

*Texts from Anglo-American Literature for
Children and Youth*

Učebné texty z anglo-americkéj literatúry pre deti a mládež



Marína Trnková

Trnava 2013

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“I have a passion for teaching kids to become readers, to become comfortable with a book, not daunted. Books shouldn’t be daunting, they should be funny, exciting and wonderful; and learning to be a reader gives a terrific advantage.”

Roald Dahl

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INTRODUCTION

Dear students,

these selected excerpts of notable works in Anglo-American children's and juvenile fiction were compiled in order to create a complex seminar material, which includes essential information on given literary genres in children's literature as well as tasks focusing on analytical reading, interpretation and classroom discussion. I aim at promotion of interaction of the reader in the search for meanings, understanding of these meanings and consequent reflection on them in order to fulfill the given task. Attention is paid not only to content analysis, but also to language devices and the overall style, thus considering both the verbal and supravocal layers of a literary text. Careful treatment of verbal and visual element, where relevant, is emphasized, too.

The presented portfolio of literary texts aims to consider the role of children's literature in ELT, too and thus, creation of didactic applications in an ELT classroom is encouraged.

I believe that thanks to the richness of the material offered, which covers various literary genres and periods, I can engage my students in reading for pleasure, not only for academic purposes. Finally, I would like to note that the introduced extracts do not substitute reading of complete books; they can be viewed as a demonstration of the work that can be done with a literary text and hopefully, they will provide a source of inspiration and motivation for my students.

Marína Trnková

NURSERY RHYMES AND ACTION GAMES

Nursery rhymes are simple, short and easy to remember and used to be passed down orally from generation to generation. First collections of traditional nursery rhymes date back to the 18th century and are associated with the name of John Newbery, who is also believed to be the author of the first children book, *A Little Pretty Pocket Book* (1744).

Nursery rhymes are not only a part of our cultural heritage and an essential and original part of our literary tradition; many of them are reflections, often parodies, on important political and social events, containing hidden meanings (e.g. *Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary* or *Remember, Remember*).

Nursery rhymes are not a forgotten art form; references to traditional nursery rhymes can be found in contemporary literature (e.g. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*), readers can even meet with their intentional distortion in nonsense literature (e.g. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*) or as a part of postmodern fiction, poetry and non-fiction (e.g. Barth's *Essays, Lectures, and Other Nonfiction, 1984-1994*), which, naturally, places specific demands on readers' literary background.

An amazingly wide spectrum of themes, subjects, literary genres and figures of speech is covered by traditional nursery rhymes, nursery songs and action games. The beneficial effects of their application in ELT classrooms are indisputable.

Baa, Baa, Black Sheep

Baa, baa, black sheep,
Have you any wool?
Yes sir, yes sir,
Three bags full.
One for the master,
One for the dame,
And one for the little boy
Who lives down the lane.

Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the King's horses and all the King's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again!

Alternative Words...

Humpty dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty dumpty had a great fall;
Threescore men and threescore more,
Could not place Humpty as he was before.

Wheels on the Bus

The wheels on the bus go round and round,

round and round,
round and round.

The wheels on the bus go round and round,
all day long. (Alternative: all through town, or all around the town)

The wipers on the bus (or "glass") go Swish, swish, swish (or back and forth);
Swish, swish, swish;
Swish, swish, swish.
The wipers on the bus go Swish, swish, swish,
all day long

The horn on the bus go Beep, beep, beep;
Beep, beep, beep;
Beep, beep, beep.
The horn on the bus go Beep, beep, beep,
all day long

The children on the bus go Chatter, chatter, chatter;
Chatter, chatter, chatter;
Chatter, chatter, chatter.
The children on the bus go Chatter, chatter, chatter,
all day long

The people on the bus go Up and down,
Up and down,
Up and down.
The people on the bus go Up and down,
all day long

The money on the bus (or “in the box”) go, Clink, clink, clink;
Clink, clink, clink;
Clink, clink, clink.
The money on the bus go, Clink, clink, clink,
all day long

The driver on the bus says “Move on back,
move on back, move on back;”
The Driver on the bus says “Move on back”,
all day long

The babies on the bus say “Wah, wah, wah;
Wah, wah, wah;
Wah, wah, wah”.
The babies on the bus say “Wah, wah, wah”,
all day long

The mummies on the bus say “Shush, shush, shush;
Shush, shush, shush;
Shush, shush, shush.”
The mummies on the bus say “Shush, shush, shush”
all day long.

Robin the Bobbin

Robin the Bobbin, the big-bellied Ben,
He ate more meat than fourscore men;
He ate a cow, he ate a calf,
He ate a butcher and a half,
He ate a church, he ate a steeple,
He ate a priest and all the people!
A cow and a calf,

An ox and a half,
A church and a steeple,
And all good people,
And yet he complained that his stomach
wasn't full.

