, warmed his heart, and made him feel capable of generosity. — "Yes, he would give them three thousand pounds: it would be liberal and handsome! It would be enough to make them completely easy. Three thousand pounds! he could spare so considerable a sum with little inconvenience." — He thought of it all day long, and for many days successively, and he did not repent.

Mrs. John Dashwood now installed herself mistress of Norland; and her mother and sisters-in-law were degraded to the condition of visitors. As such, however, they were treated by her with quiet civility; and by her husband with as much kindness as he could feel towards anybody beyond himself, his wife, and their child.

An Interfering Wife

Mrs. John Dashwood did not at all approve of what her husband intended to do for his sisters. To take three thousand pounds from the fortune of their dear little boy would be impoverishing him to the most dreadful degree. She begged him to think again on the subject. How could he answer

it to himself to rob his child, and his only child too, of so large a sum? And what possible claim could the Miss Dashwoods, who were related to him only by half blood, which she considered as no relationship at all, have on his generosity to so large an amount. It was very well known that no affection was ever supposed to exist between the children of any man by different marriages; and why was he to ruin himself, and their poor little Harry, by giving away all his money to his half sisters?

"It was my father's last request to me," replied her husband, "that I should assist his widow and daughters."

"He did not know what he was talking of, I dare say; ten to one but he was light-headed at the time. Had he been in his right senses, he could not have thought of such a thing as begging you to give away half your fortune from your own child."

The Dashwoods discuss the future of their relatives

"He did not stipulate for any particular sum, my dear Fanny; he only requested me, in general terms, to assist them, and make their situation more comfortable than it was in his power to do. Perhaps it would have been as well if he had left it wholly to myself. He could hardly suppose I should neglect them. But as he required the promise, I could not do less than give it; at least I thought so at the time. The promise, therefore, was given, and must be performed. Something must be done for them whenever they leave Norland and settle in a new home."

"Well, then, LET something be done for them; but THAT something need not be three thousand pounds. Consider," she added, "that when the money is once parted with, it never can return. Your sisters will marry, and it will be gone for ever. If, indeed, it could be restored to our poor little boy—"

"Why, to be sure," said her husband, very gravely, "that would make great difference. The time may

come when Harry will regret that so large a sum was parted with. If he should have a numerous family, for instance, it would be a very convenient addition."

"To be sure it would."

"Perhaps, then, it would be better for all parties, if the sum were diminished one half.—Five hundred pounds would be a prodigious increase to their fortunes!"

"Oh! beyond anything great! What brother on earth would do half so much for his sisters, even if REALLY his sisters! And as it is—only half blood!—But you have such a generous spirit!"

"I would not wish to do any thing mean," he replied. "One had rather, on such occasions, do too much than too little. No one, at least, can think I have not done enough for them: even themselves, they can hardly expect more."

"There is no knowing what THEY may expect," said the lady, "but we are not to think of their expectations: the question is, what you can afford to do."

"Certainly—and I think I may afford to give them five hundred pounds a-piece. As it is, without any addition of mine, they will each have about three thousand pounds on their mother's death—a very comfortable fortune for any young woman."

"To be sure it is; and, indeed, it strikes me that they can want no addition at all. They will have ten thousand pounds divided amongst them. If they marry, they will be sure of doing well, and if they do not, they may all live very comfortably together on the interest of ten thousand pounds."

"That is very true, and, therefore, I do not know whether, upon the whole, it would not be more advisable to do something for their mother while she lives, rather than for them—something of the annuity kind I mean.—My sisters would feel the good effects of it as well as herself. A hundred a year would make them all perfectly comfortable."

They foresee a financial burden

His wife hesitated a little, however, in giving her consent to this plan.

"To be sure," said she, "it is better than parting

with fifteen hundred pounds at once. But, then, if Mrs. Dashwood should live fifteen years we shall be completely taken in."

"Fifteen years! my dear Fanny; her life cannot be worth half that purchase."

"Certainly not; but if you observe, people always live for ever when there is an annuity to be paid them; and she is very stout and healthy, and hardly forty. An annuity is a very serious business; it comes over and over every year, and there is no getting rid of it. You are not aware of what you are doing. I have known a great deal of the trouble of annuities; for my mother was clogged with the payment of three to old superannuated servants by my father's will, and it is amazing how disagreeable she found it. Twice every year these annuities were to be paid; and then there was the trouble of getting it to them; and then one of them was said to have died, and afterwards it turned out to be no such thing. My mother was quite sick of it. Her income was not her own, she said, with such perpetual claims on it; and it was the more unkind in my father, because, otherwise, the money would have been entirely at my mother's disposal, without any restriction whatever. It has given me such an abhorrence of annuities, that I am sure I would not pin myself down to the payment of one for all the world."

"It is certainly an unpleasant thing," replied Mr. Dashwood, "to have those kind of yearly drains on one's income. One's fortune, as your mother justly says, is NOT one's own. To be tied down to the regular payment of such a sum, on every rent day, is by no means desirable: it takes away one's independence."

"Undoubtedly; and after all you have no thanks for it. They think themselves secure, you do no more than what is expected, and it raises no gratitude at all. If I were you, whatever I did should be done at my own discretion entirely. I would not bind myself to allow them any thing yearly. It may be very inconvenient some years to spare a hundred, or even fifty pounds from our own expenses."

"I believe you are right, my love; it will be better that there should be no annuity in the case; whatever I may give them occasionally will be of far greater assistance than a yearly allowance, because they would only enlarge their style of living if they felt sure of a larger income, and

would not be sixpence the richer for it at the end of the year. It will certainly be much the best way. A present of fifty pounds, now and then, will prevent their ever being distressed for money, and will, I think, be amply discharging my promise to my father.”

“To be sure it will. Indeed, to say the truth, I am convinced within myself that your father had no idea of your giving them any money at all. The assistance he thought of, I dare say, was only such as might be reasonably expected of you; for instance, such as looking out for a comfortable small house for them, helping them to move their things, and sending them presents of fish and game, and so forth, whenever they are in season. I’ll lay my life that he meant nothing farther; indeed, it would be very strange and unreasonable if he did. Do but consider, my dear Mr. Dashwood, how excessively comfortable your mother-in-law and her daughters may live on the interest of seven thousand pounds, besides the thousand pounds belonging to each of the girls, which brings them in fifty pounds a year a-piece, and, of course, they will pay their mother for their board out of it. Altogether, they will have five hundred a-year amongst them, and what on earth can four women want for more than that?— They will live so cheap! Their housekeeping will be nothing at all. They will have no carriage, no horses, and hardly any servants; they will keep no company, and can have no expenses of any kind! Only conceive how comfortable they will be! Five hundred a year! I am sure I cannot imagine how they will spend half of it; and as to your giving them more, it is quite absurd to think of it. They will be much more able to give YOU something.”

The right thing to do?

“Upon my word,” said Mr. Dashwood, “I believe

you are perfectly right. My father certainly could mean nothing more by his request to me than what you say. I clearly understand it now, and I will strictly fulfil my engagement by such acts of assistance and kindness to them as you have described. When my mother removes into another house my services shall be readily given to accommodate her as far as I can. Some little present of furniture too may be acceptable then.”

“Certainly,” returned Mrs. John Dashwood. “But, however, ONE thing must be considered. When your father and mother moved to Norland, though the furniture of Stanhill was sold, all the china, plate, and linen was saved, and is now left to your mother. Her house will therefore be almost completely fitted up as soon as she takes it.”

“That is a material consideration undoubtedly. A valuable legacy indeed! And yet some of the plate would have been a very pleasant addition to our own stock here.”

“Yes; and the set of breakfast china is twice as handsome as what belongs to this house. A great deal too handsome, in my opinion, for any place THEY can ever afford to live in. But, however, so it is. Your father thought only of THEM. And I must say this: that you owe no particular gratitude to him, nor attention to his wishes; for we very well know that if he could, he would have left almost everything in the world to THEM.”

This argument was irresistible. It gave to his intentions whatever of decision was wanting before; and he finally resolved, that it would be absolutely unnecessary, if not highly indecorous, to do more for the widow and children of his father, than such kind of neighbourly acts as his own wife pointed out.

Glossary

Liberal: generous

Impoverishing: making poor

Annuity: a fixed sum of money paid out to someone every year

Adventure and mystery 1: the adventure begins

Aims:

- to enjoy extracts from early in adventure stories
- to explore the conventions of the adventure genre.

Suggestions for lesson starters and hooks

- Clips from adventure films such as *The Golden Compass*, *Stormbreaker*, *Harry Potter*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *James Bond*, *Indiana Jones*.
- Discussion of the meaning of 'adventure', and students' experience of it in reading and film.
- Name cards of well-known characters from adventure stories for recognition and discussion to match up with adversaries and titles, e.g. Harry Potter/Voldemort/*The Deathly Hallows*
James Bond/Raoul Silva/*Skyfall*
Alex Ryder/Yassen Gregorovich/*Stormbreaker*
Batman/The Joker/Gotham City
Perseus /Medusa/Ancient Greece.

Texts

Extract from *Moonfleet* by J. Meade Faulkner (1898)

King Solomon's Mines by H. Rider Haggard (1885)

The Sign of Four by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1890)

Understanding and responding

Extract 1

***Moonfleet* by J. Meade Faulkner (1898)**

Identify the events in the story section by section. Identify the things that John Trenchard finds puzzling or mysterious. Find the sentence that shows John Trenchard is thinking only of Blackbeard's treasure. He has overcome his fear of the tomb and Blackbeard's ghost, but what has he overlooked?

Based on the details and clues in the extract, what do you think is going on in *Moonfleet*?

What predictions can you make about what happens next?

Either draw a labelled picture or make two columns to show the details that indicate that the underground space is both a tomb and a smugglers' hiding place.

Think about books you have read and films you have seen, and give examples from them of the following features of adventurous action:

- characters in a book or film warn others about a local superstition, myth or curse
- a character discovers a mysterious opening or path that s/he decides to explore
- a character overhears or secretly witnesses some criminal or secretive activity
- a child deceives her/his family or adults to creep out in the night
- a character searches for something valuable that has been lost or hidden
- a character has to hide from danger approaching.

What might each of these features, sometimes called conventions, add to the development of a story? How do these features affect the reader's understanding and response to it?

Closer reading

In each section of this extract explain how the change of place and time affects the atmosphere that the author has created.

Re-read each section separately in groups, and highlight the words and phrases that appeal to our senses. How does this sensory description contribute to the reader's understanding of danger and John's emotions?

Identify the references to sound in the passage where John makes his way at night back to the tomb. How is sound important in this part of the story?

Study the sentences in the penultimate

paragraph. How do they build up a sense of urgency and action?

The story is written from the point of view of the main character, John Trenchard. Identify the words and phrases that show this to be a first person account. What is the effect of the

change to third person in the final sentence of *A Moonlight Adventure*? How soon after the events do you think John Trenchard is recording this story? The story from which this extract is taken is a novel written in the 1890s by John Meade Faulkner. Why do you think the author used a boy narrator and a setting from 100 years earlier?

Writing suggestion

Plan a chapter for a class adventure story set in the modern day using the template. Divide the class in groups, each to write one section. This can lead to editing and re-drafting with peers, which is purposeful to ensure the coherence of the story's narrative structure and style.

Template for planning an early chapter in a modern adventure story

Agree the details as a class or in groups, then share out sections for writing. Students plan their sections of the chapter.

Agree the following details for the class story			
Details of child narrator: gender, age, family circumstances.	Details of the mystery that starts the adventure: a local legend or superstition, the promise of treasure or something valuable.	The place where it all starts: how the character finds it and enters. Its atmosphere and something puzzling that s/he finds.	Further danger from people approaching forces the narrator to hide.
Sections for writing			
A discovery	A moonlight adventure	Into the main setting	Danger approaches
Consider writing features: appeal to senses, sentence structures for effect, choice of vocabulary			

Researching the 19th-century context

- Smuggling on the Dorset coast.
- England as a maritime nation.

Extract 2

From the opening of *King Solomon's Mines* by H. Rider Haggard

What do we learn about this narrator? What clues are given about the content of the story that follows, and how far does it arouse our curiosity? What is your response to the narrator's comment that "there is not a petticoat in the whole history"? Thinking about other adventure stories that you have read, or seen on film, what is your understanding of the role of women in them? Is it different in more recent stories from those written in the last century?

Extract 3

From the Sherlock Holmes novel '*The Sign of Four*'

Detective fiction shares some similar features with adventure stories.

Consider how the author presents the female character in this passage. What is shown about her personality and emotions?

Identify the facts that we know about the case. Make a list of questions that need to be answered as the mystery is investigated. Which details provide clues for Sherlock Holmes and for the reader?

Moonfleet

by J. Meade Faulkner (1898)

Share this introduction before reading the extract

The narrator is a boy called John Trenchard who lives by the coast in the village of Moonfleet. He has seen and heard some suspicious activity around the churchyard. He believes the local legend of Blackbeard who betrayed King Charles and gained from him a priceless diamond, which he hid away and never reclaimed before he died.

Blackbeard died a century back, and was buried in the vault under the church, with other members of his family, but could not rest there, either because he was always looking for a lost treasure, or because of his exceeding wickedness in life.

Men said that on dark winter nights Blackbeard might be seen with an old-fashioned lantern digging for treasure in the graveyard. They said he was the tallest of men, with full black beard, coppery face, and such evil eyes that any who once met their gaze must die within a year. However that might be, there were few in Moonfleet who would not rather walk ten miles round than go near the churchyard after dark.

The story

A discovery

So it came about that on a certain afternoon in the beginning of February, in the year 1758, I was sitting on this tomb looking out to sea. Though it was so early in the year, the air was soft and warm as a May day, and so still that I could hear the drumming of turnips that Gaffer George was flinging into a cart on the hillside, near half a mile away. Ever since the floods of which I have spoken, the weather had been open, but with high winds, and little or no rain. Thus as the land dried after the floods there began to open cracks in the heavy clay soil on which Moonfleet is built, such as are usually only seen with us in the height of summer. There were cracks by the side of the path in the sea-meadows between the village and the church, and cracks in the churchyard itself, and one running right up to this very tomb.

It must have been past four o'clock in the afternoon, and I was for returning to tea at my aunt's, when underneath the stone on which I sat I heard a rumbling and crumbling, and on jumping off saw that the crack in the ground had still further widened, just where it came up to the tomb, and that the dry earth had so shrunk and settled that there was a hole in the ground a foot or more across. Now this hole reached under the big stone that formed one side of the tomb, and falling on my hands and knees and looking down it, I perceived that there was under the monument a larger cavity, into which the hole opened. I believe there never was boy yet who saw a hole in the ground, or a cave in a hill, or much more an underground passage, but longed incontinently to be into it and discover whither it led. So it was with me; and seeing that the earth had fallen enough into the hole to open a way under the stone, I slipped myself in feet foremost, dropped down on to a heap of fallen mould, and found that I could stand upright under the monument itself.

Now this was what I had expected, for I thought that there had been below this grave a vault, the roof of which had given way and let the earth fall in. But as soon as my eyes were used to the dimmer light, I saw that it was no such thing, but that the hole into which I had crept was only the mouth of a passage, which sloped gently down in the direction of the church. My heart fell to thumping with eagerness and surprise, for I thought I had made a wonderful discovery, and that this hidden way would certainly lead to great things, perhaps even to Blackbeard's hoard; for ever since Mr. Glennie's tale I had constantly before my eyes a vision of the diamond and the wealth it was to bring me. The passage was two paces broad, as high as a tall man, and cut through the soil, without bricks or any other lining; and what surprised me most was that it did not seem deserted nor mouldy and cobwebbed, as one would expect such a place to be, but rather a well-used thoroughfare; for I could see the soft clay floor was trodden with the prints of many boots, and marked with a trail as if some heavy thing had been dragged over it.

So I set out down the passage, reaching out my hand before me lest I should run against anything in the dark, and sliding my feet slowly to avoid pitfalls in the floor. But before I had gone half a dozen paces, the darkness grew so black that I was frightened, and so far from going on was glad to turn sharp about, and see the glimmer of light that came in through the hole under the tomb. Then a horror of the darkness seized me, and before I well knew what I was about I found myself wriggling my body up under the tombstone on to the churchyard grass, and was once more in the low evening sunlight and the soft sweet air. I knew I must fetch a candle if I were ever to search out the passage; and to search it I had well made up my mind, no matter how much I was scared for this moment.

Later that night...

A moonlight adventure

There was a moon three-quarters full, already in the sky, and on moonlight nights I was allowed no candle to show me to bed. But on that night I needed none, for I never took off my clothes, having resolved to wait till my aunt was asleep, and then, ghosts or no ghosts, to make my way

back to the churchyard. I did not dare to put off that visit even till the morning, lest some chance passer-by should light upon the hole, and so forestall me with Blackbeard's treasure.

Thus I lay wide awake on my bed watching the shadow of the tester-post against the whitewashed wall, and noting how it had moved, by degrees, as the moon went farther round. At last, just as it touched the picture of the Good Shepherd which hung over the mantelpiece, I heard my aunt snoring in her room, and knew that I was free. Yet I waited a few minutes so that she might get well on with her first sleep, and then took off my boots, and in stockinged feet slipped past her room and down the stairs.

How stair, handrail, and landing creaked that night, and how my feet and body struck noisily against things seen quite well but misjudged in the effort not to misjudge them! And yet there was the note of safety still sounding, for the snoring never ceased, and the sleeper woke not, though her waking then might have changed all my life. So I came safely to the kitchen, and there put in my pocket one of the best winter candles and the tinder-box, and as I crept out of the room heard suddenly how loud the old clock was ticking, and looking up saw the bright brass band marking half past ten on the dial.

Out in the street I kept in the shadow of the houses as far as I might, though all was silent as the grave; indeed, I think that when the moon is bright a great hush falls always upon Nature, as though she was taken up in wondering at her own beauty. Everyone was fast asleep in Moonfleet and there was no light in any window.

At the churchyard wall my courage had waned somewhat: it seemed a shameless thing to come to rifle Blackbeard's treasure just in the very place and hour that Blackbeard loved; and as I passed the turnstile I half-expected that a tall figure, hairy and evil-eyed, would spring out from the shadow on the north side of the church. But nothing stirred, and the frosty grass sounded crisp under my feet as I made across the churchyard, stepping over the graves and keeping always out of the shadows, towards the black clump of yew-trees on the far side.

When I got round the yews, there was the tomb standing out white against them, and at the foot of



the tomb was the hole like a patch of black velvet spread upon the ground, it was so dark. Then, for a moment, I thought that Blackbeard might be lying in wait in the bottom of the hole, and I stood uncertain whether to go on or back. I could catch the rustle of the water on the beach - not of any waves, for the bay was smooth as glass, but just a lipper at the fringe; and wishing to put off with any excuse the descent into the passage, though I had quite resolved to make it, I settled with myself that I would count the water wash twenty times, and at the twentieth would let myself down into the hole. Only seven wavelets had come in when I forgot to count, for there, right in the middle of the moon's path across the water, lay a lugger moored broadside to the beach. She was about half a mile out, but there was no mistake, for though her sails were lowered her masts and hull stood out black against the moonlight. Here was a fresh reason for delay, for surely one must consider what this craft could be, and what had brought her here. She was too small for a privateer, too large for a fishing-smack, and could not be a revenue boat by her low freeboard in the waist; and 'twas a strange thing for a boat to cast anchor in the midst of Moonfleet Bay even on a night so fine as this. Then while I watched I saw a blue flare in the bows, only for a moment, as if a man had lit a squib and flung it overboard, but I knew from it she was a contrabandier, and signalling either to the shore or to a mate in the offing. With that, courage came back, and I resolved to make this flare my signal for getting down into the hole, screwing my heart up with the thought that if Blackbeard was really waiting for me there, 'twould be little good to turn tail now, for he would be after me and could certainly run much faster than I. Then I took one last look round, and down into the hole forthwith, the same way as I had got down earlier in the day. So on that February night John Trenchard found himself standing in the heap of loose fallen mould at the bottom of the hole, with a mixture of courage and cowardice in his heart, but overruling all a great desire to get at Blackbeard's diamond.