Hector Protector

Hector Protector was dressed all in green;
Hector Protector was sent to the Queen.

There Was a Little Turtle

There was a little turtle
Who lived in a box.
He swam in the puddles
And climbed on the rocks.

He snapped at the mosquito,
He snapped at the flea.
He snapped at the minnow,
And he snapped at me.

He caught the mosquito,
He caught the flea.
He caught the minnow,
But he didn't catch me!

One, Two, Buckle My Shoe

One, two,
Buckle my shoe;
Three, four,
Knock at the door;
Five, six,
Pick up sticks;
Seven, eight,
Lay them straight:
Nine, ten,
A big fat hen;
Eleven, twelve,
Dig and delve;
Thirteen, fourteen,
Maids a-courting;
Fifteen, sixteen,
Maids in the kitchen;
Seventeen, eighteen,
Maids a-waiting
Nineteen, twenty,
My plate's empty.

The Queen did not like him,
Nor more did the King;
So Hector Protector was sent back again.

Number one, touch your tongue

Number one, touch your tongue.

Number two, touch your shoe

Number three, touch your knee

Number four, touch the floor.

Number five, do the jive.

Number six, pick up sticks.

Number seven, point to heaven.

Number eight, close the gate.

Number nine, touch your spine.

Number ten, Lets do it agai

Rain, Rain, Go Away

Rain rain go away,
Come again another day.
Little Johnny wants to play;
Rain, rain, go to Spain,
Never show your face again!

Alternative words...

Rain, rain, go away
Come again some other day
We want to go outside and play
Come again some other day!

Mary, Mary

Mary, Mary quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells and cockle shells
And pretty maids all in a row.

TASKS AND QUESTIONS

1. Suggest activities supporting development of both productive and receptive skills in any of the rhymes above.
 2. What activities connected with drawing, cutting, acting, singing etc. do you suggest for *Wheels on the Bus* rhyme, *Baa Baa Black Sheep* and *Humpty Dumpty*?
 3. Which literary genre suits *Robin the Bobin* and *Hector Protector*? What are the significant features?
 4. Design hand and body movement activities that can accompany *There Was a Little Turtle*, *Number One*, *Touch Your Tongue* and *One, Two Buckle My Shoe*. In addition, think of activities that provide for practising of grammatical structures in these nursery rhymes.
 5. Suggest activities connected to rhymes and phonetic concepts in *Rain, Rain, Go Away* and *Mary, Mary*.
- * While preparing for the seminar don't forget to take into consideration objective of a lesson; theme of a lesson; time needed; age group; proficiency level; types of activities [pre-; while; post-] etc. Similarly, be prepared for a classroom simulation and a classroom discussion.

FOLK TALES AND FAIRY TALES

Folk tales are part of a complex cultural heritage of a nation; just like rhymes, folk tales are part of the oral tradition and they used to be passed down from generation to generation. In general, folklore is based on beliefs, customs, observations, superstitions, etc., thus folk tales are full of magic, supernatural elements and imagery. Folk tales address universal themes such as good vs evil, finding a place in the world, love overcoming suffering, greed being punished and modesty rewarded and so on. Folk tales are populated by flat, clearcut characters that are often stereotyped.

Traditional fairy tales, as a distinct genre within folk tales, are usually associated with collectors of fairy tales, such as C. Perrault or Brothers Grimm, who collected and adapted oral tales, so that they were suitable for children and at the same time served various educational goals. Depending on the cultural background of a fairy tale, different versions can be found across countries, e.g. *Cinderella*.

Literary fairy tales are built upon the folk tradition of folk tales, their themes and motifs, but here, specific authors create new tales that are distributed in the written form. Among the well-known literary fairy tales are for example *The Nightingale and the Rose* by O. Wilde.

Snow White

Once upon a time in the middle of winter, when the flakes of snow were falling like feathers from the sky, a queen sat at a window sewing, and the frame of the window was made of black ebony. And whilst she was sewing and looking out of the window at the snow, she pricked her finger with the needle, and three drops of blood fell upon the snow. And the red looked pretty upon the white snow, and she thought to herself, would that I had a child as white as snow, with lips as red as blood, and hair as black as the wood of the window-frame.

But snow-white was growing up, and grew more and more beautiful, and when she was seven years old she was as beautiful as the day, and more beautiful than the queen herself. And once when the queen asked her looking-glass,
“looking-glass, looking-glass, on the wall, who in this land is the fairest of all.”
It answered,
“thou art fairer than all who are here, lady queen. But more beautiful still is snow-white, as I ween.”