Under the ground

Out came tinder-box and candle, and I was glad indeed when the light burned up bright enough to show that no one, at any rate, was standing by my side. But then there was the passage, and who could say what might be lurking there? Yet I did not falter, but set out on this adventurous journey, walking very slowly indeed - but that was

from fear of pitfalls - and nerving myself with the thought of the great diamond which surely would be found at the end of the passage. What should I not be able to do with such wealth?

I walked on down the passage, reaching out the candle as far as might be in front of me, and whistling to keep myself company, yet saw neither Blackbeard nor anyone else. All the way there were footprints on the floor, and the roof was black as with smoke of torches, and this made me fear lest some of those who had been there before might have made away with the diamond. Now, though I have spoken of this journey down the passage as though it were a mile long, and though it verily seemed so to me that night, yet I afterwards found it was not more than twenty yards or thereabouts; and then I came upon a stone wall which had once blocked the road, but was now broken through so as to make a ragged doorway into a chamber beyond. There I stood on the rough sill of the door, holding my breath and reaching out my candle arm's-length into the darkness, to see what sort of a place this was before I put foot into it. And before the light had well time to fall on things, I knew that I was underneath the church, and that this chamber was none other than the Mohune Vault.

It was a large room, much larger, I think, than the schoolroom where Mr. Glennie taught us, but not near so high, being only some nine feet from floor to roof. I say floor, though in reality there was none, but only a bottom of soft wet sand; and when I stepped down on to it my heart beat very fiercely, for I remembered what manner of place I was entering, and the dreadful sounds which had issued from it that Sunday morning so short a time before. I satisfied myself that there was nothing evil lurking in the dark corners, or nothing visible at least, and then began to look round and note what was to be seen. Walls and roof were stone, and at one end was a staircase closed by a great flat stone at top - that same stone which I had often seen, with a ring in it, in the floor of the church above. All round the sides were stone shelves, with divisions between them like great bookcases, but instead of books there were the coffins of the Mohunes. Yet these lay only at the sides, and in the middle of the room was something very different, for here were stacked scores of casks, kegs, and runlets, from a storage butt that might hold thirty gallons down to a breaker that held only one. They were marked all

of them in white paint on the end with figures and letters, that doubtless set forth the quality to those that understood. Here indeed was a discovery, and instead of picking up at the end of the passage a little brass or silver casket, which had only to be opened to show Blackbeard's diamond gleaming inside, I had stumbled on the Mohune's vault, and found it to be nothing but a cellar of gentlemen of the contraband, for surely good liquor would never be stored in so shy a place if it ever had paid the excise.

I began to turn over in my mind how to get at the treasure; and I set to work to see whether I could learn anything from the coffins themselves; but with little success, for the lead coffins had no names upon them, and on such of the wooden coffins as bore plates I found the writing to be Latin, and so rusted over that I could make nothing of it.

Soon I wished I had not come at all, considering that the diamond had vanished into air, and it was a sad thing to be cabined with so many dead men. It moved me, too, to see pieces of banners and funeral shields, and even shreds of wreaths that dear hearts had put there a century ago, now all ruined and rotten - some still clinging, water-sodden, to the coffins, and some trampled in the sand of the floor. I had spent some time in this bootless search, and was resolved to give up further inquiry and foot it home, when the clock in the tower struck midnight. Surely never was ghostly hour sounded in more ghostly place. Moonfleet peal was known over half the county, and the finest part of it was the clock bell. 'Twas said that in times past (when, perhaps, the chimes were rung more often than now) the voice of this bell had led safe home boats that were lost in the fog; and this night its clangour, mellow and profound, reached even to the vault. Bim-bom it went, bim-bom, twelve heavy thuds that shook the walls, twelve resonant echoes that followed, and then a purring and vibration of the air, so that the ear could not tell when it ended.

Danger approaches

I was wrought up, perhaps, by the strangeness of the hour and place, and my hearing quicker than at other times, but before the tremor of the bell was quite passed away I knew there was some other sound in the air, and that the awful stillness of the vault was broken. At first I could not tell what this new sound was, nor whence it came, and now it seemed a little noise close by, and now a great noise in the distance. And then it grew nearer and more defined, and in a moment I knew it was the sound of voices talking. They must have been a long way off at first, and for a minute, that seemed as an age, they came no nearer. What a minute was that to me! Even now, so many years after, I can recall the anguish of it, and how I stood with ears pricked up, eyes starting, and a clammy sweat upon my face, waiting for those speakers to come. It was the anguish of the rabbit at the end of his burrow, with the ferret's eyes gleaming in the dark, and gun and lurcher waiting at the mouth of the hole. I was caught in a trap, and knew beside that contraband-men had a way of sealing prying eyes and stilling babbling tongues.

These were but the thoughts of a second, but the voices were nearer, and I heard a dull thud far up the passage, and knew that a man had jumped down from the churchyard into the hole. So I took a last stare round, agonizing to see if there was any way of escape; but the stone walls and roof were solid enough to crush me, and the stack of casks too closely packed to hide more than a rat. There was a man speaking now from the bottom of the hole to others in the churchyard, and then my eyes were led as by a lodestone to a great wooden coffin that lay by itself on the top shelf, a full six feet from the ground. When I saw the coffin I knew that I was respited, for, as I judged, there was space between it and the wall behind enough to contain my little carcass; and in a second I had put out the candle, scrambled up the shelves, half-stunned my senses with dashing my head against the roof, and squeezed my body betwixt wall and coffin.

There I lay on one side with a thin and rotten plank between the dead man and me, dazed with the blow to my head, and breathing hard; while the glow of torches as they came down the passage reddened and flickered on the roof above.

Glossary

- Mr. Glennie:** the school teacher
Thoroughfare: a well-used road or path
Forestall: prevent
Tinder-box: a box containing the materials needed to light a fire
Contrabandiers: smugglers
Contraband: smuggled goods
Peal: a loud ringing of bells
Lodestone: a person or thing that is the focus of attention
Lurcher: a dog used by hunters and poachers to retrieve prey
Respited: given a brief period of rest or relief

King Solomon's Mines

by H. Rider Haggard (1885)

Chapter 1

I met Sir Henry Curtis

It is a curious thing that at my age—fifty-five last birthday—I should find myself taking up a pen to try to write a history. I wonder what sort of a history it will be when I have finished it, if ever I come to the end of the trip! I have done a good many things in my life, which seems a long one to me, owing to my having begun work so young, perhaps. At an age when other boys are at school I was earning my living as a trader in the old Colony. I have been trading, hunting, fighting, or mining ever since. And yet it is only eight months ago that I made my pile. It is a big pile now that I have got it—I don't yet know how big—but I do not think I would go through the last fifteen or sixteen months again for it; no, not if I knew that I should come out safe at the end, pile and all. But then I am a timid man, and dislike violence; moreover, I am almost sick of adventure. I wonder why I am going to write this book: it is not in my line. I am not a literary man, though very devoted to the Old Testament and also to the "Ingoldsby Legends." Let me try to set down my reasons, just to see if I have any.

First reason: Because Sir Henry Curtis and Captain John Good asked me.

Second reason: Because I am laid up here at Durban with the pain in my left leg. Ever since that confounded lion got hold of me I have been liable to this trouble, and being rather bad just now, it makes me limp more than ever. There must be some poison in a lion's teeth, otherwise how is it that when your wounds are healed they break out again, generally, mark you, at the same time of year that you got your mauling? It is a hard thing when one has shot sixty-five lions or more, as I have in the course of my life, that the sixty-sixth should chew your leg like a quid of tobacco. It breaks the routine of the thing, and putting other considerations aside, I am an orderly man and don't like that. This is by the way.

Third reason: Because I want my boy Harry, who is over there at the hospital in London studying to become a doctor, to have something to amuse him and keep him out of mischief for a week or so. Hospital work must sometimes pall and grow rather dull, for even of cutting up dead bodies there may come satiety, and as this history will not be dull, whatever else it may be, it will put a

little life into things for a day or two while Harry is reading of our adventures.

Fourth reason and last: Because I am going to tell the strangest story that I remember. It may seem a queer thing to say, especially considering that

there is no woman in it—except Foulata. Stop, though! There is Gagaoola, if she was a woman, and not a fiend. But she was a hundred at least, and therefore not marriageable, so I don't count her. At any rate, I can safely say that there is not a petticoat in the whole history.

Glossary

Pile: fortune

Durban: a city in South Africa

Satiety: having enough of something

The Sign of Four

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1890)

Introduction

Doctor Watson, a friend of Sherlock Holmes, is the narrator.

The Statement of the Case

Miss Morstan entered the room with a firm step and an outward composure of manner. She was a blonde young lady, small, dainty, well gloved, and dressed in the most perfect taste. There was, however, a plainness and simplicity about her costume which bore with it a suggestion of limited means. The dress was a sombre grayish beige, untrimmed and unbraided, and she wore a small turban of the same dull hue, relieved only by a suspicion of white feather in the side. Her face had neither regularity of feature nor beauty of complexion, but her expression was sweet and amiable, and her large blue eyes were singularly spiritual and sympathetic. In an experience of women which extends over many nations and three separate continents, I have never looked upon a face which gave a clearer promise of a refined and sensitive nature. I could not but observe that as she took the seat which Sherlock Holmes placed for her, her lip trembled, her hand quivered, and she showed every sign of intense inward agitation.

"I have come to you, Mr. Holmes," she said, "because you once enabled my employer, Mrs. Cecil Forrester, to unravel a little domestic complication. She was much impressed by your kindness and skill."

"Mrs. Cecil Forrester," he repeated thoughtfully. "I believe that I was of some slight service to her. The case, however, as I remember it, was a very simple one."

"She did not think so. But at least you cannot say the same of mine. I can hardly imagine anything more strange, more utterly inexplicable, than the situation in which I find myself."

Holmes rubbed his hands, and his eyes glistened. He leaned forward in his chair with an expression of extraordinary concentration upon his clear-cut, hawklike features. "State your case," said he, in brisk, business tones.

I felt that my position was an embarrassing one. "You will, I am sure, excuse me," I said, rising from my chair.

To my surprise, the young lady held up her gloved

hand to detain me. "If your friend," she said, "would be good enough to stop, he might be of inestimable service to me."

I relapsed into my chair.

"Briefly," she continued, "the facts are these. My father was an officer in an Indian regiment who sent me home when I was quite a child. My mother was dead, and I had no relative in England. I was placed, however, in a comfortable boarding establishment at Edinburgh, and there I remained until I was seventeen years of age. In the year 1878 my father, who was senior captain of his regiment, obtained twelve months' leave and came home. He telegraphed to me from London that he had arrived all safe, and directed me to come down at once, giving the Langham Hotel as his address. His message, as I remember, was full of kindness and love. On reaching London I drove to the Langham, and was informed that Captain Morstan was staying there, but that he had gone out the night before and had not yet returned. I waited all day without news of him. That night, on the advice of the manager of the hotel, I communicated with the police, and next morning we advertised in all the papers. Our inquiries led to no result; and from that day to this no word has ever been heard of my unfortunate father. He came home with his heart full of hope, to find some peace, some comfort, and instead—" She put her hand to her throat, and a choking sob cut short the sentence.

"The date?" asked Holmes, opening his note-book.

"He disappeared upon the 3d of December, 1878,—nearly ten years ago."

"His luggage?"

"Remained at the hotel. There was nothing in it to suggest a clue,—some clothes, some books, and a considerable number of curiosities from the Andaman Islands. He had been one of the officers in charge of the convict-guard there."

"Had he any friends in town?"

"Only one that we know of,—Major Sholto, of his own regiment, the 34th Bombay Infantry. The major had retired some little time before, and lived at Upper Norwood. We communicated with him, of course, but he did not even know that his brother officer was in England."

"A singular case," remarked Holmes.

"I have not yet described to you the most singular part. About six years ago—to be exact, upon the 4th of May, 1882—an advertisement appeared in the Times asking for the address of Miss Mary Morstan and stating that it would be to her advantage to come forward. There was no name or address appended. I had at that time just entered the family of Mrs. Cecil Forrester in the capacity of governess. By her advice I published



my address in the advertisement column. The same day there arrived through the post a small cardboard box addressed to me, which I found to contain a very large and lustrous pearl. No word of writing was enclosed. Since then every year upon the same date there has always appeared a similar box, containing a similar pearl, without any clue as to the sender. They have been pronounced by an expert to be of a rare variety and of considerable value. You can see for yourselves that they are very handsome." She opened a flat box as she spoke, and showed me six of the finest pearls that I had ever seen.

"Your statement is most interesting," said Sherlock Holmes. "Has anything else occurred to you?"

"Yes, and no later than to-day. That is why I have come to you. This morning I received this letter, which you will perhaps read for yourself."
"Thank you," said Holmes. "The envelope too, please. Postmark, London, S.W. Date, July 7. Hum! Man's thumb-mark on corner,—probably postman. Best quality paper. Envelopes at sixpence a packet. Particular man in his stationery. No address. 'Be at the third pillar from the left outside the Lyceum Theatre to-night at seven o'clock. If you are distrustful, bring two friends. You are a wronged woman, and shall have justice. Do not bring police. If you do, all will be in vain. Your unknown friend.' Well, really, this is a very pretty little mystery. What do you intend to do, Miss Morstan?"

Glossary

Inexplicable: cannot be explained

Inestimable: more than can be measured

Lustrous: gleaming brilliantly

Adventure and mystery 2: the good the bad and the ugly: characters in adventure stories

Aims:

- to understand how authors present characters: the pirate, the detective
- to explore the notion of stock characters and stereotypical features of good and bad characters.

Suggestions for lesson starters or hooks

- Provide pictures of a variety of characters to discuss the inferences that we make based on appearance.
- List examples of villains in film and literature and the features they share.
- Use a clip from *Pirates of the Caribbean* to explore the recognisable features that we associate with pirates.
- Discuss the characteristics of fictional detectives.

Researching the 19th-century context

- Piracy.
- Smuggling.
- Taxation.
- Origins of detective fiction.
- Crime in London.

Texts

Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson
(published 1883)

A Study in Scarlet by Arthur Conan Doyle
(published 1887)

Understanding and responding

Extract 1

Descriptions of characters from *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson

In groups read the descriptions of characters from

Treasure Island. Identify the features that we have come to associate with pirates. In which other books and films do we find similar characters? Highlight all the references in these descriptions to unattractive physical characteristics and disabilities.

List other examples from books and films where the bad characters are given such characteristics. Why do you think the authors use this sort of device to present bad characters? Can you think of examples of good characters whose physical appearance is unusual or frightening?

Develop the discussion about presentation of, and attitudes to, disabled people in modern literature and media. Has there been a change over time? Why, or why not?

Writing Suggestion

Create your own villain based on the characters you have studied.

Extract 2

Description of Sherlock Holmes from *A Study in Scarlet* by Arthur Conan Doyle

Consider the list of subjects on which Sherlock Holmes has no knowledge, and his assertion that knowledge of the solar system “would not make a pennyworth of difference to me or to my work “. What does this suggest about this character and his approach to solving mysteries?

“Observation and deduction” are the secrets of Sherlock Holmes’s success. Find the details that he observes and the deductions he makes from them. In your opinion, are other deductions possible from these observations?

Make a list of Holmes’s qualities described by Dr Watson. Explain by referring closely to this passage whether you think that Dr Watson admires him.

Now imagine knowing Holmes in real life and suggest how people might respond to him. Do you see any weaknesses or flaws in his character?

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's creation of the character of Sherlock Holmes was very well received, and he published four novels and fifty-six short stories about him. Detective stories have remained popular from the middle of the 19th century to the present day. Which detective books, TV programmes and films do you know?

In reality, crimes are solved by teams of police officers. In detective fiction, a single character with a superior mind considers the evidence and reveals the solution to an admiring audience. How do you explain the popularity of this genre of fiction?

Close reading

Re-read the paragraph beginning “You see”, he explained ...’ in which Sherlock Holmes uses

the metaphor of an attic room to describe his view of the way in which the human brain works. Underline the words and phrases that the author uses to extend this metaphor.

How does this passage help us to understand why Sherlock Holmes has seriously studied only a small number of subjects?

Writing Suggestion

Now consider an opposing point of view which suggests that the brain grows in response to the more we learn and take in. What image would provide a suitable metaphor to express this? What words and phrases would help to extend that metaphor?

Now write a paragraph as an extended metaphor to challenge Holmes and express this contrasting view of the brain.

Treasure Island

by Robert Louis Stevenson (1883)

The following extracts describe characters from the novel.

Captain Billy Bones

I remember him as if it were yesterday, as he came plodding to the inn door, his sea-chest following behind him in a hand-barrow—a tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man, his tarry pigtail falling over the shoulder of his soiled blue coat, his hands ragged and scarred, with black, broken nails, and the sabre cut across one cheek, a dirty, livid white. I remember him looking round the cover and whistling to himself as he did so, and then breaking out in that old sea-song that he sang so often afterwards:

“Fifteen men on the dead man’s chest—

Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!”

In the high, old tottering voice that seemed to have been tuned and broken at the capstan bars.

Then he rapped on the door with a bit of stick like a handspike that he carried, and when my father appeared, called roughly for a glass of rum. This, when it was brought to him, he drank slowly, like a connoisseur, lingering on the taste and still looking about him at the cliffs and up at our signboard.

“This is a handy cove,” says he at length; “and a pleasant sittyated grog-shop. Much company, mate?”

My father told him no, very little company, the more was the pity.

“Well, then,” said he, “this is the berth for me. Here you, matey,” he cried to the man who trundled the barrow; “bring up alongside and help up my chest. I’ll stay here a bit,” he continued. “I’m a plain man; rum and bacon and eggs is what I want, and that head up there for to watch ships off. What you mought call me? You mought call me captain. Oh, I see what you’re at—there”;

and he threw down three or four gold pieces on the threshold. "You can tell me when I've worked through that," says he, looking as fierce as a commander.

And indeed bad as his clothes were and coarsely as he spoke, he had none of the appearance of a man who sailed before the mast, but seemed like a mate or skipper accustomed to be obeyed or to strike. The man who came with the barrow told us the mail had set him down the morning before at the Royal George, that he had inquired what inns there were along the coast, and hearing ours well spoken of, I suppose, and described as lonely, had chosen it from the others for his place of residence. And that was all we could learn of our guest.

Blind Pew

So things passed until, the day after the funeral, and about three o'clock of a bitter, foggy, frosty afternoon, I was standing at the door for a moment, full of sad thoughts about my father, when I saw someone drawing slowly near along the road. He was plainly blind, for he tapped before him with a stick and wore a great green shade over his eyes and nose; and he was hunched, as if with age or weakness, and wore a huge old tattered sea-cloak with a hood that made him appear positively deformed. I never saw in my life a more dreadful-looking figure. He stopped a little from the inn, and raising his voice in an odd sing-song, addressed the air in front of him, "Will any kind friend inform a poor blind man, who has lost the precious sight of his eyes in the gracious defence of his native country, England—and God bless King George!—where or in what part of this country he may now be?"

"You are at the Admiral Benbow, Black Hill Cove, my good man," said I.

"I hear a voice," said he, "a young voice. Will you give me your hand, my kind young friend, and lead me in?"