And as she was so beautiful the huntsman had pity on her and said, run away, then, you poor child. The wild beasts will soon have devoured you, thought he, and yet it seemed as if a stone had been rolled from his heart since it was no longer needful for him to kill her. And as a young bear just then came running by he stabbed it, and cut out its lung and liver and took them to the queen as proof that the child was dead. The cook had to salt them, and the wicked queen ate them, and thought she had eaten the lung and liver of snow-white.

But now the poor child was all alone in the great forest, and so terrified that she looked at all the leaves on the trees, and did not know what to do. Then she began to run, and ran over sharp stones and through thorns, and the wild beasts ran past her, but did her no harm. She ran as long as her feet would go until it was almost evening, then she saw a little cottage and went into it to rest herself. Everything in the cottage was small, but neater and cleaner than can be told. There was a table on which was a white cover, and seven little plates, and on each plate a little spoon, moreover, there were seven little knives and forks, and seven little mugs. Against the wall stood seven little beds side by side, and covered with snow-white counterpanes.

The dwarfs said, if you will take care of our house, cook, make the beds, wash, sew and knit, and if you will keep everything neat and clean you can stay with us and you shall want for nothing. Yes, said snow-white, with all my heart. And she stayed with them.

When the apple was ready she painted her face, and dressed herself up as a farmer's wife, and so she went over the seven mountains to the seven dwarfs. She knocked at the door. Snow-white put her head out of the window and said, I cannot let anyone in, the seven dwarfs have forbidden me. It is all the same to me, answered the woman, I shall soon get rid of my apples. There, I will give you one.

It happened, however, that a king's son came into the forest, and went to the dwarfs, house to spend the night. He saw the coffin on the mountain, and the beautiful snow-white within it, and read what was written upon it in golden letters. Then he said to the dwarfs, let me have the coffin, I will give you whatever you want for it. But the dwarfs answered, we will not part with it for all the gold in the world. Then he said, let me have it as a gift, for I cannot live without seeing snow-white. I will honor and prize her as my dearest possession. As he spoke in this way the good dwarfs took pity upon him, and gave him the coffin.

And snow-white was willing, and went with him, and their wedding was held with great show and splendor.

Little Red Riding Hood (the Grimm version)

There was once a sweet little maid, much beloved by everybody, but most of all by her grandmother, who never knew how to make enough of her. Once she sent her a little riding hood of red velvet, and as it was very becoming to her, and she never wore anything else, people called her Little Red Riding Hood. One day her mother said to her, "Come, Little Red Riding Hood, here are some cakes and a flask of wine for you to take to grandmother; she is weak and ill, and they will do her good."

The wolf thought to himself, "That tender young thing would be a delicious morsel, and would taste better than the old one; I must manage somehow to get both of them."

"O grandmother, what large ears you have!" "The better to hear with." "O grandmother, what great eyes you have!" "The better to see with." "O grandmother, what large hands you have!" "The better to take hold of you with." "But, grandmother, what a terrible large mouth you have!" "The better to devour you!" And no sooner had the wolf said it than he made one bound from the bed, and swallowed up poor Little Red Riding Hood.

When he made a few snips Little Red Riding Hood appeared, and after a few more snips she jumped out and cried, "Oh dear, how frightened I have been! It is so dark inside the wolf." And then out came the old grandmother, still living and breathing. But Little Red Riding Hood went and quickly fetched some large stones, with which she filled the wolf's body, so that when he waked up, and was going to rush away, the stones were so heavy that he sank down and fell dead.

Cinderella

A rich man's wife became sick, and when she felt that her end was drawing near, she called her only daughter to her bedside and said, "Dear child, remain pious and good, and then our dear God will always protect you, and I will look down on you from heaven and be near you." With this she closed her eyes and died.

This wife brought two daughters into the house with her. They were beautiful, with fair faces, but evil and dark hearts. Times soon grew very bad for the poor stepchild.

One day it happened that the father was going to the fair, and he asked his two stepdaughters what he should bring back for them.

"Beautiful dresses," said the one.

"Pearls and jewels," said the other.

“And you, Cinderella,” he said, “what do you want?”

“Father, break off for me the first twig that brushes against your hat on your way home.”

Cinderella went to this tree three times every day, and beneath it she wept and prayed. A white bird came to the tree every time, and whenever she expressed a wish, the bird would throw down to her what she had wished for.

Now it happened that the king proclaimed a festival that was to last three days. All the beautiful young girls in the land were invited, so that his son could select a bride for himself. When the two stepsisters heard that they too had been invited, they were in high spirits.

The girl went through the back door into the garden, and called out, “You tame pigeons, you turtledoves, and all you birds beneath the sky, come and help me to gather:

The good ones go into the pot,
The bad ones go into your crop.”

When evening came Cinderella wanted to leave, and the prince tried to escort her, but she ran away from him so quickly that he could not follow her. The prince, however, had set a trap. He had had the entire stairway smeared with pitch. When she ran down the stairs, her left slipper stuck in the pitch. The prince picked it up. It was small and dainty, and of pure gold.

Then her mother gave her a knife, and said, “Cut a piece off your heel. When you are queen you will no longer have to go on foot.”

Then the wedding with the prince was to be held, the two false sisters came, wanting to gain favor with Cinderella and to share her good fortune. When the bridal couple walked into the church, the older sister walked on their right side and the younger on their left side, and the pigeons pecked out one eye from each of them. Afterwards, as they came out of the church, the older one was on the left side, and the younger one on the right side, and then the pigeons pecked out the other eye from each of them. And thus, for their wickedness and falsehood, they were punished with blindness as long as they lived.

Sea Witch

Kirk was a farmer and his land began at the foot of the mountain in the east and rolled over the fields and across streams until it tumbled over the cliffs to the sea. Kirk was alone but never lonely.

Kirk had always loved the sea. It was a part of him. [...] Mac, too, found the beach exciting. Mac was all sheepdog, from the tip of his tail to the tip of his cold inquisitive nose.

It was Mac who first played with the seals. [...] it seemed to Kirk that the seals spent more and more time on the beach. One seal, more slender and agile than the others, often lingered at the water's edge after the others had disappeared.

As Kirk watched, he saw Mac jump at the seal and to his horror, the seal's skin came away in the dog's mouth. At last Kirk reached the dog. The seal skin now lay on the sand and beside it, huddled in a wet brown cloak, was a young girl.

He cleaned the spare room for her. Each morning Kirk and Mac set off for work leaving the girl behind. Her early clumsiness soon disappeared and Kirk thought her more beautiful each day. Kirk called her Ila. [...] He claimed that she had put a spell on him and teasingly called her his Sea Witch.

The baby was named Fiona and to Kirk's delight grew more and more like her mother everyday.

"It's the Northern Star", said Kirk. "There are fifty people on board, and all will be drowned." Again and again they tried to fire the rescue line. Suddenly Ila left Kirk and scrambled down the cliff path. She grasped the line, tied it around her slender waist and ran into the sea. [...] Then from the ship came the signal that the line had been secured. Soon the hawser was in place and the first of the victims pulled to safety. They all spoke of the young girl who had climbed on to the ship. One man spoke also of the seals that swam alongside her and seemed to be guiding her.

Ila said little about the rescue but Kirk could see a new sadness in her smile, a longing in her eyes that he did not understand. She no longer wanted to work with him in the fields. Even Mac was sad. Ila spent more and more time on the beach. Kirk would find her sitting, pale and motionless on the sands looking out to sea, her face so sad that he knew that he would soon lose her.

One day Kirk found Fiona alone on the beach and he knew he would not see his beloved Ila again. [...] Each evening Kirk and Fiona and Mac searched the sea.

The years passed and Fiona grew up and had a family on her own. One evening Kirk kissed Fiona and held her close as he had done so often when she was a little girl, went out in his boat with Mac and did not come back.

The seals still come ashore and the people are glad to see them. They will tell you that as long as the seals are there, there will never be shipwrecks along this stretch of coastline again.

Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900)

"I have the simplest tastes. I am always satisfied with the best."

The Nightingale and the Rose

"She said that she would dance with me if I brought her red roses," cried the young Student; "but in all my garden there is no red rose." From her nest in the holm-oak tree the Nightingale heard him, and she looked out through the leaves, and wondered.

"The Prince gives a ball to-morrow night," murmured the young Student, "and my love will be of the company. If I bring her a red rose she will dance with me till dawn. If I bring her a red rose, I shall hold her in my arms, and she will lean her head upon my shoulder, and her hand will be clasped in mine. But there is no red rose in my garden, so I shall sit lonely, and she will pass me by. She will have no heed of me, and my heart will break."

"Here indeed is the true lover," said the Nightingale. "What I sing of, he suffers—what is joy to me, to him is pain. Surely Love is a wonderful thing. It is more precious than emeralds, and dearer than fine opals. Pearls and pomegranates cannot buy it, nor is it set forth in the marketplace. It may not be purchased of the merchants, nor can it be weighed out in the balance for gold."

So the Nightingale flew over to the Rose-tree that was growing beneath the Student's window. "Give me a red rose," she cried, "and I will sing you my sweetest song."

But the Tree shook its head.

"My roses are red," it answered, "as red as the feet of the dove, and redder than the great fans of coral that wave and wave in the ocean-cavern. But the winter has chilled my veins, and the frost has nipped my buds, and the storm has broken my branches, and I shall have no roses at all this year."

"One red rose is all I want," cried the Nightingale, "only one red rose! Is there no way by which I can get it?"

"There is away," answered the Tree; "but it is so terrible that I dare not tell it to you."