I held out my hand, and the horrible, soft-spoken, eyeless creature gripped it in a moment like a vise. I was so much startled that I struggled to withdraw, but the blind man pulled me close up to him with a single action of his arm.

"Now, boy," he said, "take me in to the captain."
"Sir," said I, "upon my word I dare not."

"Oh," he sneered, "that's it! Take me in straight or I'll break your arm."

And he gave it, as he spoke, a wrench that made me cry out.

"Sir," said I, "it is for yourself I mean. The captain is not what he used to be. He sits with a drawn cutlass. Another gentleman—"

"Come, now, march," interrupted he; and I never heard a voice so cruel, and cold, and ugly as that blind man's. It cowed me more than the pain, and I began to obey him at once, walking straight in at the door and towards the parlour, where our sick old buccaneer was sitting, dazed with rum. The blind man clung close to me, holding me in one iron fist and leaning almost more of his weight on me than I could carry. "Lead me straight up to him, and when I'm in view, cry out, 'Here's a friend for you, Bill.' If you don't, I'll do this," and with that he gave me a twitch that I thought would have made me faint. Between this and that, I was so utterly terrified of the blind beggar that I forgot my terror of the captain, and as I opened the parlour door, cried out the words he had ordered in a trembling voice.

The poor captain raised his eyes, and at one look the rum went out of him and left him staring sober. The expression of his face was not so much of terror as of mortal sickness. He made a movement to rise, but I do not believe he had enough force left in his body.

"Now, Bill, sit where you are," said the beggar. "If I can't see, I can hear a finger stirring. Business is business. Hold out your left hand. Boy, take his left hand by the wrist and bring it near to my right."

We both obeyed him to the letter, and I saw him pass something from the hollow of the hand that held his stick into the palm of the captain's, which closed upon it instantly.

"And now that's done," said the blind man; and at the words he suddenly left hold of me, and with incredible accuracy and nimbleness, skipped out of the parlour and into the road, where, as I still stood motionless, I could hear his stick go tap-tap-tapping into the distance.

Long John Silver or Barbecue, as the men called him.

Aboard ship he carried his crutch by a lanyard round his neck, to have both hands as free as possible. It was something to see him wedge the foot of the crutch against a bulkhead, and propped against it, yielding to every movement of the ship, get on with his cooking like someone safe ashore. Still more strange was it to see him in the heaviest of weather cross the deck. He had a line or two rigged up to help him across the widest spaces—Long John's earrings, they were called; and he would hand himself from one place to another, now using the crutch, now trailing it



alongside by the lanyard, as quickly as another man could walk. Yet some of the men who had sailed with him before expressed their pity to see him so reduced.

“He’s no common man, Barbecue,” said the coxswain to me. “He had good schooling in his young days and can speak like a book when so minded; and brave—a lion’s nothing alongside of Long John! I seen him grapple four and knock their heads together—him unarmed.”

All the crew respected and even obeyed him. He had a way of talking to each and doing everybody some particular service. To me he was unweariedly kind, and always glad to see me in the galley, which he kept as clean as a new pin, the dishes hanging up burnished and his parrot in a cage in one corner.

“Come away, Hawkins,” he would say; “come and have a yarn with John. Nobody more welcome than yourself, my son. Sit you down and hear the news. Here’s Cap’n Flint—I calls my parrot Cap’n Flint, after the famous buccaneer—here’s Cap’n Flint predicting success to our v’yage. Wasn’t you, cap’n?”

And the parrot would say, with great rapidity, “Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight! Pieces of eight!” till you wondered that it was not out of breath, or till John threw his handkerchief over the cage.

“Now, that bird,” he would say, “is, maybe, two hundred years old, Hawkins—they live forever mostly; and if anybody’s seen more wickedness, it must be the devil himself. She’s sailed with England, the great Cap’n England, the pirate. She’s been at Madagascar, and at Malabar, and Surinam, and Providence, and Portobello. She was at the fishing up of the wrecked plate ships. It’s there she learned ‘Pieces of eight,’ and little wonder; three hundred and fifty thousand of ‘em, Hawkins! She was at the boarding of the viceroy of the Indies out of Goa, she was; and to look at her you would think she was a babby. But you smelt powder—didn’t you, cap’n?”

“Stand by to go about,” the parrot would scream.

“Ah, she’s a handsome craft, she is,” the cook would say, and give her sugar from his pocket, and then the bird would peck at the bars and swear straight on, passing belief for wickedness.

“There,” John would add, “you can’t touch pitch and not be mucked, lad. Here’s this poor old innocent bird o’mine swearing blue fire, and none the wiser, you may lay to that. She would

swear the same, in a manner of speaking, before chaplain.” And John would touch his forelock with a solemn way he had that made me think he was the best of men.

Glossary

Capstan bars: levers for turning a cylinder used to wind in the rope on a ship

Cowed: intimidated or scared

Lanyard: a rope or cord

Dr Watson’s description of Sherlock Holmes from *A Study in Scarlet*

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1887)

Holmes was certainly not a difficult man to live with. He was quiet in his ways, and his habits were regular. It was rare for him to be up after ten at night, and he had invariably breakfasted and gone out before I rose in the morning. Sometimes he spent his day at the chemical laboratory, sometimes in the dissecting-rooms, and occasionally in long walks, which appeared to take him into the lowest portions of the City. Nothing could exceed his energy when the working fit was upon him; but now and again a reaction would seize him, and for days on end he would lie upon the sofa in the sitting-room, hardly uttering a word or moving a muscle from morning to night. On these occasions I have noticed such a dreamy, vacant expression in his eyes, that I might have suspected him of being addicted to the use of some narcotic, had not the temperance and cleanliness of his whole life forbidden such a notion.

As the weeks went by, my interest in him and my curiosity as to his aims in life, gradually deepened and increased. His very person and appearance

were such as to strike the attention of the most casual observer. In height he was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing, save during those intervals of torpor to which I have alluded; and his thin, hawk-like nose gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision. His chin, too, had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination. His hands were invariably blotted with ink and stained with chemicals, yet he was possessed of extraordinary delicacy of touch, as I frequently had occasion to observe when I watched him manipulating his fragile philosophical instruments.

His ignorance was as remarkable as his knowledge. Of contemporary literature, philosophy and politics he appeared to know next to nothing. Upon my quoting Thomas Carlyle, he inquired in the naivest way who he might be and what he had done. My surprise reached a climax, however, when I found incidentally that he was ignorant of the Copernican Theory and

of the composition of the Solar System. That any civilized human being in this nineteenth century should not be aware that the earth travelled round the sun appeared to be to me such an extraordinary fact that I could hardly realize it.

"You appear to be astonished," he said, smiling at my expression of surprise. "Now that I do know it I shall do my best to forget it."

"To forget it!"

"You see," he explained, "I consider that a man's brain originally is like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he comes across, so that the knowledge which might be useful to him gets crowded out, or at best is jumbled up with a lot of other things so that he has a difficulty in laying his hands upon it. Now the skilful workman is very careful indeed as to what he takes into his brain-attic. He will have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work, but of these he has a large assortment, and all in the most perfect order. It is a mistake to think that that little room has elastic walls and can distend to any extent. Depend upon it there comes a time when for every addition of knowledge you forget something that you knew before. It is of the highest importance, therefore, not to have useless facts elbowing out the useful ones."

"But the Solar System!" I protested.

"What the deuce is it to me?" he interrupted impatiently; "you say that we go round the sun. If we went round the moon it would not make a pennyworth of difference to me or to my work."

I was on the point of asking him what that work might be, but something in his manner showed me that the question would be an unwelcome one. I pondered over our short conversation, however, and endeavoured to draw my deductions from it. He said that he would acquire no knowledge which did not bear upon his object. Therefore all the knowledge which he possessed was such as would be useful to him. I enumerated in my own mind all the various points upon which he had shown me that he was exceptionally well-informed. I even took a pencil and jotted them down. I could not help smiling at the document when I had completed it. It ran in this way—

SHERLOCK HOLMES — his limits.

1. Knowledge of Literature. — Nil.
2. Philosophy. — Nil.
3. Astronomy. — Nil.
4. Politics. — Feeble.
5. Botany. — Variable. Well up in belladonna, opium, and poisons generally.
6. Knows nothing of practical gardening.
7. Geology. — Practical, but limited. Tells at a glance different soils from each other. After walks has shown me splashes upon his trousers, and told me by their colour and consistence in what part of London he had received them.
8. Chemistry. — Profound.
9. Anatomy. — Accurate, but unsystematic.
10. Sensational Literature. — Immense. He appears to know every detail of every horror perpetrated in the century.
11. Plays the violin well.
12. Is an expert singlestick player, boxer, and swordsman.
13. Has a good practical knowledge of British law.

Later, Sherlock Holmes explains to Watson the nature of his work:

I have a turn both for observation and for deduction. I have a trade of my own. I suppose I am the only one in the world. I'm a consulting detective, if you can understand what that is. Here in London we have lots of Government detectives and lots of private ones. When these fellows are at fault they come to me, and I manage to put them on the right scent. They lay all the evidence before me, and I am generally able, by the help of my knowledge of the history of crime, to set them straight. There is a strong family resemblance about misdeeds, and if you have all the details of a thousand at your finger ends, it is odd if you can't unravel the thousand and first. Lestrade is a well-known detective. He got himself into a fog recently over a forgery case, and that was what brought him here."

"And these other people?"

"They are mostly sent on by private inquiry agencies. They are all people who are in trouble about something, and want a little enlightening. I listen to their story, they listen to my comments, and then I pocket my fee."

“But do you mean to say,” I said, “that without leaving your room you can unravel some knot which other men can make nothing of, although they have seen every detail for themselves?”

“Quite so. I have a kind of intuition that way. Now and again a case turns up which is a little more complex. Then I have to bustle about and see things with my own eyes. You see I have a lot of special knowledge which I apply to the problem, and which facilitates matters wonderfully. Those rules of deduction laid down in that article which aroused your scorn, are invaluable to me in practical work. Observation with me is second nature. You appeared to be surprised when I told you, on our first meeting, that you had come from Afghanistan.”

“You were told, no doubt.”

“Nothing of the sort. I knew you came from Afghanistan. From long habit the train of thoughts ran so swiftly through my mind, that I arrived at the conclusion without being conscious of intermediate steps. There were such steps, however. The train of reasoning ran, ‘Here is a gentleman of a medical type, but with the air of a military man. Clearly an army doctor, then. He has just come from the tropics, for his face is dark, and that is not the natural tint of his skin, for his wrists are fair. He has undergone hardship and sickness, as his haggard face says clearly. His left arm has been injured. He holds it in a stiff and unnatural manner. Where in the tropics could an English army doctor have seen much hardship and got his arm wounded? Clearly in Afghanistan.’ The whole train of thought did not occupy a second. I then remarked that you came from Afghanistan, and you were astonished.”

Glossary

Torpor: a state of physical or mental inactivity

Thomas Carlyle: a famous Scottish philosopher, writer and historian

Copernican: theory the astronomical model of the solar system developed by Copernicus in the 16th century which described how the planets of the solar system orbit the sun

Adventure and mystery 3: man's best friend? Animals in 19th-century literature

Aims:

- to understand the role of animals in adventure stories and why they are included
- to understand how authors present animals and use them to reflect human behaviour and attitudes.

Suggestions for lesson starters or hooks

- Do a pet survey in the class. Why do we keep animals? What role do they have in our lives today? What about working animals?
- Use some publicity and promotional materials from animal charities
- Look at anthropomorphism through examples from young children's literature. Why are these books appealing?

Texts

The Call of the Wild by Jack London (1903)

Black Beauty by Anna Sewell (1877)

Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens (1837)

Researching the 19th-century context

- The Gold Rush in America.
- Travel and transport in 19th century England.

Understanding and responding

Extract 1

from *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London

Identify the words and phrases that refer to gambling and explain the challenge made. Why do the odds increase after the dispute about the meaning of 'break out'?

How confident does John Thornton feel about Buck's ability to perform the feat?

Explain how the author, Jack London, has built up

tension in this passage. You might consider how he shows that John Thornton regrets his boast; how the other characters react; how Buck's pulling of the sled is described.

What do you understand about the relationship between Buck and John Thornton

Extract 2

from *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell

Explain the urgency of the mission on which Black Beauty is engaged. What circumstances at the doctor's house put an additional demand on Black Beauty? What is the effect of the exertion on Black Beauty? What mistakes does young Joe make in caring for the horse? How does John react?

Closer reading

Identify the words and phrases that the two authors use to describe Buck and Black Beauty. How do they suggest that each animal is special?

Look in detail at how the humans and animals in these passages communicate. What does this communication show about their relationships?

In addition to the animals' physical features, the authors give them human qualities. Identify examples of anthropomorphism in these passages. Which human qualities do the two animals possess?

Discuss the presentation of the two animals and the events in the stories by using the following abstract nouns: loyalty, love, respect, kindness, pride, heroism, nobility, achievement. How does the use of third and first person narrator affect the reader's response?

How are the humans in the stories presented? To what extent do the authors show faults and weaknesses in the human characters that the animals do not possess?

Extract 3**from *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens**

How can you tell that Bill Sikes is a bad character?

How does Dickens present Bullseye? Identify the details that show the dog to be a victim of its owner and to share some of his qualities.

Does this dog share any of the qualities that you saw in Buck and Black Beauty?

Compare your response to the three animals. Which one do you pity most? Which one do you admire?

To what extent have the authors used the animals for different effects?

Explore modern literature and films that include animals and consider how they are used.

Developing the idea of human characteristics in animals, discuss the associations we make with

different species: e.g. snakes, lambs, owls, and how writers use them metaphorically.

We have become used to the cute anthropomorphism of animals, but not everybody sees them in such a way. Read the section from *To Kill a Mockingbird* where Scout and her classmates are nonplussed by the teacher's stories about animals, and explain their responses.

During the 19th century animals were used to work with and for humans, but they were not always treated well. The RSPCA was founded in 1824, though it is interesting to note that the NSPCC was not founded until 1884.

What do these stories tell the reader about how humans should care for animals?

How successful do you think they would be in shaping people's attitudes towards animals?

The Call of the Wild

by Jack London (1903)*

Introduction

Set in Alaska during the Yukon gold rush of the 1890s, this novel tells the story of a sled dog, Buck, and the people with whom he works in this harsh environment. This extract from chapter six shows Buck's owner John Thornton boasting about his dog's prowess. Buck feels great love and loyalty to John Thornton who saved his life when a previous owner was treating him cruelly. The 'five hundred pounds' in the story describes the weight of the load on the sled that the dogs must pull.

Extract

That winter, at Dawson, Buck performed another exploit, not so heroic, perhaps, but one that put his name many notches higher on the totem-

pole of Alaskan fame. It was brought about by a conversation in the Eldorado Saloon, in which men waxed boastful of their favorite dogs. Buck, because of his record, was the target for these men, and Thornton was driven stoutly to defend him. At the end of half an hour one man stated that his dog could start a sled with five hundred pounds and walk off with it; a second bragged six hundred for his dog; and a third, seven hundred.

"Pooh! pooh!" said John Thornton; "Buck can start a thousand pounds."

"And break it out? and walk off with it for a hundred yards?" demanded Matthewson, a Bonanza King, he of the seven hundred vaunt.

"And break it out, and walk off with it for a hundred yards," John Thornton said coolly.

*We are aware that this isn't a 19th-century text, however, we feel it provides a good example of this style of literature.

“Well,” Matthewson said, slowly and deliberately, so that all could hear, “I’ve got a thousand dollars that says he can’t. And there it is.” So saying, he slammed a sack of gold dust of the size of a bologna sausage down upon the bar. Nobody spoke. Thornton’s bluff, if bluff it was, had been called. He could feel a flush of warm blood creeping up his face. His tongue had tricked him. He did not know whether Buck could start a thousand pounds. Half a ton! The enormosity of it appalled him. He had great faith in Buck’s strength and had often thought him capable of starting such a load; but never, as now, had he faced the possibility of it, the eyes of a dozen men fixed upon him, silent and waiting. Further, he had no thousand dollars; nor had Hans or Pete.

“I’ve got a sled standing outside now, with twenty fiftypound sacks of flour on it,” Matthewson went on with brutal directness; “so don’t let that hinder you.”

Thornton did not reply. He did not know what to say. He glanced from face to face in the absent way of a man who has lost the power of thought and is seeking somewhere to find the thing that will start it going again. The face of Jim O’Brien, a Mastodon King and old-time comrade, caught his eyes. It was as a cue to him, seeming to rouse him to do what he would never have dreamed of doing.

“Can you lend me a thousand?” he asked, almost in a whisper.

“Sure,” answered O’Brien, thumping down a plethoric sack by the side of Matthewson’s. “Though it’s little faith I’m having, John, that the beast can do the trick.”

The Eldorado emptied its occupants into the street to see the test. The tables were deserted, and the dealers and gamekeepers came forth to see the outcome of the wager and to lay odds. Several hundred men, furred and mittened, banked around the sled within easy distance. Matthewson’s sled, loaded with a thousand pounds of flour, had been standing for a couple of hours, and in the intense cold (it was sixty below zero) the runners had frozen fast to the hard-packed snow. Men offered odds of two to one that Buck could not budge the sled. A quibble arose concerning the phrase “break out.” O’Brien contended it was Thornton’s privilege to knock

the runners loose, leaving Buck to “break it out” from a dead standstill. Matthewson insisted that the phrase included breaking the runners from the frozen grip of the snow. A majority of the men who had witnessed the making of the bet decided in his favor, whereat the odds went up to three to one against Buck.

There were no takers. Not a man believed him capable of the feat. Thornton had been hurried into the wager, heavy with doubt; and now that he looked at the sled itself, the concrete fact, with the regular team of ten dogs curled up in the snow before it, the more impossible the task appeared. Matthewson waxed jubilant.

“Three to one!” he proclaimed. “I’ll lay you another thousand at that figure, Thornton. What d’ye say?”

Thornton’s doubt was strong in his face, but his fighting spirit was aroused—the fighting spirit that soars above odds, fails to recognize the impossible, and is deaf to all save the clamor for battle. He called Hans and Pete to him. Their sacks were slim, and with his own the three partners could rake together only two hundred dollars. In the ebb of their fortunes, this sum was their total capital; yet they laid it unhesitatingly against Matthewson’s six hundred.

The team of ten dogs was unhitched, and Buck, with his own harness, was put into the sled. He had caught the contagion of the excitement, and he felt that in some way he must do a great thing for John Thornton. Murmurs of admiration at his splendid appearance went up. He was in perfect condition, without an ounce of superfluous flesh, and the one hundred and fifty pounds that he weighed were so many pounds of grit and virility. His furry coat shone with the sheen of silk. Down the neck and across the shoulders, his mane, in repose as it was, half bristled and seemed to lift with every movement, as though excess of vigor made each particular hair alive and active. The great breast and heavy fore legs were no more than in proportion with the rest of the body, where the muscles showed in tight rolls underneath the skin. Men felt these muscles and proclaimed them hard as iron, and the odds went down to two to one.

“Gad, sir! Gad, sir!” stuttered a member of the latest dynasty, a king of the Skookum Benches. “I offer you eight hundred for him, sir, before the test, sir; eight hundred just as he stands.”

Thornton shook his head and stepped to Buck's side.

"You must stand off from him," Matthewson protested. "Free play and plenty of room."

The crowd fell silent; only could be heard the voices of the gamblers vainly offering two to one. Everybody acknowledged Buck a magnificent animal, but twenty fifty-pound sacks of flour bulked too large in their eyes for them to loosen their pouch-strings.