"Tell it to me," said the Nightingale, "I am not afraid."

"If you want a red rose," said the Tree, "you must build it out of music by moonlight, and stain it with your own heart's-blood. You must sing to me with your breast against a thorn. All night long you must sing to me, and the thorn must pierce your heart, and your life-blood must flow into my veins, and become mine."

So the Nightingale pressed closer against the thorn, and the thorn touched her heart, and a fierce pang of pain shot through her. Bitter, bitter was the pain, and wilder and wilder grew her song, for she sang of the Love that is perfected by Death, of the Love that dies not in the tomb.

And the marvellous rose became crimson, like the rose of the eastern sky. Crimson was the girdle of petals, and crimson as a ruby was the heart.

"Look, look!" cried the Tree, "the rose is finished now"; but the Nightingale made no answer, for she was lying dead in the long grass, with the thorn in her heart.

And at noon the Student opened his window and looked out.

"Why, what a wonderful piece of luck!" he cried; "here is a red rose! I have never seen any rose like it in all my life. It is so beautiful that I am sure it has a long Latin name"; and he leaned down and plucked it.

"You said that you would dance with me if I brought you a red rose," cried the Student. "Here is the reddest rose in all the world. You will wear it to-night next your heart, and as we dance together it will tell you how I love you."

But the girl frowned.

"I am afraid it will not go with my dress," she answered; "and, besides, the Chamberlain's nephew has sent me some real jewels, and everybody knows that jewels cost far more than flowers."

"Well, upon my word, you are very ungrateful," said the Student angrily; and he threw the rose into the street, where it fell into the gutter, and a cart-wheel went over it.

So he returned to his room and pulled out a great dusty book, and began to read.

TASKS AND QUESTIONS

1. Working with the folk tales and traditional fairy tales *Snow White*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Cinderella* and *Sea Witch* comment on some of the universal features that can be found in all of these tales concerning setting, characters, plot, structure, themes, motifs and language (figures of speech, etc.). Design didactic application of selected parts of the given tales. Point to the differences concerning versions of these fairy tales in Slovak culture.

	Snow White	Little Red Riding Hood	Cinderella	Sea Witch
setting				
characters				
plot				
structure				
themes				
motifs				
language				

2. After reading *The Nightingale and the Rose* summarise the main ideas of this literary fairy tale and be ready to discuss your statements (always supported by quotations). What are the moral lessons incorporated in the story? How are they in accordance with Wilde's perception and criticism of society?

PICTURE BOOKS

Note: Since the illustrations in picture books are crucial for overall understanding and interpretation, let me remind you again that the presented excerpts do not substitute reading the original materials. The Tasks and Questions section also relates to the original versions of the books mentioned. The offered sample material below has solely an introductory and illustrative purpose.

Picture books form a specific genre and are not to be confused with illustrated books. Both a picture book and an illustrated book communicate through verbal and visual elements, but the relationship between a text and an illustration in a picture book is far more complex – the illustrations have at least an equal importance while creating and negotiating the meaning of the work, the illustrations often convey the essential message. It can be stated that text and illustration form an inseparable unit. Many modern picture books are aimed at juvenile and adult readers; because of the seriousness of the themes, but also postmodern literary techniques that are rather demanding on cognitive processes and background knowledge of the reader.

David McKee (1935 –)

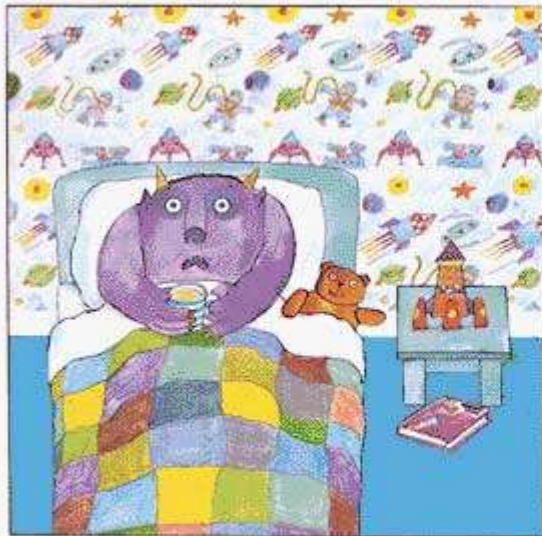
Not Now, Bernard



"Hello, Dad," said Bernard.



"Not now, Bernard," said his father.



"But I'm a monster," said the monster.



"Not now, Bernard," said Bernard's mother.

Original source: McKee, D.: Not Now, Bernard, 1980. The above pictures taken from <http://bookvivisection.blogspot.cz/2012/06/not-now-bernard-david-mckee.html>

“Hello, Dad,” said Bernard.

“Not now, Bernard,” said his father.

“Hello, Mum,” said Bernard.

“Not now, Bernard,” said his mother.

“There’s a monster in the garden and it is going to eat me,” said Bernard.

“Not now, Bernard,” said his mother.

Bernard went into the garden.

“Hello, monster,” he said to the monster.

The monster ate Bernard up, every bit.

Then the monster went indoors.

“ROAR,” went the monster behind Bernard’s mother.

“Not now, Bernard,” said Bernard’s mother.

The monster bit Bernard’s father.

“Not now, Bernard,” said Bernard’s father.

“Your dinner’s ready,” said Bernard’s mother.

She put the dinner in front of the television.

The monster ate the dinner.

Then it watched the television.

Then it read one of Bernard’s comics.

And broke one of his toys.

“Go to bed. I’ve taken up your milk,” called Bernard’s mother.

The monster went upstairs.

“But I’m a monster,” said the monster.

“Not now, Bernard,” said Bernard’s mother.

Maurice Sendak (1928 – 2012)

Where the Wild Things Are



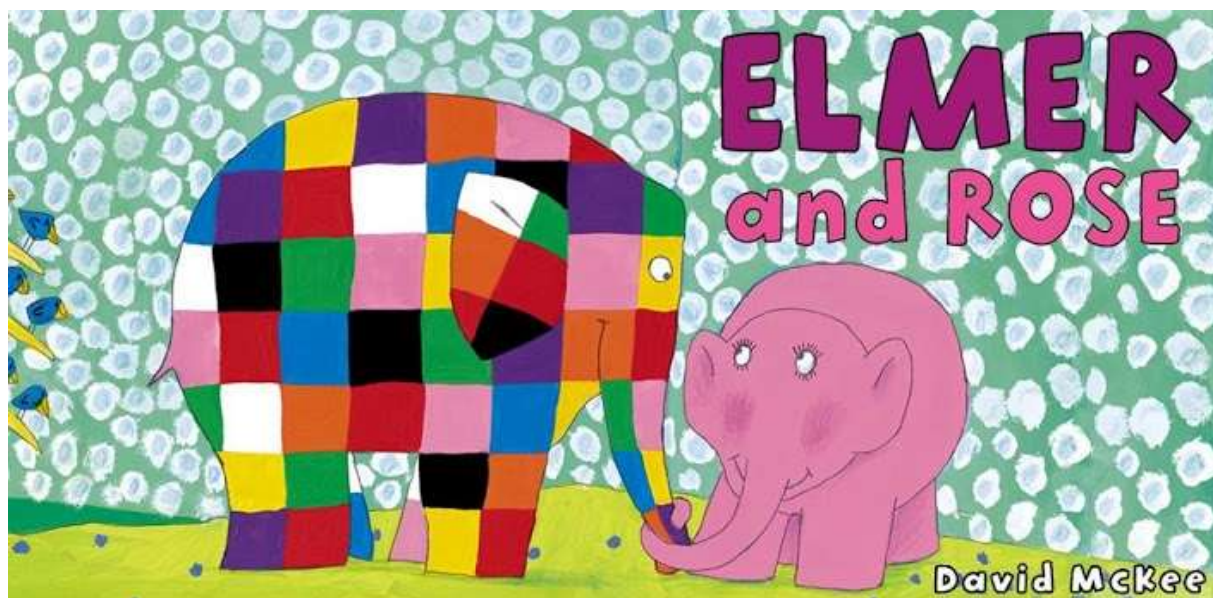
Original source: Sendak, M.: Where the Wild Things Are, 1963. The picture above taken from <http://puppybunnyguineapretty.wordpress.com/2012/05/09/where-the-wild-things-are/>

The night Max wore his wolf suit and made mischief of one kind and another. His mother called him “WILD THING!” and Max said “I’LL EAT YOU UP!” so he was sent to bed without eating anything. That very night in Max’s room a forest grew and grew – and grew until his ceiling hung with vines and the walls became the world all around and an ocean tumbled by with a private boat for Max and he sailed off through night and day and in and out of weeks and almost over a year to where the wild things are. And when he came to the place where the wild things are they roared their terrible roars and gnashed their terrible teeth and rolled their terrible eyes and showed their terrible claws – till Max said “BE STILL!” and tamed them with a magic trick of staring into their yellow eyes without blinking once and they were frightened and called him the most wild thing of all and made him king of all wild things. “And now,” cried Max, “let the wild rumpus start!” “Now stop!” Max said and sent the wild things off to bed without their supper. And Max the king of all wild things was lonely and wanted to be where someone loved him best of all. Then all around from far away across the world he smelled good things to eat so he gave up being king of where the wild things are. But the wild things cried, “Oh please don’t go – we’ll eat you up – we love you so!” And Max said, “No!” The wild things roared their terrible roars and gnashed their terrible teeth and rolled their terrible eyes and showed their terrible claws but Max stepped into his private boat and waved good-bye and sailed back over a year and in and out of weeks and through a day and into the night of his very own room where he found his supper waiting for him – and it was still hot.