Thornton knelt down by Buck's side. He took his head in his two hands and rested cheek on cheek. He did not playfully shake him, as was his wont, or murmur soft love curses; but he whispered in his ear. "As you love me, Buck. As you love me," was what he whispered. Buck whined with suppressed eagerness.

The crowd was watching curiously. The affair was growing mysterious. It seemed like a conjuration. As Thornton got to his feet, Buck seized his mittened hand between his jaws, pressing in with his teeth and releasing slowly, half-reluctantly. It was the answer, in terms, not of speech, but of love. Thornton stepped well back.

"Now, Buck," he said.

Buck tightened the traces, then slacked them for a matter of several inches. It was the way he had learned.

"Gee!" Thornton's voice rang out, sharp in the tense silence.

Buck swung to the right, ending the movement in a plunge that took up the slack and with a sudden jerk arrested his one hundred and fifty pounds. The load quivered, and from under the runners arose a crisp crackling.

"Haw!" Thornton commanded.

Buck duplicated the manoeuvre, this time to the left. The crackling turned into a snapping, the sled pivoting and the runners slipping and grating several inches to the side. The sled was broken out. Men were holding their breaths, intensely unconscious of the fact.

"Now, MUSH!"

Thornton's command cracked out like a pistol-shot. Buck threw himself forward, tightening the traces with a jarring lunge. His whole body was gathered compactly together in the tremendous effort, the muscles writhing and knotting like live things under the silky fur. His great chest was low to the ground, his head forward and down, while his feet were flying like mad, the claws scarring the hard-packed snow in parallel grooves. The sled swayed and trembled, half-started forward. One of his feet slipped, and one man groaned aloud. Then the sled lurched ahead in what appeared a rapid succession of jerks, though it never really came to a dead stop again...half an inch...an inch... two inches... The jerks perceptibly diminished; as the sled gained momentum, he caught them up, till it was moving steadily along.

Men gasped and began to breathe again, unaware that for a moment they had ceased to breathe. Thornton was running behind, encouraging Buck with short, cheery words. The distance had been measured off, and as he neared the pile of firewood which marked the end of the hundred yards, a cheer began to grow and grow, which burst into a roar as he passed the firewood and halted at command. Every man was tearing himself loose, even Matthewson. Hats and mittens were flying in the air. Men were shaking hands, it did not matter with whom, and bubbling over in a general incoherent babel.

But Thornton fell on his knees beside Buck. Head was against head, and he was shaking him back and forth. Those who hurried up heard him cursing Buck, and he cursed him long and fervently, and softly and lovingly.

"Gad, sir! Gad, sir!" spluttered the Skookum Bench king. "I'll give you a thousand for him, sir, a thousand, sir—twelve hundred, sir."

Thornton rose to his feet. His eyes were wet. The tears were streaming frankly down his cheeks. "Sir," he said to the Skookum Bench king, "no, sir. You can go to hell, sir. It's the best I can do for you, sir."

Buck seized Thornton's hand in his teeth. Thornton shook him back and forth. As though animated by a common impulse, the onlookers drew back to a respectful distance; nor were they again indiscreet enough to interrupt.

Black Beauty

by Anna Sewell (1877)

Introduction

This famous novel is written in first person as the autobiographical memoir of a horse in 19th century England. It describes Black Beauty's experiences and treatment at the hands of the people who look after him. This extract is taken from chapter 18. John Manley is the groom who is in charge of the owner's stables. Joe is a young lad who only recently started working with the horses.

Extract

One night, a few days after James had left, I had eaten my hay and was lying down in my straw fast asleep, when I was suddenly roused by the stable bell ringing very loud. I heard the door of John's house open, and his feet running up to the hall. He was back again in no time; he unlocked the stable door, and came in, calling out, "Wake up, Beauty! You must go well now, if ever you did;" and almost before I could think he had got the saddle on my back and the bridle on my head. He just ran round for his coat, and then took me at a quick trot up to the hall door. The squire stood there, with a lamp in his hand.

"Now, John," he said, "ride for your life—that is, for your mistress' life; there is not a moment to lose. Give this note to Dr. White; give your horse a rest at the inn, and be back as soon as you can."

John said, "Yes, sir," and was on my back in a minute. The gardener who lived at the lodge had heard the bell ring, and was ready with the gate open, and away we went through the park, and through the village, and down the hill till we came to the toll-gate. John called very loud and thumped upon the door; the man was soon out and flung open the gate.

"Now," said John, "do you keep the gate open for the doctor; here's the money," and off he went again.

There was before us a long piece of level road by the river side; John said to me, "Now, Beauty, do your best," and so I did; I wanted no whip

nor spur, and for two miles I galloped as fast as I could lay my feet to the ground; I don't believe that my old grandfather, who won the race at Newmarket, could have gone faster. When we came to the bridge John pulled me up a little and patted my neck. "Well done, Beauty! good old fellow," he said. He would have let me go slower, but my spirit was up, and I was off again as fast as before. The air was frosty, the moon was bright; it was very pleasant. We came through a village, then through a dark wood, then uphill, then downhill, till after eight miles' run we came to the town, through the streets and into the market-place. It was all quite still except the clatter of my feet on the stones—everybody was asleep. The church clock struck three as we drew up at Dr. White's door. John rang the bell twice, and then knocked at the door like thunder. A window was thrown up, and Dr. White, in his nightcap, put his head out and said, "What do you want?"

"Mrs. Gordon is very ill, sir; master wants you to go at once; he thinks she will die if you cannot get there. Here is a note."

"Wait," he said, "I will come."

He shut the window, and was soon at the door.

"The worst of it is," he said, "that my horse has been out all day and is quite done up; my son has just been sent for, and he has taken the other. What is to be done? Can I have your horse?"

"He has come at a gallop nearly all the way, sir, and I was to give him a rest here; but I think my master would not be against it, if you think fit, sir."

"All right," he said; "I will soon be ready."

John stood by me and stroked my neck; I was very hot. The doctor came out with his riding-whip.

"You need not take that, sir," said John; "Black Beauty will go till he drops. Take care of him, sir, if you can; I should not like any harm to come to him."

"No, no, John," said the doctor, "I hope not," and

in a minute we had left John far behind.

I will not tell about our way back. The doctor was a heavier man than John, and not so good a rider; however, I did my very best. The man at the toll-gate had it open. When we came to the hill the doctor drew me up. "Now, my good fellow," he said, "take some breath." I was glad he did, for I was nearly spent, but that breathing helped me on, and soon we were in the park. Joe was at the lodge gate; my master was at the hall door, for he had heard us coming. He spoke not a word; the doctor went into the house with him, and Joe led me to the stable. I was glad to get home; my legs shook under me, and I could only stand and pant. I had not a dry hair on my body, the water ran down my legs, and I steamed all over, Joe used to say, like a pot on the fire. Poor Joe! he was young and small, and as yet he knew very little, and his father, who would have helped him, had been sent to the next village; but I am sure he did the very best he knew. He rubbed my legs and my chest, but he did not put my warm cloth on me; he thought I was so hot I should not like it. Then he gave me a pailful of water to drink; it was cold and very good, and I drank it all; then he gave me some hay and some corn, and thinking he had done right, he went away. Soon I began to shake and tremble, and turned deadly cold; my legs ached, my loins ached, and my chest ached, and I felt sore all over. Oh! how I wished for my warm, thick cloth, as I stood and trembled. I wished for John, but he had eight miles to walk, so I lay

down in my straw and tried to go to sleep. After a long while I heard John at the door; I gave a low moan, for I was in great pain. He was at my side in a moment, stooping down by me. I could not tell him how I felt, but he seemed to know it all; he covered me up with two or three warm cloths, and then ran to the house for some hot water; he made me some warm gruel, which I drank, and then I think I went to sleep.

John seemed to be very much put out. I heard him say to himself over and over again, "Stupid boy! stupid boy! no cloth put on, and I dare say the water was cold, too; boys are no good;" but Joe was a good boy, after all.

I was now very ill; a strong inflammation had attacked my lungs, and I could not draw my breath without pain. John nursed me night and day; he would get up two or three times in the night to come to me. My master, too, often came to see me. "My poor Beauty," he said one day, "my good horse, you saved your mistress' life, Beauty; yes, you saved her life." I was very glad to hear that, for it seems the doctor had said if we had been a little longer it would have been too late. John told my master he never saw a horse go so fast in his life. It seemed as if the horse knew what was the matter. Of course I did, though John thought not; at least I knew as much as this—that John and I must go at the top of our speed, and that it was for the sake of the mistress.

Glossary

Spent: exhausted after using up all his energy

Oliver Twist

by Charles Dickens (1837)

The following extract introduces **Bill Sikes**, a famous villain from this novel.



In the obscure parlour of a low public-house, in the filthiest part of Little Saffron Hill; a dark and gloomy den, where a flaring gas-light burnt all day in the winter-time; and where no ray of sun ever shone in the summer: there sat, brooding over a little pewter measure and a small glass, strongly impregnated with the smell of liquor, a man in a velveteen coat, drab shorts, half-boots and stockings, whom even by that dim light no experienced agent of the police would have hesitated to recognise as Mr. William Sikes. At his feet, sat a white-coated, red-eyed dog; who occupied himself, alternately, in winking at his master with both eyes at the same time; and in licking a large, fresh cut on one side of his mouth, which appeared to be the result of some recent conflict.

‘Keep quiet, you warmint! Keep quiet!’ said Mr. Sikes, suddenly breaking silence. Whether his meditations were so intense as to be disturbed by the dog’s winking, or whether his feelings were so wrought upon by his reflections that they required all the relief derivable from kicking an unoffending animal to allay them, is matter for argument and consideration. Whatever was the cause, the effect was a kick and a curse, bestowed upon the dog simultaneously.

Dogs are not generally apt to revenge injuries inflicted upon them by their masters; but Mr. Sikes’s dog, having faults of temper in common with his owner, and labouring, perhaps, at this moment, under a powerful sense of injury, made no more ado but at once fixed his teeth in one of the half-boots. Having given in a hearty shake, he retired, growling, under a form; just escaping the pewter measure which Mr. Sikes levelled at his head.

‘You would, would you?’ said Sikes, seizing the poker in one hand, and deliberately opening with the other a large clasp-knife, which he drew from his pocket. ‘Come here, you born devil! Come here! D’ye hear?’

The dog no doubt heard; because Mr. Sikes spoke in the very harshest key of a very harsh voice; but, appearing to entertain some unaccountable

objection to having his throat cut, he remained where he was, and growled more fiercely than before: at the same time grasping the end of the poker between his teeth, and biting at it like a wild beast.

This resistance only infuriated Mr. Sikes the more; who, dropping on his knees, began to assail the animal most furiously. The dog jumped from right to left, and from left to right; snapping, growling, and barking; the man thrust and swore, and struck and blasphemed; and the struggle was reaching a most critical point for one or other; when, the door suddenly opening, the dog darted out: leaving Bill Sikes with the poker and the clasp-knife in his hands.

Later in the novel, Sikes decides that he must get rid of the dog because it is well known and would help to identify him as a wanted murderer ...

If any description of him were out, it would not be forgotten that the dog was missing, and had probably gone with him. This might lead to his apprehension as he passed along the streets. He resolved to drown him, and walked on, looking about for a pond: picking up a heavy stone and

tying it to his handkerchief as he went. The animal looked up into his master's face while these preparations were making; whether his instinct apprehended something of their purpose, or the robber's sidelong look at him was sterner than ordinary, he skulked a little farther in the rear than usual, and cowered as he came more slowly along. When his master halted at the brink of a pool, and looked round to call him, he stopped outright.

'Do you hear me call? Come here!' cried Sikes. The animal came up from the very force of habit; but as Sikes stooped to attach the handkerchief to his throat, he uttered a low growl and started back.

'Come back!' said the robber.

The dog wagged his tail, but moved not. Sikes made a running noose and called him again. The dog advanced, retreated, paused an instant, and scoured away at his hardest speed. The man whistled again and again, and sat down and waited in the expectation that he would return. But no dog appeared, and at length he resumed his journey.

Glossary

Form: a narrow wooden bench

Pewter measure: a pint mug made of the alloy pewter

Poker: a metal bar used for tending a fire

Apprehension: being caught

Adventure and mystery 4: real adventure during the 19th century – exploration and colonialism

Aims:

- to understand the historical context of exploration and colonialism
- to understand attitudes expressed in the literature of the period and be able to make comparisons with the present day.

Suggestions for lesson starters and hooks

- What is an Explorer? Do you know anyone who is considered an explorer today? Life on a desert island: Survival – I’m a Celebrity – Desert Island Discs – Bear Grylls – *Swiss Family Robinson* – Island of the Blue Dolphins – *Cast Away* the movie.
- What is patriotism? Hillary and the climbing of Everest – announcement on the day of the Coronation.
- Equipment - provide pictures of past and modern explorers. What sort of equipment and clothing would be needed for exploration in a cold or hostile environment?
- Look at a map of the Antarctic.

Researching the 19th-century context

- Use the following resources on Scott’s life and achievements and Antarctica:
<http://news.nationalgeographic.co.uk/news/2103/10/131025-antarctica-south-pole-scott-expedition-science-polar/>
<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/antarctica/>
www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00q86nb
- Colonialism – what is it? How far did the Empire stretch? What is the Commonwealth and which countries belong to it?
- The work and role of missionaries
- Life of David Livingstone

Texts

Robert Falcon Scott’s diary (1868-1912)

David Livingstone’s journal – Finding the Victoria Falls (1860)

Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe (1719)

Extract 1

From Robert Falcon Scott’s diary (1868-1912)

1. Why were the explorers there? How would they have been viewed at home?
2. Look at the photo of the men after they have arrived at the Pole to discover the Norwegians have arrived there before them – Describe their expressions. Now look at how the words of the passage express their thoughts and their feelings of fear and disappointment. Would they be seen as failures at home?
3. What is your response to the letter from the successful Norwegian explorers, and how do you think Scott’s team would have responded to it?
4. Which details from this passage show Scott’s sense of failure? Identify details that suggest a sense of foreboding about their homeward journey.

Writing suggestion

Write the diary entry of one of the other men in Scott’s team. Explain what it felt like when you saw the Norwegian flag in the distance and realised that you had failed.

Extract 2

The final part of the diary

1. What do you think Scott was feeling whilst he was writing his journal? Identify words which

demonstrate his state of mind.

2. Consider Scott's use of short sentences and explain what they contribute to the reader's understanding of the situation described.
3. Explain Scott's feelings towards the men in his team, and analyse the language he uses to express them.
4. What did Titus Oates do? Why did he do this? Explain whether, in your opinion, he was a hero.
5. Consider what it means to be a hero and discuss real people or fictional characters whom you consider to be heroic.

Extract 3

The letter from Scott entitled *Message to the Public*

Why did the mission fail? What was Scott's purpose in writing this letter? How do you think the British public would respond to it? What about the families of the members of the expedition.

Extract 4

Dr Livingstone I presume?

How can you tell from Livingstone's description that the place is unfamiliar and wonderful to him?

Which details create an impression of noise and speed?

Explain the effects of the author's use of simile and metaphor to describe the falls.

Extract 5

***Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe**

What does Crusoe do to ensure his survival? List the things he rescues from the ship.

Why does he stop going back to the ship?

What are his priorities? Do you agree that they are the right ones?

Writing Suggestion

A journal entry about survival in a strange or hostile environment.

Extract 6

***Robinson Crusoe* meets a native of the island**

What do you think of the way that Robinson Crusoe treats the man and gives him the name Friday?

What does he mean when he says 'my man, Friday'?

How can you tell that Defoe was writing in the 18th century for white British readers who would have had little personal experience of meeting people from other ethnic backgrounds?

Which details show that Crusoe seems to consider himself superior to the man? How do you explain the man's actions in the final paragraph?

How would a modern audience respond to the attitudes expressed in this passage?

Robert Falcon Scott

(1868-1912)

Introduction

Scott was a British Naval Officer who commanded two expeditions to Antarctica. His first expedition was called the Discovery Expedition (1901-1904) named after his ship which was specifically equipped to work in the Antarctic and to complete scientific research. He explored the continent and discovered a

new 'farthest South' of 82 degrees 17. In 1910 he set out for the Antarctic again in his ship, Terra Nova, this time determined to reach the South Pole. In November 1911 with four companions, Captain Lawrence Edward (Titus) Oates, Lieutenant Henry Robertson (Birdie) Bowers, Dr Edward (Uncle Bill) Wilson and Petty Officer Edgar (Taff) Evans he set off across the high polar plateau, pulling the heavy

sleds by hand. They reached the Pole only to discover that Roald Amundsen, a Norwegian had arrived there a month before. The following diary is from Scott's Journal describing the long journey back to the waiting ship.

Extract

Tuesday 16th January, Wednesday 17th January and Thursday 18th January. Arrival at the South Pole.

It is wonderful to think that two long marches would land us at the Pole. We left our depot to-day with nine days' provisions, so that it ought to be a certain thing now, and the only appalling possibility the sight of the Norwegian flag forestalling ours. Little Bowers continues his indefatigable efforts to get good sights, and it is wonderful how he works them up in his sleeping-bag in our congested tent. (Minimum for night -27.5°.) Only 27 miles from the Pole. We ought to do it now.

Tuesday, January 16.—Camp 68. Height 9760. T. -23.5°. The worst has happened, or nearly the worst. We marched well in the morning and covered 7 1/2 miles. Noon sight showed us in Lat. 89° 42' S., and we started off in high spirits in the afternoon, feeling that to-morrow would see us at our destination. About the second hour of the March Bowers' sharp eyes detected what he thought was a cairn; he was uneasy about it, but argued that it must be a sastrugus. Half an hour later he detected a black speck ahead. Soon we knew that this could not be a natural snow feature. We marched on, found that it was a black flag tied to a sledge bearer; near by the remains of a camp; sledge tracks and ski tracks going and coming and the clear trace of dogs' paws—many dogs. This told us the whole story. The Norwegians have forestalled us and are first at the Pole. It is a terrible disappointment, and I am very sorry for my loyal companions. Many thoughts come and much discussion have we had. To-morrow we must march on to the Pole and then hasten home with all the speed we can compass. All the day dreams must go; it will be a wearisome return. We are descending in altitude—certainly also the Norwegians found an easy way up.

Wednesday, January 17.—Camp 69. T. -22° at start. Night -21°. The Pole. Yes, but under very different circumstances from those expected. We have had a horrible day—add to

our disappointment a head wind 4 to 5, with a temperature -22°, and companions labouring on with cold feet and hands.

We started at 7.30, none of us having slept much after the shock of our discovery. We followed the Norwegian sledge tracks for some way; as far as we make out there are only two men. In about three miles we passed two small cairns. Then the weather overcast, and the tracks being increasingly drifted up and obviously going too far to the west, we decided to make straight for the Pole according to our calculations. At 12.30 Evans had such cold hands we camped for lunch—an excellent 'week-end one.' We had marched 7.4 miles. Lat. sight gave 89° 53' 37". We started out and did 6 1/2 miles due south. To-night little Bowers is laying himself out to get sights in terrible difficult circumstances; the wind is blowing hard, T. -21°, and there is that curious damp, cold feeling in the air which chills one to the bone in no time. We have been descending again, I think, but there looks to be a rise ahead; otherwise there is very little that is different from the awful monotony of past days. Great God! this is an awful place and terrible enough for us to have laboured to it without the reward of priority. Well, it is something to have got here, and the wind may be our friend to-morrow. We have had a fat Polar hoosh in spite of our chagrin, and feel comfortable inside—added a small stick of chocolate and the queer taste of a cigarette brought by Wilson. Now for the run home and a desperate struggle. I wonder if we can do it.