David McKee (1935 –)

Elmer and Rose

“Join Elmer and his friend Rose in a new story about what it really means to be unique. Grandpa Eldo asks Elmer and his cousin Wilbur to help a young elephant find her way back to her herd— and they get a shock when they see she is pink! No wonder she is called Rose. As they help Rose find her herd, Elmer and Wilbur learn a valuable lesson about being different and fitting in.”



Original source: McKee, D.: Elmer and Rose, 1989. The picture above taken from https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.oceanhouse_media.bookelmerandrose_app

A young friend of Elmer’s named Rose blushes from her head to her toes, or sometimes instead from her toes to her head but never from her tail to her nose.

Elmer, the patchwork elephant, was with his cousin Wilbur. They were looking at the herd of elephants. “Jolly fellows,” smiled Wilbur, “but not exactly unique.” “They’re all unique,” said Elmer. “Just not as different as us. Imagine a herd like you or me.” At that moment, Bird arrived and said, “Grandpa Eldo wants you two.” “Come on, Wilbur,” said Elmer. Grandpa Eldo was looking under a bush. “Where is she?” he muttered. Then, seeing Elmer and Wilbur, he said, “She must be hiding from you two.” “She?” said Elmer. “Who are you talking about?” “Rose,” said Eldo. “She wandered away from a herd of elephants that passed nearby. You two can take her back to them. Ah! There she is. Don’t be frightened, Rose. Come and meet Elmer and Wilbur.” From behind a tree peeped a young elephant— a pink elephant. “Oh!” said Elmer and Wilbur in surprise. “Very pretty,” Elmer added quickly. Rose became even pinker. “She blushes very easily,” whispered Eldo. “I imagine that’s why she’s called Rose.” “Pleased to meet you,” Rose said, and she blushed again. “You’ll find the tracks of the herd by the lake. Just follow them,” said Eldo. “You’ll go faster than I would. Good-bye, Rose.” Rose said good-bye very sweetly, blushed a deeper pink, and ran after Elmer and Wilbur. At the lake, they met another elephant. Rose stared and hid between Elmer and Wilbur. “Hello, Elmer. Hello, Wilbur,” said the elephant. “Hello...” he continued awkwardly, looking at Rose. “Rose,” said Elmer helpfully. After the elephant had gone, Rose said, “That’s a strange one.” Every so often, to make the journey more fun, they raced one another. Rose loved that because somehow she always won, and every time, she blushed even pinker. Between races, Wilbur played tricks with his voice. He made his voice roar from behind a rock and shout from a treetop. Rose squealed with excitement, blushed almost red, and held onto Elmer’s trunk. Elmer just chuckled. Suddenly Rose said excitedly, “Listen! They’re just over the hill. I’ll go alone now. You

may upset the others. They're quite shy. You're all such unusual elephants, especially the strange gray one we saw. Thank you for bringing me back." "Come and visit us sometime," Elmer called after her. "Strange gray one? What did she mean?" asked Wilbur. "I think she was joking," said Elmer. From the hill, they watched Rose safely join the herd.

"She wasn't joking," said Elmer. "No wonder she thought the gray elephant was strange." The elephants in Rose's herd were all... PINK! Going home, Elmer and Wilbur were met by Eldo.

"You knew about the pink elephants, didn't you, Grandpa Eldo?" said Elmer. "Yes, I wanted you to see them," said Eldo. "Rose was nice," said Wilbur. "I thought she was unique, and she thought the gray elephant was unique." "They're probably all nice, unique or not," said Elmer. Wilbur grinned. "Remember what you said, Elmer? Imagine a herd like one of us." "Especially like you, Elmer," laughed Eldo. Elmer smiled and said nothing. He was imagining a herd of elephants like himself...

TASKS AND QUESTIONS

1. After reading the stories comment on the following: word-picture interaction; visual and verbal intertextuality (in case it is present); themes and aims of the given stories; plot; characters; symbols.
2. Consider the feelings of the characters in each of the stories at different times, think of their verbal and visual depiction. Pay attention also to the setting, colors, shapes, distances, etc. What do they indicate?
3. Suggest didactic application of these picture books (indicate the objective of a lesson; theme of a lesson; time needed; age group; proficiency level; types of activities [pre-; while; post-], etc.) and be ready to discuss it in the classroom or for a classroom simulation.