Thursday morning, January 18.—Decided after summing up all observations that we were 3.5 miles away from the Pole—one mile beyond it and 3 to the right. More or less in this direction Bowers saw a cairn or tent.

We have just arrived at this tent, 2 miles from our camp, therefore about 1 1/2 miles from the Pole. In the tent we find a record of five Norwegians having been here, as follows:

*Roald Amundsen
Olav Olavson Bjaaland
Hilmer Hanssen
Sverre H. Hassel
Oscar Wisting.*

16 Dec. 1911.

The tent is fine—a small compact affair supported

by a single bamboo. A note from Amundsen, which I keep, asks me to forward a letter to King Haakon!

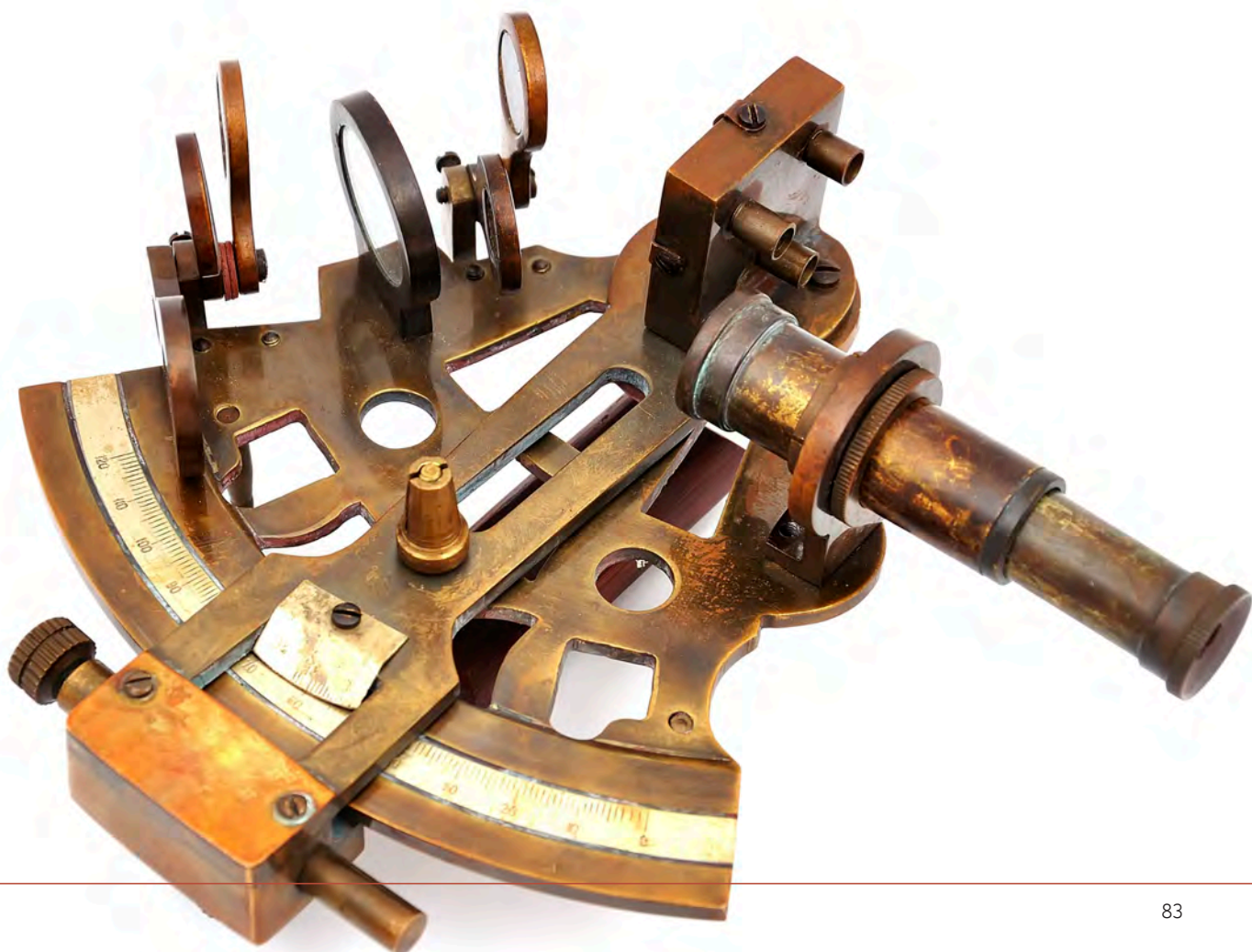
The following articles have been left in the tent: 3 half bags of reindeer containing a miscellaneous assortment of mits and sleeping socks, very various in description, a sextant, a Norwegian artificial horizon and a hypsometer without boiling-point thermometers, a sextant and hypsometer of English make.

Left a note to say I had visited the tent with companions. Bowers photographing and Wilson sketching. Since lunch we have marched 6.2 miles S.S.E. by compass (i.e. northwards). Sights at lunch gave us 1/2 to 3/4 of a mile from the Pole, so we call it the PoleCamp. (Temp. Lunch -21°.) We built a cairn, put up our poor slighted Union Jack, and photographed ourselves—mighty cold work all of it—less than 1/2 a mile south we saw stuck up an old underrunner of a sledge. This we commandeered as a yard for a floorcloth sail. I imagine it was intended to mark the exact spot of the Pole as near as the Norwegians could fix it. (Height 9500.) A note attached talked of the tent

as being 2 miles from the Pole. Wilson keeps the note. There is no doubt that our predecessors have made thoroughly sure of their mark and fully carried out their programme. I think the Pole is about 9500 feet in height; this is remarkable, considering that in Lat. 88° we were about 10,500. We carried the Union Jack about 3/4 of a mile north with us and left it on a piece of stick as near as we could fix it. I fancy the Norwegians arrived at the Pole on the 15th Dec. and left on the 17th, ahead of a date quoted by me in London as ideal, viz. Dec. 22. It looks as though the Norwegian party expected colder weather on the summit than they got; it could scarcely be otherwise from Shackleton's account. Well, we have turned our back now on the goal of our ambition and must face our 800 miles of solid dragging—and good-bye to most of the daydreams!

Extract from the end of the journal

Sunday, March 11.—Titus Oates is very near the end, one feels. What we or he will do, God only knows. We discussed the matter after breakfast; he is a brave fine fellow and understands the situation, but he practically asked for advice. Nothing could be said but to urge him to march as long as he



could. One satisfactory result to the discussion; I practically ordered Wilson to hand over the means of ending our troubles to us, so that anyone of us may know how to do so. Wilson had no choice between doing so and our ransacking the medicine case. We have 30 opium tablets apiece and he is left with a tube of morphine. So far the tragical side of our story. (R. 53.)

The sky completely overcast when we started this morning. We could see nothing, lost the tracks, and doubtless have been swaying a good deal since—3.1 miles for the forenoon—terribly heavy dragging—expected it. Know that 6 miles is about the limit of our endurance now, if we get no help from wind or surfaces. We have 7 days' food and should be about 55 miles from One Ton Camp tonight, $6 \times 7 = 42$, leaving us 13 miles short of our distance, even if things get no worse. Meanwhile the season rapidly advances.

Monday, March 12.—We did 6.9 miles yesterday, under our necessary average. Things are left much the same, Oates not pulling much, and now with hands as well as feet pretty well useless. We did 4 miles this morning in 4 hours 20 min.—we may hope for 3 this afternoon, $7 \times 6 = 42$. We shall be 47 miles from the depot. I doubt if we can possibly do it. The surface remains awful, the cold intense, and our physical condition running down. God help us! Not a breath of favourable wind for more than a week, and apparently liable to head winds at any moment.

Wednesday, March 14.—No doubt about the going downhill, but everything going wrong for us. Yesterday we woke to a strong northerly wind with temp. -37° . Couldn't face it, so remained in camp (R. 54) till 2, then did 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles. Wanted to march later, but party feeling the cold badly as the breeze (N.) never took off entirely, and as the sun sank the temp. fell. Long time getting supper in dark. (R. 55.)

This morning started with southerly breeze, set sail and passed another cairn at good speed; half-way, however, the wind shifted to W. by S. or W.S.W., blew through our wind clothes and into our mits. Poor Wilson horribly cold, could not get off ski for some time. Bowers and I practically made camp, and when we got into the tent at last we were all deadly cold. Then temp, now midday down -43° and the wind strong. We must go on, but now the making of every camp must

be more difficult and dangerous. It must be near the end, but a pretty merciful end. Poor Oates got it again in the foot. I shudder to think what it will be like to-morrow. It is only with greatest pains rest of us keep off frostbites. No idea there could be temperatures like this at this time of year with such winds. Truly awful outside the tent. Must fight it out to the last biscuit, but can't reduce rations.

Friday, March 16 or Saturday 17.—Lost track of dates, but think the last correct. Tragedy all along the line. At lunch, the day before yesterday, poor Titus Oates said he couldn't go on; he proposed we should leave him in his sleeping-bag. That we could not do, and induced him to come on, on the afternoon march. In spite of its awful nature for him he struggled on and we made a few miles. At night he was worse and we knew the end had come.

Should this be found I want these facts recorded. Oates' last thoughts were of his Mother, but immediately before he took pride in thinking that his regiment would be pleased with the bold way in which he met his death. We can testify to his bravery. He has borne intense suffering for weeks without complaint, and to the very last was able and willing to discuss outside subjects. He did not—would not—give up hope to the very end. He was a brave soul. This was the end. He slept through the night before last, hoping not to wake; but he woke in the morning—yesterday. It was blowing a blizzard. He said, 'I am just going outside and may be some time.' He went out into the blizzard and we have not seen him since.

I take this opportunity of saying that we have stuck to our sick companions to the last. In case of Edgar Evans, when absolutely out of food and he lay insensible, the safety of the remainder seemed to demand his abandonment, but Providence mercifully removed him at this critical moment. He died a natural death, and we did not leave him till two hours after his death. We knew that poor Oates was walking to his death, but though we tried to dissuade him, we knew it was the act of a brave man and an English gentleman. We all hope to meet the end with a similar spirit, and assuredly the end is not far.

I can only write at lunch and then only occasionally. The cold is intense, -40° at midday. My companions are unendingly cheerful, but

we are all on the verge of serious frostbites, and though we constantly talk of fetching through I don't think anyone of us believes it in his heart.

We are cold on the march now, and at all times except meals. Yesterday we had to lay up for a blizzard and to-day we move dreadfully slowly. We are at No. 14 pony camp, only two pony marches from One Ton Dépôt. We leave here our theodolite, a camera, and Oates' sleeping-bags. Diaries, &c., and geological specimens carried at Wilson's special request, will be found with us or on our sledge.

Sunday, March 18.—*To-day, lunch, we are 21 miles from the depot. Ill fortune presses, but better may come. We have had more wind and drift from ahead yesterday; had to stop marching; wind N.W., force 4, temp. -35°. No human being could face it, and we are worn out nearly.*

My right foot has gone, nearly all the toes—two days ago I was proud possessor of best feet. These are the steps of my downfall. Like an ass I mixed a small spoonful of curry powder with my melted pemmican—it gave me violent indigestion. I lay awake and in pain all night; woke and felt done on the march; foot went and I didn't know it. A very small measure of neglect and have a foot which is not pleasant to contemplate. Bowers takes first place in condition, but there is not much to choose after all. The others are still confident of getting through—or pretend to be—I don't know! We have the last half fill of oil in our primus and a very small quantity of spirit—this alone between us and thirst. The wind is fair for the moment, and that is perhaps a fact to help. The mileage would have seemed ridiculously small on our outward journey.

Monday, March 19.—*Lunch. We camped with difficulty last night, and were dreadfully cold till after our supper of cold pemmican and biscuit and a half a pannikin of cocoa cooked over the spirit. Then, contrary to expectation, we got warm and all slept well. To-day we started in the usual dragging manner. Sledge dreadfully heavy. We are 15 1/2 miles from the depot and ought to get there in three days. What progress! We have two days' food but barely a day's fuel. All our feet are getting bad—Wilson's best, my right foot worst, left all right. There is no chance to nurse one's feet till we can get hot food into us. Amputation is the least I can hope for now, but will the trouble*

spread? That is the serious question. The weather doesn't give us a chance—the wind from N. to N.W. and -40° temp, to-day.

Wednesday, March 21.—*Got within 11 miles of dépôt Monday night; [47] had to lay up all yesterday in severe blizzard.²⁷ To-day forlorn hope, Wilson and Bowers going to depot for fuel. Thursday, March 22 and 23.—Blizzard bad as ever—Wilson and Bowers unable to start—to-morrow last chance—no fuel and only one or two of food left—must be near the end. Have decided it shall be natural—we shall march for the depot with or without our effects and die in our tracks. Thursday, March 29.—Since the 21st we have had a continuous gale from W.S.W. and S.W. We had fuel to make two cups of tea apiece and bare food for two days on the 20th. Every day we have been ready to start for our depot 11 miles away, but outside the door of the tent it remains a scene of whirling drift. I do not think we can hope for any better things now. We shall stick it out to the end, but we are getting weaker, of course, and the end cannot be far.*

It seems a pity, but I do not think I can write more.

For God's sake look after our people.

R. Scott

The bodies of the three men, Wilson, Bowers and Scott were found eight months after they had died. A wallet containing three notebooks of diaries and a number of letters was found with them.

Letter from Scott – Message to the Public in which he explains what has happened and praises his men

Message to the Public

The causes of the disaster are not due to faulty organisation, but to misfortune in all risks which had to be undertaken.

- 1. The loss of pony transport in March 1911 obliged me to start later than I had intended, and obliged the limits of stuff transported to be narrowed.*
- 2. The weather throughout the outward journey, and especially the long gale in 83° S., stopped us.*
- 3. The soft snow in lower reaches of glacier again reduced pace.*

We fought these untoward events with a will and conquered, but it cut into our provision reserve.

Every detail of our food supplies, clothing and depôts made on the interior ice-sheet and over that long stretch of 700 miles to the Pole and back, worked out to perfection. The advance party would have returned to the glacier in fine form and with surplus of food, but for the astonishing failure of the man whom we had least expected to fail. Edgar Evans was thought the strongest man of the party.

The Beardmore Glacier is not difficult in fine weather, but on our return we did not get a single completely fine day; this with a sick companion enormously increased our anxieties.

As I have said elsewhere we got into frightfully rough ice and Edgar Evans received a concussion of the brain—he died a natural death, but left us a shaken party with the season unduly advanced.

But all the facts above enumerated were as nothing to the surprise which awaited us on the Barrier. I maintain that our arrangements for returning were quite adequate, and that no one in the world would have expected the temperatures and surfaces which we encountered at this time of the year. On the summit in lat. 85° 86° we had -20°, -30°. On the Barrier in lat. 82°, 10,000 feet lower, we had -30° in the day, -47° at night pretty regularly, with continuous head wind during our day marches. It is clear that these circumstances come on very suddenly, and our wreck is certainly due to this sudden advent of severe weather, which does not seem to have any satisfactory

cause. I do not think human beings ever came through such a month as we have come through, and we should have got through in spite of the weather but for the sickening of a second companion, Captain Oates, and a shortage of fuel in our depôts for which I cannot account, and finally, but for the storm which has fallen on us within 11 miles of the depôt at which we hoped to secure our final supplies. Surely misfortune could scarcely have exceeded this last blow. We arrived within 11 miles of our old One Ton Camp with fuel for one last meal and food for two days. For four days we have been unable to leave the tent—the gale howling about us. We are weak, writing is difficult, but for my own sake I do not regret this journey, which has shown that Englishmen can endure hardships, help one another, and meet death with as great a fortitude as ever in the past. We took risks, we knew we took them; things have come out against us, and therefore we have no cause for complaint, but bow to the will of Providence, determined still to do our best to the last. But if we have been willing to give our lives to this enterprise, which is for the honour of our country, I appeal to our countrymen to see that those who depend on us are properly cared for.

Had we lived, I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance, and courage of my companions which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman. These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale, but surely, surely, a great rich country like ours will see that those who are dependent on us are properly provided for.

R. SCOTT.

Glossary

Pemmican: paste of dried and pounded meat mixed with melted fat (North American Indians used it originally – taken up by explorers of the Antarctic)

Providence: intervention of God

Pannikan: small metal drinking cup

David Livingstone

(1813-1873)

Introduction

The American explorer, Henry Stanley encountered David Livingstone on the shores of Lake Tanganyika on 10th November 1871. Livingstone had not been heard from for 6 years and the New York Herald had sent Stanley to find him. The ‘tongue in cheek’ salutation, ‘Dr Livingstone I presume?’ was used as Livingstone was the only white man for hundreds of miles. He replied to Stanley with the words, ‘Yes’ and quickly followed it with ‘I feel thankful that I am here to welcome you.’ Livingstone had been ill for some time but refused to leave Africa until his mission was complete. He thought that he had discovered the source of the Nile but had not gone far enough north. However, for Western science, he discovered numerous geographical features, and large regions were able to be mapped which previously had been blank. He was the first European to see the Mosi-oa-Tunya (‘the smoke that thunders’) waterfall which he re-named Victoria Falls after his Queen. He was awarded the gold medal of the National Geographical Society of London for his explorations in Africa.

Livingstone refused to leave Africa and died there in 1873. After his death his body was returned to Britain and buried in Westminster Abbey. His heart was removed on his death and buried under a Mvula tree near the spot where he died in Ilala (present day Zambia).

Finding the Victoria Falls

We proceeded next morning, 9th August, 1860, to see the Victoria Falls. ‘Mosi-oa-tunya’ is the Makololo name and means ‘Smoke that Thunders.’ We embarked in canoes, belonging to Tuba Mokoro. For some miles the river was smooth and tranquil, and we glided pleasantly over water clear as crystal, and past lovely islands densely covered with a tropical vegetation. But our attention was quickly called to the dangerous rapids, down which Tuba might unintentionally shoot us. To confess the truth, these roaring

rapids could scarcely fail to cause some uneasiness in the minds of new-comers. Both hippopotami and elephants have been known to be swept over the Falls, and of course, smashed to pulp.

At times it seemed as if nothing could save us from the rocks which jutted out of the water; but just at the very nick of time, Tuba passed the word to the steersman, and we glided swiftly past the threatened danger. We landed at the head of Garden Island, which is situated near the middle of the river and on the lip of the Falls. On reaching that lip, and peering over the giddy height, the wondrous character of the magnificent cascade at once burst upon us.

It is rather a hopeless task to endeavour to convey an idea of it in words, since an accomplished painter, even by a number of views, could but impart a faint impression of the glorious scene.

Garden Island, when the river is low, commands the best view of the Great Fall chasm, as also of the promontory opposite, with its grove of large evergreen trees, and brilliant rainbows of three-quarters of a circle, two, three, and sometimes even four in number, resting on the face of the vast perpendicular rock, down which tiny streams are always running to be swept again back by the upward rushing vapour. The whole body of water rolls clear over, quite unbroken; but, after a descent of ten or more feet, the entire mass suddenly becomes like a huge sheet of driven snow. Pieces of water leap off it in the form of comets with tails streaming behind, till the whole snowy sheet becomes myriads of rushing, leaping, aqueous comets. Much of the spray, rising to the west of Garden Island, falls on the grove of evergreen trees opposite; and from their leaves, heavy drops are for ever falling, running down the steep face of rock, are blown off and turned back, up into the column from which they have just descended. The morning sun gilds these columns of watery smoke with all the glowing colours of double or treble rainbows.

Robinson Crusoe

by Daniel Defoe (1719)*

Introduction

The novel is widely believed to have been written after Daniel Defoe read about a Scottish adventurer called Alexander Selkirk, a castaway who lived on a Pacific island for about four years. However, this idea has changed over the years. At the time it was written, the public thought that it was a true story and that the incidents had really happened. This is because of the way that the story is written, partly as a journal.

The following extract joins Robinson Crusoe after a series of adventures when he has landed on the island where he will spend the next 25 years. He organises himself and plans how he will survive.

Extract

When I waked it was broad day, the weather clear, and the storm abated, so that the sea did not rage and swell as before. But that which surprised me most was, that the ship was lifted off in the night from the sand where she lay by the swelling of the tide, and was driven up almost as far as the rock which I at first mentioned, where I had been so bruised by the wave dashing me against it. This being within about a mile from the shore where I was, and the ship seeming to stand upright still, I wished myself on board, that at least I might save some necessary things for my use.

When I came down from my apartment in the tree, I looked about me again, and the first thing I found was the boat, which lay, as the wind and the sea had tossed her up, upon the land, about two miles on my right hand. I walked as far as I could upon the shore to have got to her; but found a neck or inlet of water between me and the boat which was about half a mile broad; so I came back for the present, being more intent upon getting at the ship, where I hoped to find something for my present subsistence.

A little after noon I found the sea very calm, and the tide ebbed so far out that I could come within a quarter of a mile of the ship. I resolved, if possible, to get to the ship; so I pulled off my

clothes—for the weather was hot to extremity—and took the water. But when I came to the ship my difficulty was still greater to know how to get on board; for, as she lay aground, and high out of the water, there was nothing within my reach to lay hold of. I swam round her twice, and the second time I spied a small piece of rope, which I wondered I did not see at first, hung down by the fore-chains so low, as that with great difficulty I got hold of it, and by the help of that rope I got up into the fore-castle of the ship.

I found that all the ship's provisions were dry and untouched by the water, and being very well disposed to eat, I went to the bread room and filled my pockets with biscuit, and ate it as I went about other things, for I had no time to lose. I also found some rum in the great cabin, of which I took a large dram, and which I had, indeed, need enough of to spirit me for what was before me. Now I wanted nothing but a boat to furnish myself with many things which I foresaw would be very necessary to me.

So I went to work, and with a carpenter's saw I cut a spare topmast into three lengths, and made them into a raft, with a great deal of labour and pains. But the hope of furnishing myself with necessaries encouraged me to go beyond what I should have been able to have done upon another occasion.

My raft was now strong enough to bear any reasonable weight. My next care was what to load it with, and how to preserve what I laid upon it from the surf of the sea. I first laid all the planks or boards upon it that I could get, and having considered well what I most wanted, I got three of the seamen's chests, which I had broken open, and emptied, and lowered them down upon my raft; the first of these I filled with provisions—viz. bread, rice, three Dutch cheeses, five pieces of dried goat's flesh (which we lived much upon), and a little remainder of European corn, which had been laid by for some fowls which we brought to sea with us, but the fowls were killed. There had been some barley and wheat together; but, to my great disappointment, I found afterwards that

the rats had eaten or spoiled it all. As for liquors, I found several, cases of bottles belonging to our skipper.

While I was doing this, I found the tide begin to flow, though very calm; and I had the mortification to see my coat, shirt, and waistcoat, which I had left on the shore, upon the sand, swim away.

This set me on rummaging for clothes, of which I found enough, but took no more than I wanted for present use, for I had others things which my eye was more upon—as, first, tools to work with on shore. And it was after long searching that I found out the carpenter’s chest, which was, indeed, a very useful prize to me, and much more valuable than a shipload of gold would have been at that time.

My next care was for some ammunition and arms. There were two very good fowling-pieces in the great cabin, and two pistols. These I secured first, with some powder-horns and a small bag of shot, and two old rusty swords. I knew there were three barrels of powder in the ship, but knew not where our gunner had stowed them; but with much search I found them, two of them dry and good, the third had taken water. Those two I got to my raft with the arms. And now I thought myself pretty well freighted, and began to think how I should get to shore with them, having neither sail, oar, nor rudder; and the least capful of wind would have overset all my navigation.

There appeared before me a little opening of the land, and I found a strong current of the tide set into it; so I guided my raft as well as I could, to keep in the middle of the stream. At length I spied a little cove on the right shore of the creek, to which with great pain and difficulty I guided my raft, and at last got so near that, reaching ground with my oar, I could thrust her directly in. Thus I lay till the water ebbed away, and left my raft and all my cargo safe on shore.

My next work was to view the country, and seek a proper place for my habitation, and where to stow my goods to secure them from whatever might happen. Where I was, I yet knew not; whether on the continent or on an island; whether inhabited or not inhabited; whether in danger of wild beasts or not. There was a hill not above a mile from me, which rose up very steep and high. I took out one of the fowling-pieces, and one of the pistols, and a horn of powder; and thus armed, I travelled for

discovery up to the top of that hill, where, after I had with great labour and difficulty got to the top, I saw my fate, viz. that I was in an island environed every way with the sea: no land to be seen except some rocks, which lay a great way off; and two small islands, less than this, which lay about three leagues to the west.

I found also that the island I was in was barren, and, as I saw good reason to believe, uninhabited except by wild beasts, of whom, however, I saw none. Yet I saw abundance of fowls, but knew not their kinds; neither when I killed them could I tell what was fit for food, and what not.

Contented with this discovery, I came back to my raft, and fell to work to bring my cargo on shore, which took me up the rest of that day. What to do with myself at night I knew not, nor indeed where to rest, for I was afraid to lie down on the ground, not knowing but some wild beast might devour me, though, as I afterwards found, there was really no need for those fears.

However, as well as I could, I barricaded myself round with the chest and boards that I had brought on shore, and made a kind of hut for that night’s lodging. As for food, I yet saw not which way to supply myself, except that I had seen two or three creatures like hares run out of the wood.

I now began to consider that I might yet get a great many things out of the ship which would be useful to me, and particularly some of the rigging and sails, and such other things as might come to land; and I resolved to make another voyage on board the vessel, if possible. And as I knew that the first storm that blew must necessarily break her all in pieces, I resolved to set all other things apart till I had got everything out of the ship that I could get.

I got on board the ship as before, and prepared a second raft and brought away several things very useful to me; as first, in the carpenters stores I found two or three bags full of nails and spikes, a great screw-jack, a dozen or two of hatchets, and, above all, that most useful thing called a grindstone. All these I secured, together with several things belonging to the gunner.

Besides these things, I took all the men’s clothes that I could find, and a spare fore-topsail, a hammock, and some bedding; and with this I

loaded my second raft, and brought them all safe on shore, to my very great comfort.

Having got my second cargo on shore I went to work to make me a little tent with the sail and some poles which I cut for that purpose: and into this tent I brought everything that I knew would spoil either with rain or sun; and I piled all the empty chests and casks up in a circle round the tent, to fortify it from any sudden attempt, either from man or beast.

When I had done this, I blocked up the door of the tent with some boards within, and an empty chest set up on end without; and spreading one of the beds upon the ground, laying my two pistols just at my head, and my gun at length by me, I went to bed for the first time, and slept very quietly all night, for I was very weary and heavy; for the night before I had slept little, and had laboured very hard all day to fetch all those things from the ship, and to get them on shore.

I thought I ought to get everything out of the ship that I could; so every day at low water I went on board, and brought away something or other. The next day I made another voyage, and now, having plundered the ship of what was portable and fit to hand out, I began with the cables. Cutting the great cable into pieces, such as I could move, I got two cables and a hawser on shore, with all

the ironwork I could get; and having cut down the spritsail-yard, and the mizzen-yard, and everything I could, to make a large raft, I loaded it with all these heavy goods, and came away.

I had been now thirteen days on shore, and had been eleven times on board the ship, in which time I had brought away all that one pair of hands could well be supposed capable to bring; though I believe verily, had the calm weather held, I should have brought away the whole ship, piece by piece. But preparing the twelfth time to go on board, I found the wind began to rise: however, at low water I went on board, and though I thought I had rummaged the cabin so effectually that nothing more could be found, yet I discovered a locker with drawers in it, in one of which I found two or three razors, and one pair of large scissors, with some ten or a dozen of good knives and forks: in another I found about thirty-six pounds value in money—some European coin, some Brazil, some pieces of eight, some gold, and some silver.

I began to think of making another raft; but while I was preparing this, I found the sky overcast, and the wind began to rise, and in a quarter of an hour it blew a fresh gale from the shore. Accordingly, I let myself down into the water, and swam across the channel, which lay between the ship and the sands, and even that with difficulty enough, partly with the weight of the things I had about me, and



partly the roughness of the water; for the wind rose very hastily, and before it was quite high water it blew a storm. But I had got home to my little tent, where I lay, with all my wealth about me, very secure. It blew very hard all night, and in the morning, when I looked out, behold, no more ship was to be seen!

My thoughts were now wholly employed about securing myself against either savages, if any should appear, or wild beasts, if any were in the island; and I had many thoughts of the method how to do this, and what kind of dwelling to make—whether I should make me a cave in the earth, or a tent upon the earth; and, in short, I resolved upon both; the manner and description of which, it may not be improper to give an account of.

I soon found the place I was in was not fit for my settlement, because it was upon a low, moorish ground, near the sea, and I believed it would not be wholesome, and more particularly because there was no fresh water near it; so I resolved to find a more healthy and more convenient spot of ground.

I consulted several things in my situation, which I found would be proper for me: 1st, health and fresh water, I just now mentioned; 2ndly, shelter from the heat of the sun; 3rdly, security from ravenous creatures, whether man or beast; 4thly, a view to the sea, that if God sent any ship in sight, I might not lose any advantage for my deliverance, of which I was not willing to banish all my expectation yet.

In search of a place proper for this, I found a little plain on the side of a rising hill, whose front towards this little plain was steep as a house-side, so that nothing could come down upon me from the top. On the one side of the rock there was a hollow place, worn a little way in, like the entrance or door of a cave but there was not really any cave or way into the rock at all.

On the flat of the green, just before this hollow place, I resolved to pitch my tent. This plain was not above a hundred yards broad, and about twice as long, and lay like a green before my door; and, at the end of it, descended irregularly every way down into the low ground by the seaside. It was on the N.N.W. side of the hill; so that it was sheltered from the heat every day, till it came to a

W. and by S. sun, or thereabouts, which, in those countries, is near the setting.

Before I set up my tent I drew a half-circle before the hollow place, which took in about ten yards in its semi-diameter from the rock, and twenty yards in its diameter from its beginning and ending.

In this half-circle I pitched two rows of strong stakes, driving them into the ground till they stood very firm like piles, the biggest end being out of the ground above five feet and a half, and sharpened on the top. The two rows did not stand above six inches from one another.

Then I took the pieces of cable which I had cut in the ship, and laid them in rows, one upon another, within the circle, between these two rows of stakes, up to the top, placing other stakes in the inside, leaning against them, about two feet and a half high, like a spur to a post; and this fence was so strong, that neither man nor beast could get into it or over it. This cost me a great deal of time and labour, especially to cut the piles in the woods, bring them to the place, and drive them into the earth.

The entrance into this place I made to be, not by a door, but by a short ladder to go over the top; which ladder, when I was in, I lifted over after me; and so I was completely fenced in and fortified, as I thought, from all the world, and consequently slept secure in the night, which otherwise I could not have done; though, as it appeared afterwards, there was no need of all this caution from the enemies that I apprehended danger from.

Into this fence or fortress, with infinite labour, I carried all my riches, all my provisions, ammunition, and stores, of which you have the account above; and I made a large tent, which to preserve me from the rains that in one part of the year are very violent there, I made double—one smaller tent within, and one larger tent above it; and covered the uppermost with a large tarpaulin, which I had saved among the sails.

And now I lay no more for a while in the bed which I had brought on shore, but in a hammock, which was indeed a very good one, and belonged to the mate of the ship.

Into this tent I brought all my provisions, and everything that would spoil by the wet; and

having thus enclosed all my goods, I made up the entrance, which till now I had left open, and so passed and repassed, as I said, by a short ladder.

When I had done this, I began to work my way into the rock, and bringing all the earth and stones that I dug down out through my tent, I laid them up within my fence, in the nature of a terrace, so that it raised the ground within about a foot and a half; and thus I made me a cave, just behind my tent, which served me like a cellar to my house.

After I had been there about ten or twelve days, it came into my thoughts that I should lose my reckoning of time for want of books, and pen and ink, and should even forget the Sabbath days; but to prevent this, I cut with my knife upon a large post, in capital letters—and making it into a great cross, I set it up on the shore where I first landed—“I came on shore here on the 30th September 1659.”

Upon the sides of this square post I cut every day a notch with my knife, and every seventh notch was as long again as the rest, and every first day of the month as long again as that long one; and thus I kept my calendar, or weekly, monthly, and yearly reckoning of time.

Crusoe meets a native of the island

At this point in the novel, Crusoe has been on the island for 25 years and realises that in all that time he has been in danger because there were indigenous inhabitants in the area.

He was a comely, handsome fellow, perfectly well made, with straight, strong limbs, not too large; tall, and well-shaped; and, as I reckon, about twenty-six years of age. He had a very good countenance, not a fierce and surly aspect, but seemed to have something very manly in his face; and yet he had all the sweetness and softness of

a European in his countenance, too, especially when he smiled. His hair was long and black, not curled like wool; his forehead very high and large; and a great vivacity and sparkling sharpness in his eyes. The colour of his skin was not quite black, but very tawny; and yet not an ugly, yellow, nauseous tawny, as the Brazilians and Virginians, and other natives of America are, but of a bright kind of a dun olive-colour, that had in it something very agreeable, though not very easy to describe. His face was round and plump; his nose small, not flat, like the negroes; a very good mouth, thin lips, and his fine teeth well set, and as white as ivory.

After he had slumbered, rather than slept, about half-an-hour, he awoke again, and came out of the cave to me: for I had been milking my goats which I had in the enclosure just by: when he espied me he came running to me, laying himself down again upon the ground, with all the possible signs of an humble, thankful disposition, making a great many antic gestures to show it. At last he lays his head flat upon the ground, close to my foot, and sets my other foot upon his head, as he had done before; and after this made all the signs to me of subjection, servitude, and submission imaginable, to let me know how he would serve me so long as he lived. I understood him in many things, and let him know I was very well pleased with him. In a little time I began to speak to him; and teach him to speak to me: and first, I let him know his name should be Friday, which was the day I saved his life: I called him so for the memory of the time. I likewise taught him to say Master; and then let him know that was to be my name: I likewise taught him to say Yes and No and to know the meaning of them. I gave him some milk in an earthen pot, and let him see me drink it before him, and sop my bread in it; and gave him a cake of bread to do the like, which he quickly complied with, and made signs that it was very good for him.

Glossary

Subsistence: keeping oneself alive at a minimal level

Three leagues: approximately nine miles

Hawser: a thick cable or rope

Sabbath day: Sunday – the holy day

Countenance: face

19th-century settings 1: the Gothic tradition

Aims:

- to enjoy a selection of extracts from classic Gothic literature and see the links between them
- to be able to identify features of the Gothic genre
- to understand the effects achieved by writers' use of these features.

Suggestions for starters or hooks

- Discussion of Goth subculture.
- Pictures of the annual Goth weekends in Whitby.
- Film clips showing gothic settings.
- Modern stories with a gothic theme.
- Scenes from illustrations of Dante's *Inferno*.

Texts

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley (1818)

Northanger Abbey by Jane Austen – extract 2 from chapter 21 (1817)

Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte – Lockwood's dream (1847)

Dracula by Bram Stoker – chapter 7 (1897)

Hound of Baskervilles by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle – chapter 14 (1902)

Understanding and responding

Extract 1

Frankenstein

1. Draw an outline diagram of a man, and label it with words and phrases from the description of the creature. Which features suggest beauty, and which are ugly?
2. Victor Frankenstein's first reference to the creature is as "the lifeless thing". Find all the other nouns and noun phrases that he uses to name his creation. What do these words show about his feelings towards it?
3. Trace Frankenstein's emotions from the anxiety that he felt at the start to the horror he feels at

the end of the passage.

4. Look at the behaviour of the creature in paragraph three. What do you think it was trying to express? How does Frankenstein react to it?

Extract 2

Northanger Abbey

1. Draw the chest and annotate it with details from the text.
2. How does the author portray Catherine's eagerness to discover something in the chest?
3. Identify the details that suggest that Catherine is afraid.
4. In the passage later in the evening, Catherine sees a cabinet in her room which she hadn't previously noticed. How does the author build an atmosphere of suspense around this piece of furniture?
5. Finding the roll of paper has a physical effect on Catherine. Look again at these details and discuss how lifelike they are.
6. How does candlelight enhance the atmosphere of mystery and tension at the end of the passage?
7. What do you think the "precious manuscript" contains?

Extract 3

Wuthering Heights – Lockwood's dream

1. What disturbs Lockwood and makes him get out of bed?
2. How does the author show confusion between sleeping and dreaming?
3. What happens when Lockwood breaks the glass of the window?
4. "Terror made me cruel" Describe Lockwood's reaction to the child he hears and explain why he acts in the way he does.
5. How does he try to block out the horror, and how does it continue?
6. How does the presence of Heathcliff at the end of the passage add to the atmosphere of tension and fear?

Extract 4

Dracula

1. Highlight all the details that describe the scene and weather. What atmosphere and mood do they convey?
2. How does the description of the ship create a sense of danger?
3. What is the significance of the old sailor's comment "She must fetch up somewhere, if it was only in hell."?
4. Identify the features from the final two paragraphs that add mystery and horror to the scene.
5. Knowing what you do about the story of Dracula, how do you explain the presence of a corpse on the ship and the immense dog that leaps off the ship?

Comparing Gothic passages

Extract 5

The Hound of the Baskervilles

Read this passage and identify any points of comparison between it and the previous four extracts.

All of these extracts occur at night. What do night time and the weather contribute to the atmosphere created in each?

Explain how the authors have portrayed characters' fears, expectations and reality in these extracts. Which authors have used a first person narrator, and what effect have they achieved? What is the effect of the third person narrative in the other texts?

All these passages contain recognisable gothic features. Make a list of the elements that you think gothic stories contain.

Writing

Describe a Gothic setting using what you have learned from these extracts.

Frankenstein

by Mary Shelley (1818)

Introduction

Victor Frankenstein describes the moment when, after two years' work creating a man made from stolen body parts, he brings the creature to life.

Extract from chapter 5

It was on a dreary night of November that I beheld the accomplishment of my toils. With an anxiety that almost amounted to agony, I collected the instruments of life around me, that I might infuse a spark of being into the lifeless thing that lay at my feet. It was already one in the morning; the rain pattered dismally against the panes, and my candle was nearly burnt out, when, by the glimmer of the half-extinguished light, I saw the dull yellow

eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs.

How can I describe my emotions at this catastrophe, or how delineate the wretch whom with such infinite pains and care I had endeavoured to form? His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! Great God! His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.

The different accidents of life are not so changeable as the feelings of human nature. I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room and continued a long time traversing my bed-chamber, unable to compose my mind to sleep. At length lassitude succeeded to the tumult I had before endured, and I threw myself on the bed in my clothes, endeavouring to seek a few moments of forgetfulness. But it was in vain; I slept, indeed, but I was disturbed by the wildest dreams. I started from my sleep with horror; a cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window shutters, I beheld the wretch—the miserable monster whom

I had created. He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks. He might have spoken, but I did not hear; one hand was stretched out, seemingly to detain me, but I escaped and rushed downstairs. I took refuge in the courtyard belonging to the house which I inhabited, where I remained during the rest of the night, walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound as if it were to announce the approach of the demoniacal corpse to which I had so miserably given life.

Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch. I had gazed on him while unfinished; he was ugly then, but when those muscles and joints were rendered capable of motion, it became a thing such as even Dante could not have conceived.

Glossary

Toils: hard work and efforts

Ardour: passion

Lassitude: tiredness

Dante: an Italian poet from the Middle Ages who wrote *The Divine Comedy*, describing a journey through Hell

Northanger Abbey

by Jane Austen (1817)

Introduction

Catherine Morland is visiting Northanger Abbey, the home of her friends Eleanor and Henry Tilney. As a keen reader of Gothic romantic novels, she expects the abbey to be an ancient and frightening place full of the atmosphere that her reading has led her

to associate with such buildings, and Henry has enjoyed teasing her by encouraging her to exercise her imagination. In this passage, Catherine sees her bedroom for the first time.

Extract from chapter 21

A moment's glance was enough to satisfy Catherine that her apartment was very unlike

the one which Henry had endeavoured to alarm her by the description of. It was by no means unreasonably large, and contained neither tapestry nor velvet. The walls were papered, the floor was carpeted; the windows were neither less perfect nor more dim than those of the drawing-room below; the furniture, though not of the latest fashion, was handsome and comfortable, and the air of the room altogether far from uncheerful. Her heart instantaneously at ease on this point, she resolved to lose no time in particular examination of anything, as she greatly dreaded disobliging the general by any delay. Her habit therefore was thrown off with all possible haste, and she was preparing to unpin the linen package, which the chaise-seat had conveyed for her immediate accommodation, when her eye suddenly fell on a large high chest, standing back in a deep recess on one side of the fireplace. The sight of it made her start; and, forgetting everything else, she stood gazing on it in motionless wonder, while these thoughts crossed her:

“This is strange indeed! I did not expect such a sight as this! An immense heavy chest! What can it hold? Why should it be placed here? Pushed back too, as if meant to be out of sight! I will look into it—cost me what it may, I will look into it—and directly too—by daylight. If I stay till evening my candle may go out.” She advanced and examined it closely: it was of cedar, curiously inlaid with some darker wood, and raised, about a foot from the ground, on a carved stand of the same. The lock was silver, though tarnished from age; at each end were the imperfect remains of handles also of silver, broken perhaps prematurely by some strange violence; and, on the centre of the lid, was a mysterious cipher, in the same metal. Catherine bent over it intently, but without being able to distinguish anything with certainty. She could not, in whatever direction she took it, believe the last letter to be a T; and yet that it should be anything else in that house was a circumstance to raise no common degree of astonishment. If not originally theirs, by what strange events could it have fallen into the Tilney family?

Her fearful curiosity was every moment growing greater; and seizing, with trembling hands, the hasp of the lock, she resolved at all hazards to satisfy herself at least as to its contents. With difficulty, for something seemed to resist her efforts, she raised the lid a few inches; but at that moment a sudden knocking at the door of the

room made her, starting, quit her hold, and the lid closed with alarming violence. This ill-timed intruder was Miss Tilney’s maid, sent by her mistress to be of use to Miss Morland; and though Catherine immediately dismissed her, it recalled her to the sense of what she ought to be doing, and forced her, in spite of her anxious desire to penetrate this mystery, to proceed in her dressing without further delay. Her progress was not quick, for her thoughts and her eyes were still bent on the object so well calculated to interest and alarm; and though she dared not waste a moment upon a second attempt, she could not remain many paces from the chest. At length, however, having slipped one arm into her gown, her toilette seemed so nearly finished that the impatience of her curiosity might safely be indulged. One moment surely might be spared; and, so desperate should be the exertion of her strength, that, unless secured by supernatural means, the lid in one moment should be thrown back. With this spirit she sprang forward, and her confidence did not deceive her. Her resolute effort threw back the lid, and gave to her astonished eyes the view of a white cotton counterpane, properly folded, reposing at one end of the chest in undisputed possession!

She was gazing on it with the first blush of surprise when Miss Tilney, anxious for her friend’s being ready, entered the room, and to the rising shame of having harboured for some minutes an absurd expectation, was then added the shame of being caught in so idle a search. *“That is a curious old chest, is not it?”* said Miss Tilney, as Catherine hastily closed it and turned away to the glass. *“It is impossible to say how many generations it has been here. How it came to be first put in this room I know not, but I have not had it moved, because I thought it might sometimes be of use in holding hats and bonnets. The worst of it is that its weight makes it difficult to open. In that corner, however, it is at least out of the way.”*

Catherine had no leisure for speech, being at once blushing, tying her gown, and forming wise resolutions with the most violent dispatch. Miss Tilney gently hinted her fear of being late; and in half a minute they ran downstairs together, in an alarm not wholly unfounded, for General Tilney was pacing the drawing-room, his watch in his hand, and having, on the very instant of their entering, pulled the bell with violence, ordered *“Dinner to be on table directly!”*

Later that evening ...

The night was stormy; the wind had been rising at intervals the whole afternoon; and by the time the party broke up, it blew and rained violently. Catherine, as she crossed the hall, listened to the tempest with sensations of awe; and, when she heard it rage round a corner of the ancient building and close with sudden fury a distant door, felt for the first time that she was really in an abbey. Yes, these were characteristic sounds; they brought to her recollection a countless variety of dreadful situations and horrid scenes, which such buildings had witnessed, and such storms ushered in; and most heartily did she rejoice in the happier circumstances attending her entrance within walls so solemn! She had nothing to dread from midnight assassins or drunken gallants. Henry had certainly been only in jest in what he had told her that morning. In a house so furnished, and so guarded, she could have nothing to explore or to suffer, and might go to her bedroom as securely as if it had been her own chamber at Fullerton. Thus wisely fortifying her mind, as she proceeded upstairs, she was enabled, especially on perceiving that Miss Tilney slept only two doors from her, to enter her room with a tolerably stout heart; and her spirits were immediately assisted by the cheerful blaze of a wood fire.

She looked round the room. The window curtains seemed in motion. It could be nothing but the violence of the wind penetrating through the divisions of the shutters; and she stepped boldly forward, carelessly humming a tune, to assure herself of its being so, peeped courageously behind each curtain, saw nothing on either low window seat to scare her, and on placing a hand against the shutter, felt the strongest conviction of the wind's force. A glance at the old chest, as she turned away from this examination, was not without its use; she scorned the causeless fears of an idle fancy, and began with a most happy indifference to prepare herself for bed. "She should take her time; she should not hurry herself; she did not care if she were the last person up in the house. But she would not make up her fire; that would seem cowardly, as if she wished for the protection of light after she were in bed." The fire therefore died away, and Catherine, having spent the best part of an hour in her arrangements, was beginning to think of stepping into bed, when, on giving a parting glance round the room, she was struck by the appearance of a high, old-fashioned black cabinet, which, though in a situation conspicuous enough, had never caught her notice before. Henry's words, his description of the ebony cabinet which was to escape her observation at first, immediately rushed across



her; and though there could be nothing really in it, there was something whimsical, it was certainly a very remarkable coincidence! She took her candle and looked closely at the cabinet. It was not absolutely ebony and gold; but it was japan, black and yellow japan of the handsomest kind; and as she held her candle, the yellow had very much the effect of gold. The key was in the door, and she had a strange fancy to look into it; not, however, with the smallest expectation of finding anything, but it was so very odd, after what Henry had said. In short, she could not sleep till she had examined it. So, placing the candle with great caution on a chair, she seized the key with a very tremulous hand and tried to turn it; but it resisted her utmost strength. Alarmed, but not discouraged, she tried it another way; a bolt flew, and she believed herself successful; but how strangely mysterious! The door was still immovable. She paused a moment in breathless wonder. The wind roared down the chimney, the rain beat in torrents against the windows, and everything seemed to speak the awfulness of her situation. To retire to bed, however, unsatisfied on such a point, would be vain, since sleep must be impossible with the consciousness of a cabinet so mysteriously closed in her immediate vicinity. Again, therefore, she applied herself to the key, and after moving it in every possible way for some instants with the determined celerity of hope's last effort, the door suddenly yielded to her hand: her heart leaped with exultation at such a victory, and having thrown open each folding door, the second being secured only by bolts of less wonderful construction than the lock, though in that her eye could not discern anything unusual, a double range of small drawers appeared in view, with some larger drawers above and below them; and in the centre, a small door, closed also with a lock and key, secured in all probability a cavity of importance.

Catherine's heart beat quick, but her courage did not fail her. With a cheek flushed by hope, and an eye straining with curiosity, her fingers grasped the handle of a drawer and drew it forth. It was entirely empty. With less alarm and greater eagerness she seized a second, a third, a fourth; each was equally empty. Not one was left unsearched, and in not one was anything found. Well read in the art of concealing a treasure, the possibility of false linings to the drawers did not escape her, and she felt round each with anxious acuteness in vain. The place

in the middle alone remained now unexplored; and though she had "never from the first had the smallest idea of finding anything in any part of the cabinet, and was not in the least disappointed at her ill success thus far, it would be foolish not to examine it thoroughly while she was about it." It was some time however before she could unfasten the door, the same difficulty occurring in the management of this inner lock as of the outer; but at length it did open; and not vain, as hitherto, was her search; her quick eyes directly fell on a roll of paper pushed back into the further part of the cavity, apparently for concealment, and her feelings at that moment were indescribable. Her heart fluttered, her knees trembled, and her cheeks grew pale. She seized, with an unsteady hand, the precious manuscript, for half a glance sufficed to ascertain written characters; and while she acknowledged with awful sensations this striking exemplification of what Henry had foretold, resolved instantly to peruse every line before she attempted to rest.

The dimness of the light her candle emitted made her turn to it with alarm; but there was no danger of its sudden extinction; it had yet some hours to burn; and that she might not have any greater difficulty in distinguishing the writing than what its ancient date might occasion, she hastily snuffed it. Alas! It was snuffed and extinguished in one. A lamp could not have expired with more awful effect. Catherine, for a few moments, was motionless with horror. It was done completely; not a remnant of light in the wick could give hope to the rekindling breath. Darkness impenetrable and immovable filled the room. A violent gust of wind, rising with sudden fury, added fresh horror to the moment. Catherine trembled from head to foot. In the pause which succeeded, a sound like receding footsteps and the closing of a distant door struck on her affrighted ear. Human nature could support no more. A cold sweat stood on her forehead, the manuscript fell from her hand, and groping her way to the bed, she jumped hastily in, and sought some suspension of agony by creeping far underneath the clothes. To close her eyes in sleep that night, she felt must be entirely out of the question. With a curiosity so justly awakened, and feelings in every way so agitated, repose must be absolutely impossible. The storm too abroad so dreadful! She had not been used to feel alarm from wind, but now every blast seemed fraught with awful intelligence. The manuscript so wonderfully found, so wonderfully

accomplishing the morning's prediction, how was it to be accounted for? What could it contain? To whom could it relate? By what means could it have been so long concealed? And how singularly strange that it should fall to her lot to discover it! Till she had made herself mistress of its contents, however, she could have neither repose nor comfort; and with the sun's first rays she was determined to peruse it. But many were the tedious hours which must yet intervene. She shuddered, tossed about in her bed, and envied every quiet sleeper. The storm still raged, and

various were the noises, more terrific even than the wind, which struck at intervals on her startled ear. The very curtains of her bed seemed at one moment in motion, and at another the lock of her door was agitated, as if by the attempt of somebody to enter. Hollow murmurs seemed to creep along the gallery, and more than once her blood was chilled by the sound of distant moans. Hour after hour passed away, and the wearied Catherine had heard three proclaimed by all the clocks in the house before the tempest subsided or she unknowingly fell fast asleep.

Glossary

Toilette: washing, dressing and personal grooming

Fancy: imagination

Japan: a dark varnish with the appearance of enamel

Tempest: storm

Wuthering Heights

by Emily Bronte (1847) – Lockwood's dream

Introduction

Mr Lockwood has been forced by snowy weather to spend the night in the remote farmhouse, Wuthering Heights, which belongs to his neighbour Mr Heathcliff. A servant has warned him that Mr Heathcliff has odd notions about the room that Lockwood is using. Before going to sleep Lockwood passes the time by reading a journal written by a young girl, Catherine Earnshaw, who lived in the house twenty-five years earlier. When he falls asleep, he is troubled by nightmares.

Extract from chapter 3

I remembered I was lying in the oak closet, and I heard distinctly the gusty wind, and the driving of the snow; I heard, also, the fir bough repeat its teasing sound, and ascribed it to the right cause: but it annoyed me so much, that I resolved to

silence it, if possible; and, I thought, I rose and endeavoured to unhasp the casement. The hook was soldered into the staple: a circumstance observed by me when awake, but forgotten.

'I must stop it, nevertheless!' I muttered, knocking my knuckles through the glass, and stretching an arm out to seize the importunate branch; instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand!

The intense horror of nightmare came over me: I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed, 'Let me in—let me in!'

'Who are you?' I asked, struggling, meanwhile, to disengage myself.

'Catherine Linton,' it replied, shiveringly (why did I

think of Linton? I had read Earnshaw twenty times for Linton)—‘I’m come home: I’d lost my way on the moor!’

As it spoke, I discerned, obscurely, a child’s face looking through the window. Terror made me cruel; and, finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, I pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes: still it wailed, ‘Let me in!’ and maintained its tenacious grip, almost maddening me with fear.

‘How can I!’ I said at length. ‘Let me go, if you want me to let you in!’

The fingers relaxed, I snatched mine through the hole, hurriedly piled the books up in a pyramid against it, and stopped my ears to exclude the lamentable prayer. I seemed to keep them closed above a quarter of an hour; yet, the instant I listened again, there was the doleful cry moaning on!

‘Begone!’ I shouted. ‘I’ll never let you in, not if you beg for twenty years.’

‘It is twenty years,’ mourned the voice: ‘twenty years. I’ve been a waif for twenty years!’

Thereat began a feeble scratching outside, and the pile of books moved as if thrust forward. I tried to jump up; but could not stir a limb; and so yelled aloud, in a frenzy of fright. To my confusion, I discovered the yell was not ideal: hasty footsteps approached my chamber door; somebody pushed it open, with a vigorous hand, and a light glimmered through the squares at the top of the bed. I sat shuddering yet, and wiping the perspiration from my forehead: the intruder appeared to hesitate, and muttered to himself.

At last, he said, in a half-whisper, plainly not expecting an answer, ‘Is any one here?’

I considered it best to confess my presence; for I knew Heathcliff’s accents, and feared he might search further, if I kept quiet.

Glossary

Unhasp: the casement undo the window

Importunate: persistent and annoying

Lamentable: sorrowful

Dracula

by Bram Stoker (1897)

Introduction

The novel is written in letter and diary form telling the story of the vampire Count Dracula. The following passage appears as a newspaper cutting in the journal of one of the narrators, Mina Murray. It describes the strange events that happened on the night of Dracula’s arrival in the North Yorkshire fishing port of Whitby.

Extract

Shortly before ten o’clock the stillness of the air grew quite oppressive, and the silence was so marked that the bleating of a sheep inland or the barking of a dog in the town was distinctly heard, and the band on the pier, with its lively French air, was like a discord in the great harmony of nature’s silence. A little after midnight came a strange sound from over the sea, and high overhead

the air began to carry a strange, faint, hollow booming.

Then without warning the tempest broke. With a rapidity which, at the time, seemed incredible, and even afterwards is impossible to realize, the whole aspect of nature at once became convulsed. The waves rose in growing fury, each overtopping its fellow, till in a very few minutes the lately glassy sea was like a roaring and devouring monster. White-crested waves beat madly on the level sands and rushed up the shelving cliffs; others broke over the piers, and with their spume swept the lanthorns of the lighthouses which rise from the end of either pier of Whitby Harbour. The wind roared like thunder, and blew with such force that it was with difficulty that even strong men kept their feet, or clung with grim clasp to the iron stanchions. It was found necessary to clear the entire piers from the mass of onlookers, or else the fatalities of the night would have been increased manifold. To add to the difficulties and dangers of the time, masses of sea-fog came drifting inland—white, wet clouds, which swept by in ghostly fashion, so dank and damp and cold that it needed but little effort of imagination to think that the spirits of those lost at sea were touching their living brethren with the clammy hands of death, and many a one shuddered as the wreaths of sea-mist swept by. At times the mist cleared, and the sea for some distance could be seen in the glare of the lightning, which now came thick and fast, followed by such sudden peals of thunder that the whole sky overhead seemed trembling under the shock of the footsteps of the storm.

Some of the scenes thus revealed were of immeasurable grandeur and of absorbing interest—the sea, running mountains high, threw skywards with each wave mighty masses of white foam, which the tempest seemed to snatch at and whirl away into space; here and there a fishing-boat, with a rag of sail, running madly for shelter before the blast; now and again the white wings of a storm-tossed sea-bird. On the summit of the East Cliff the new searchlight was ready for experiment, but had not yet been tried. The officers in charge of it got it into working order, and in the pauses of the inrushing mist swept with it the surface of the sea. Once or twice its service was most effective, as when a fishing-boat, with gunwale under water, rushed into the harbour, able, by the guidance of the sheltering light, to

avoid the danger of dashing against the piers. As each boat achieved the safety of the port there was a shout of joy from the mass of people on shore, a shout which for a moment seemed to cleave the gale and was then swept away in its rush.

Before long the searchlight discovered some distance away a schooner with all sails set, apparently the same vessel which had been noticed earlier in the evening. The wind had by this time backed to the east, and there was a shudder amongst the watchers on the cliff as they realized the terrible danger in which she now was. Between her and the port lay the great flat reef on which so many good ships have from time to time suffered, and, with the wind blowing from its present quarter, it would be quite impossible that she should fetch the entrance of the harbour. It was now nearly the hour of high tide, but the waves were so great that in their troughs the shallows of the shore were almost visible, and the schooner, with all sails set, was rushing with such speed that, in the words of one old salt, “she must fetch up somewhere, if it was only in hell.” Then came another rush of sea-fog, greater than any hitherto—a mass of dank mist, which seemed to close on all things like a grey pall, and left available to men only the organ of hearing, for the roar of the tempest, and the crash of the thunder, and the booming of the mighty billows came through the damp oblivion even louder than before.

The rays of the searchlight were kept fixed on the harbour mouth across the East Pier, where the shock was expected, and men waited breathless. The wind suddenly shifted to the north-east, and the remnant of the sea-fog melted in the blast; and then, mirabile dictu, between the piers, leaping from wave to wave as it rushed at headlong speed, swept the strange schooner before the blast, with all sail set, and gained the safety of the harbour. The searchlight followed her, and a shudder ran through all who saw her, for lashed to the helm was a corpse, with drooping head, which swung horribly to and fro at each motion of the ship. No other form could be seen on deck at all. A great awe came on all as they realised that the ship, as if by a miracle, had found the harbour, unsteered save by the hand of a dead man! However, all took place more quickly than it takes to write these words. The schooner paused not, but rushing across the harbour, pitched herself on that accumulation of sand and gravel

washed by many tides and many storms into the south-east corner of the pier jutting under the East Cliff, known locally as Tate Hill Pier.

There was of course a considerable concussion as the vessel drove up on the sand heap. Every spar, rope, and stay was strained, and some of the “top-hammer” came crashing down. But, strangest of all, the very instant the shore was touched, an immense dog sprang up on deck from below, as if shot up by the concussion,

and running forward, jumped from the bow on the sand. Making straight for the steep cliff, where the churchyard hangs over the laneway to the East Pier so steeply that some of the flat tombstones—“thruff-steans” or “through-stones,” as they call them in the Whitby vernacular—actually project over where the sustaining cliff has fallen away, it disappeared in the darkness, which seemed intensified just beyond the focus of the searchlight.

Glossary

Tempest: storm

Brethren: brothers or fellow members of a group

Gunwale: the top edge of a boat

Cleave: cut through

Schooner: a sailing ship with two masts

Mirabile dictum: Latin for ‘wonderful to tell’

The Hound of the Baskervilles

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1902)

The night was clear and fine above us. The stars shone cold and bright, while a half-moon bathed the whole scene in a soft, uncertain light. Before us lay the dark bulk of the house, its serrated roof and bristling chimneys hard outlined against the silver-spangled sky. Broad bars of golden light from the lower windows stretched across the orchard and the moor. One of them was suddenly shut off. The servants had left the kitchen. There only remained the lamp in the dining-room where the two men, the murderous host and the unconscious guest, still chatted over their cigars.

Every minute that white woolly plain which covered one-half of the moor was drifting closer and closer to the house. Already the first thin wisps of it were curling across the golden square of the lighted window. The farther wall of the

orchard was already invisible, and the trees were standing out of a swirl of white vapour. As we watched it the fog-wreaths came crawling round both corners of the house and rolled slowly into one dense bank on which the upper floor and the roof floated like a strange ship upon a shadowy sea. Holmes struck his hand passionately upon the rock in front of us and stamped his feet in his impatience.

“If he isn’t out in a quarter of an hour the path will be covered. In half an hour we won’t be able to see our hands in front of us.”

“Shall we move farther back upon higher ground?”

“Yes, I think it would be as well.”

So as the fog-bank flowed onward we fell back before it until we were half a mile from the house, and still that dense white sea, with the moon silvering its upper edge, swept slowly and inexorably on.

A sound of quick steps broke the silence of the moor. Crouching among the stones we stared intently at the silver-tipped bank in front of us. The steps grew louder, and through the fog, as through a curtain, there stepped the man whom we were awaiting. He looked round him in surprise as he emerged into the clear, starlit night. Then he came swiftly along the path, passed close to where we lay, and went on up the long slope behind us. As he walked he glanced continually over either shoulder, like a man who is ill at ease. "Hist!" cried Holmes, and I heard the sharp click of a cocking pistol. "Look out! It's coming!"

There was a thin, crisp, continuous patter from somewhere in the heart of that crawling bank. The

cloud was within fifty yards of where we lay, and we glared at it, uncertain what horror was about to break from the heart of it. I was at Holmes's elbow, and I glanced for an instant at his face. It was pale and exultant, his eyes shining brightly in the moonlight. But suddenly they started forward in a rigid, fixed stare, and his lips parted in amazement. I sprang to my feet, my inert hand grasping my pistol, my mind paralyzed by the dreadful shape which had sprung out upon us from the shadows of the fog.

A hound it was, an enormous coal-black hound, but not such a hound as mortal eyes have ever seen. Fire burst from its open mouth, its eyes glowed with a smouldering glare, its muzzle and hackles and dewlap were outlined in flickering flame. Never in the delirious dream of a disordered brain could anything more savage, more appalling, more hellish be conceived than that dark form and savage face which broke upon us out of the wall of fog.

Glossary

Orchard: an area of land on which fruit trees are grown

Inexorably: in an unstoppable way

Hound: a hunting dog which has a very good sense of smell

Delirious: feverish or in a disturbed state of mind



19th-century settings 2: working life in rural and urban settings in 19th-century literature

Aims:

- to understand how authors present settings
- to understand how settings influence the reader's understanding of characters and themes
- to understand how authors present the working lives of characters.

Suggestions for starters or hooks

- Share pictures of modern rural and urban landscapes and discuss students' experiences of and responses to them.
- Explore the presentation of the pastoral idyll with examples from art, music and literature.
- Discuss the connotations of aspects of the natural world.

Share some of the thoughts in this piece with students and discuss their experiences:

theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/nov/18/new-ruralism-takes-over-cities

Use historical sources to explore the urban landscape of the 19th century.

Use online materials from industrial and working museums.

Devise a picture quiz to see how many common wild flowers, plants and trees students can name. Discuss whether previous generations would have known more, and why.

Researching the 19th-century context

- The industrial revolution.
- Conditions in cities and towns.
- Agricultural seasons and working practices in the 19th century.
- Working conditions in factories.

Texts

Tess of the D'Urbervilles – extract 2 by Thomas Hardy (1891)

Mary Barton by Elizabeth Gaskell (1848)

Understanding and responding

Tess of the D'Urbervilles – extract 2 by Thomas Hardy (1891)

Read the first section

In the first paragraph identify which season of the year is the setting for this passage. What associations does this season have for the reader?

Identify the words and phrases that create an impression of happy and carefree people. Are the workers wealthy? What does the author suggest about the importance of material wealth? Look at the details of their work and their working days. Does the author accurately portray its hardships? Would you like to do their jobs?

Explain the attraction between Tess and Angel Clare, and how their situation at the dairy farm contributes to the development of their relationship.

Now read the second section

How is the natural scene here different from the first one? What mood does it create? What do we learn of the characters' experience and feelings? Read the third section about Tess's work with a mechanical threshing machine

What is Tess's experience here? Does she enjoy the work? What pressures make the work more demanding? Does the author suggest that the

introduction of machinery has been beneficial? What is your response to Tess in all three sections?

Close reading

Explain the metaphor of a sapling that Hardy uses to describe Tess in the fourth paragraph.

In two contrasting columns, list details from the passage that create an impression of softness and beauty against those that create an impression of harshness and ugliness. Consider the sounds of the words and the author's appeal to the reader's senses.

Identify the author's use of onomatopoeia in his description of the threshing machine. How does it add to our understanding of the scene?

Mary Barton by Elizabeth Gaskell (1848)

Read the description of Green Heys Fields. Which features make it seem attractive?

Underline all the names of flowers and plants. Do you know what they look like? Are people in the modern day familiar with these species?

How does the passage appeal to the reader's senses?

How do the factory workers feel when they visit Green Heys? Which details does the author give of their behaviour to portray their feelings to the reader?

Now read the description of Berry Street and the passage about the arrest of Jem.

Although it too is set in the spring, a very different atmosphere is created. How is the scene different from Green Heys fields? How does the environment affect the characters in it? In your opinion, what would be the worst features of life on Berry Street?

What is the cause of such conditions for the workers?

How does Elizabeth Gaskell's description of the foundry where Jem is arrested create an impression of hell?

Comparing the three texts

What ideas about rural and urban life do these extracts explore? Did you find them realistic? Where does your sympathy lie? To what extent do you think literature like this might influence public attitudes and policy?

Tess of the D'Urbervilles

by Thomas Hardy (1891)

Introduction

Following the death of her illegitimate baby, Tess travels to another part of the country to find work on a dairy farm which belongs to Farmer Crick. Here she meets Angel Clare, a young man who is staying there to learn more about dairy farming.

Extract

The season developed and matured. Another year's instalment of flowers, leaves, nightingales, thrushes, finches, and such ephemeral creatures, took up their positions where only a year ago

others had stood in their place when these were nothing more than germs and inorganic particles. Rays from the sunrise drew forth the buds and stretched them into long stalks, lifted up sap in noiseless streams, opened petals, and sucked out scents in invisible jets and breathings.

Dairyman Crick's household of maids and men lived on comfortably, placidly, even merrily. Their position was perhaps the happiest of all positions in the social scale, being above the line at which neediness ends, and below the line at which the conveniences begin to cramp natural feelings, and the stress of threadbare modishness makes too

little of enough.

Tess and Clare unconsciously studied each other, ever balanced on the edge of a passion, yet apparently keeping out of it. All the while they were converging, under an irresistible law, as surely as two streams in one vale.

Tess had never in her recent life been so happy as she was now, possibly never would be so happy again. She was, for one thing, physically and mentally suited among these new surroundings. The sapling which had rooted down to a poisonous stratum on the spot of its sowing had been transplanted to a deeper soil. Moreover she, and Clare also, stood as yet on the debatable land between predilection and love; where no profundities have been reached; no reflections have set in, awkwardly inquiring, "Whither does this new current tend to carry me? What does it mean to my future? How does it stand towards my past?"

Tess was the merest stray phenomenon to Angel Clare as yet—a rosy, warming apparition which had only just acquired the attribute of persistence in his consciousness. So he allowed his mind to be occupied with her, deeming his preoccupation to be no more than a philosopher's regard of an exceedingly novel, fresh, and interesting specimen of womankind.

They met continually; they could not help it. They met daily in that strange and solemn interval, the twilight of the morning, in the violet or pink dawn; for it was necessary to rise early, so very early, here. Milking was done betimes; and before the milking came the skimming, which began at a little past three. It usually fell to the lot of some one or other of them to wake the rest, the first being aroused by an alarm-clock; and, as Tess was the latest arrival, and they soon discovered that she could be depended upon not to sleep though the alarm as others did, this task was thrust most frequently upon her. No sooner had the hour of three struck and whizzed, than she left her room and ran to the dairyman's door; then up the ladder to Angel's, calling him in a loud whisper; then woke her fellow-milkmaids. By the time that Tess was dressed Clare was downstairs and out in the humid air. The remaining maids and the dairyman usually gave themselves another turn on the pillow, and did not appear till a quarter of an hour later.

Tess marries Angel Clare, but he deserts her, and so she is forced to take any work she can. In the next passage, she starts work at Flintcomb Ash farm with Marion, a friend she knew in happier times at Farmer Crick's dairy farm.



The swede-field in which she and her companion were set hacking was a stretch of a hundred odd acres in one patch, on the highest ground of the farm, rising above stony lanchets or lynchets—the outcrop of siliceous veins in the chalk formation, composed of myriads of loose white flints in bulbous, cusped, and phallic shapes. The upper half of each turnip had been eaten off by the live-stock, and it was the business of the two women to grub up the lower or earthy half of the root with a hooked fork called a hacker, that it might be eaten also. Every leaf of the vegetable having already been consumed, the whole field was in colour a desolate drab; it was a complexion without features, as if a face, from chin to brow, should be only an expanse of skin. The sky wore, in another colour, the same likeness; a white vacuity of countenance with the lineaments gone. So these two upper and nether visages confronted each other all day long, the white face looking down on the brown face, and the brown face looking up at the white face, without anything standing between them but the two girls crawling over the surface of the former like flies.

Nobody came near them, and their movements showed a mechanical regularity; their forms standing enshrouded in Hessian “wroppers”—sleeved brown pinafores, tied behind to the bottom, to keep their gowns from blowing about—scant skirts revealing boots that reached high up the ankles, and yellow sheepskin gloves with gauntlets. The pensive character which the curtained hood lent to their bent heads would have reminded the observer of some early Italian conception of the two Marys.

They worked on hour after hour, unconscious of the forlorn aspect they bore in the landscape, not thinking of the justice or injustice of their lot. Even in such a position as theirs it was possible to exist in a dream. In the afternoon the rain came on again, and Marian said that they need not work

any more. But if they did not work they would not be paid; so they worked on. It was so high a situation, this field, that the rain had no occasion to fall, but raced along horizontally upon the yelling wind, sticking into them like glass splinters till they were wet through. Tess had not known till now what was really meant by that.

Later in the year, after the harvest Tess has to work alongside a mechanical threshing machine

In the afternoon the farmer made it known that the rick was to be finished that night, since there was a moon by which they could see to work, and the man with the engine was engaged for another farm on the morrow. Hence the twanging and humming and rustling proceeded with even less intermission than usual.

Thus the afternoon dragged on. The wheat-rick shrank lower, and the straw-rick grew higher, and the corn-sacks were carted away. At six o'clock the wheat-rick was about shoulder-high from the ground. But the unthreshed sheaves remaining untouched seemed countless still, notwithstanding the enormous numbers that had been gulped down by the insatiable swallower, fed by the man and Tess, through whose two young hands the greater part of them had passed.

She still stood at her post, her flushed and perspiring face coated with the corndust, and her white bonnet embrowned by it. She was the only woman whose place was upon the machine so as to be shaken bodily by its spinning, and the decrease of the stack now separated her from Marian and Izz, and prevented their changing duties with her as they had done. The incessant quivering, in which every fibre of her frame participated, had thrown her into a stupefied reverie in which her arms worked on independently of her consciousness.

Glossary

Ephemeral: lasting only for a short time

Predilection: a preference or liking for something

Vacuity: emptiness

Pensive: thoughtful

Mary Barton

by Elizabeth Gaskell (1848)

Chapter 1

There are some fields near Manchester, well known to the inhabitants as "Green Heys Fields," through which runs a public footpath to a little village about two miles distant. In spite of these fields being flat and low, nay, in spite of the want of wood (the great and usual recommendation of level tracts of land), there is a charm about them which strikes even the inhabitant of a mountainous district, who sees and feels the effect of contrast in these common-place but thoroughly rural fields, with the busy, bustling manufacturing town he left but half-an-hour ago. Here and there an old black and white farm-house, with its rambling outbuildings, speaks of other times and other occupations than those which now absorb the population of the neighbourhood. Here in their seasons may be seen the country business of hay-making, ploughing, &c., which are such pleasant mysteries for townspeople to watch; and here the artisan, deafened with noise of tongues and engines, may come to listen awhile to the delicious sounds of rural life: the lowing of cattle, the milk-maids' call, the clatter and cackle of poultry in the old farm-yards. You cannot wonder, then, that these fields are popular places of resort at every holiday time; and you would not wonder, if you could see, or I properly describe, the charm of one particular stile, that it should be, on such occasions, a crowded halting-place. Close by it is a deep, clear pond, reflecting in its dark green depths the shadowy trees that bend over it to exclude the sun. The only place where its banks are shelving is on the side next to a rambling farm-yard, belonging to one of those old-world, gabled, black and white houses I named above, overlooking the field through which the public footpath leads. The porch of this farm-house is covered by a rose-tree; and the little garden surrounding it is crowded with a medley of old-fashioned herbs and flowers, planted long ago, when the garden was the only druggist's shop within reach, and allowed to grow in scrambling and wild luxuriance—roses, lavender, sage, balm (for tea), rosemary, pinks and wallflowers, onions and jessamine, in most republican and indiscriminate order. This farm-house and garden are within a hundred yards of the stile of which

I spoke, leading from the large pasture field into a smaller one, divided by a hedge of hawthorn and black-thorn; and near this stile, on the further side, there runs a tale that primroses may often be found, and occasionally the blue sweet violet on the grassy hedge bank.

I do not know whether it was on a holiday granted by the masters, or a holiday seized in right of Nature and her beautiful spring time by the workmen, but one afternoon (now ten or a dozen years ago) these fields were much thronged. It was an early May evening—the April of the poets; for heavy showers had fallen all the morning, and the round, soft, white clouds which were blown by a west wind over the dark blue sky, were sometimes varied by one blacker and more threatening. The softness of the day tempted forth the young green leaves, which almost visibly fluttered into life; and the willows, which that morning had had only a brown reflection in the water below, were now of that tender gray-green which blends so delicately with the spring harmony of colours.

Groups of merry and somewhat loud-talking girls, whose ages might range from twelve to twenty, came by with a buoyant step. They were most of them factory girls, and wore the usual out-of-doors dress of that particular class of maidens; namely, a shawl, which at mid-day or in fine weather was allowed to be merely a shawl, but towards evening, or if the day were chilly, became a sort of Spanish mantilla or Scotch plaid, and was brought over the head and hung loosely down, or was pinned under the chin in no unpicturesque fashion.

A description from chapter 6 of *Berry Street where the workers live*

As the cold bleak spring came on (spring, in name alone), and consequently as trade continued dead, other mills shortened hours, turned off hands, and finally stopped work altogether.

Barton worked short hours; Wilson, of course, being a hand in Carsons' factory, had no work at

all. But his son, working at an engineer's, and a steady man, obtained wages enough to maintain all the family in a careful way. Still it preyed on Wilson's mind to be so long indebted to his son. He was out of spirits and depressed. Barton was morose, and soured towards mankind as a body, and the rich in particular. One evening, when the clear light at six o'clock contrasted strangely with the Christmas cold, and when the bitter wind piped down every entry, and through every cranny, Barton sat brooding over his stinted fire, and listening for Mary's step, in unacknowledged trust that her presence would cheer him. The door was opened, and Wilson came breathless in.

"You've not got a bit o' money by you, Barton?" asked he.

"Not I; who has now, I'd like to know. Whatten you want it for?"

"I donnot want it for mysel, tho' we've none to

spare. But don ye know Ben Davenport as worked at Carsons'? He's down wi' the fever, and ne'er a stick o' fire, nor a cowd potato in the house."

"I han got no money, I tell ye," said Barton. Wilson looked disappointed. Barton tried not to be interested, but he could not help it in spite of his gruffness. He rose, and went to the cupboard (his wife's pride long ago). There lay the remains of his dinner, hastily put by ready for supper. Bread, and a slice of cold fat boiled bacon. He wrapped them in his handkerchief, put them in the crown of his hat, and said—"Come, let's be going."

"Going—art thou going to work this time o' day?"

"No, stupid, to be sure not. Going to see the fellow thou spoke on." So they put on their hats and set out. On the way Wilson said Davenport was a good fellow, though too much of the Methodee; that his children were too young to work, but not too young to be cold and hungry;



that they had sunk lower and lower, and pawned thing after thing, and that now they lived in a cellar in Berry Street, off Store Street. Barton growled inarticulate words of no benevolent import to a large class of mankind, and so they went along till they arrived in Berry Street. It was unpaved; and down the middle a gutter forced its way, every now and then forming pools in the holes with which the street abounded. Never was the Old Edinburgh cry of "Gardez l'eau" more necessary than in this street. As they passed, women from their doors tossed household slops of every description into the gutter; they ran into the next pool, which overflowed and stagnated. Heaps of ashes were the stepping-stones, on which the passer-by, who cared in the least for cleanliness, took care not to put his foot. Our friends were not dainty, but even they picked their way till they got to some steps leading down into a small area, where a person standing would have his head about one foot below the level of the street, and might at the same time, without the least motion of his body, touch the window of the cellar and the damp muddy wall right opposite. You went down one step even from the foul area into the cellar in which a family of human beings lived. It was very dark inside. The window-panes were, many of them, broken and stuffed with rags, which was reason enough for the dusky light that pervaded the place even at mid-day. After the account I have given of the state of the street, no one can be surprised that on going into the cellar inhabited by Davenport, the smell was so

foetid as almost to knock the two men down. Quickly recovering themselves, as those inured to such things do, they began to penetrate the thick darkness of the place, and to see three or four little children rolling on the damp, nay wet, brick floor, through which the stagnant, filthy moisture of the street oozed up; the fire-place was empty and black; the wife sat on her husband's lair, and cried in the dank loneliness.

In this passage three policemen arrive at the factory to arrest Jem.

Dark, black were the walls, the ground, the faces around them, as they crossed the yard. But, in the furnace-house a deep and lurid red glared over all; the furnace roared with mighty flame. The men, like demons, in their fire-and-soot colouring, stood swart around, awaiting the moment when the tons of solid iron should have melted down into fiery liquid, fit to be poured, with still, heavy sound, into the delicate moulding of fine black sand, prepared to receive it. The heat was intense, and the red glare grew every instant more fierce; the policemen stood awed with the novel sight. Then, black figures, holding strange-shaped bucket shovels, came athwart the deep-red furnace light, and clear and brilliant flowed forth the iron into the appropriate mould. The buzz of voices rose again; there was time to speak, and gasp, and wipe the brows; and then, one by one, the men dispersed to some other branch of their employment.

Glossary

- Morose:** gloomy or bad-tempered
Benevolent: well-meaning
Gardez l'eau: French for 'watch out for the water', a shout that people gave before emptying buckets and bowls into the street
Foetid: sour and unpleasantly smelly