ANIMAL BIOLOGICAL STORIES

Animal biological stories, also referred to as realistic animal stories, offer the reader an extraordinary insight into the life of animals, where the animal characters act and behave mainly according to their biological instincts and within the borders of natural laws. Stories may be written from human point of view, animal point view or a combination of both. Generally speaking, animal stories stress the animals' perspective, often concentrating on man – animal relationship, animals' personality and ability to reason.

Wild animal story, a genre that originated in Canada, combines elements of nature writing and fiction. It reflects the idea of preservation of nature and wilderness; it often depicts the Darwinian survival of the fittest and advocates animals' rights.

Jack London (1876 – 1916)

“I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet.”

White Fang

CHAPTER I

THE TRAIL OF THE MEAT

Dark spruce forest frowned on either side the frozen waterway. The trees had been stripped by a recent wind of their white covering of frost, and they seemed to lean towards each other, black and ominous, in the fading light. A vast silence reigned over the land. The land itself was a desolation, lifeless, without movement, so lone and cold that the spirit of it was not even that of sadness. There was a hint in it of laughter, but of a laughter more terrible than any sadness—a laughter that was mirthless as the smile of the sphinx, a laughter cold as the frost and partaking of the grimness of infallibility. It was the masterful and incommunicable wisdom of eternity laughing at the futility of life and the effort of life. It was the Wild, the savage, frozen – hearted Northland Wild.

CHAPTER IV

THE BATTLE OF THE FANGS

The young leader snarled terribly, but his snarl broke midmost into a tickling cough. Bleeding and coughing, already stricken, he sprang at the elder and fought while life faded from him, his legs going weak beneath him, the light of day dulling on his eyes, his blows and springs falling shorter and shorter. And all the while the she-wolf sat on her haunches and smiled. She was made glad in vague ways by the battle, for this was the love – making of the Wild, the sex-tragedy of the natural world that was tragedy only to those that died. To those that survived it was not tragedy, but realisation and achievement.

CHAPTER VI

THE GREY CUB

He was a fierce little cub. So were his brothers and sisters. It was to be expected. He was a carnivorous animal. He came of a breed of meat-killers and meat-eaters. His father and mother lived wholly upon meat. The milk he had sucked with his first flickering life, was milk transformed directly from meat, and now, at a month old, when his eyes had been open for but a week, he was beginning himself to eat meat—meat half-digested by the she-wolf and disgorged for the five growing cubs that already made too great demand upon her breast. But he was, further, the fiercest of the litter. He could make a louder rasping growl than any of them. His tiny rages were much more terrible than theirs. It was he that first learned the trick of rolling a fellow-cub over with a cunning paw-stroke. And it was he that first gripped another cub by the ear and pulled and tugged and growled through jaws tight-clenched. And certainly it was he that caused the mother the most trouble in keeping her litter from the mouth of the cave.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAW OF MEAT

He began to accompany his mother on the meat-trail, and he saw much of the killing of meat and began to play his part in it. And in his own dim way he learned the law of meat. There were two kinds of life—his own kind and the other kind. His own kind included his mother and himself. The other kind included all live things that moved. But the other kind was divided. One portion was what his own kind killed and ate. This portion was composed of the non-killers and the small killers. The

other portion killed and ate his own kind, or was killed and eaten by his own kind. And out of this classification arose the law. The aim of life was meat. Life itself was meat. Life lived on life. There were the eaters and the eaten. The law was: EAT OR BE EATEN. He did not formulate the law in clear, set terms and moralise about it. He did not even think the law; he merely lived the law without thinking about it at all.

CHAPTER X THE BONDAGE

But the bane of his life was Lip-lip. Larger, older, and stronger, Lip-lip had selected White Fang for his special object of persecution. While Fang fought willingly enough, but he was outclassed. His enemy was too big. Lip-lip became a nightmare to him. Whenever he ventured away from his mother, the bully was sure to appear, trailing at his heels, snarling at him, picking upon him, and watchful of an opportunity, when no man-animal was near, to spring upon him and force a fight. As Lip-lip invariably won, he enjoyed it hugely. It became his chief delight in life, as it became White Fang's chief torment. But the effect upon White Fang was not to cow him. Though he suffered most of the damage and was always defeated, his spirit remained unsubdued. Yet a bad effect was produced. He became malignant and morose. His temper had been savage by birth, but it became more savage under this unending persecution.

But it was not altogether an unhappy bondage. There was much to interest him. Something was always happening. There was no end to the strange things these gods did, and he was always curious to see. Besides, he was learning how to get along with Grey Beaver. Obedience, rigid, undeviating obedience, was what was exacted of him; and in return he escaped beatings and his existence was tolerated. Nay, Grey Beaver himself sometimes tossed him a piece of meat, and defended him against the other dogs in the eating of it. And such a piece of meat was of value. It was worth more, in some strange way, than a dozen pieces of meat from the hand of a squaw. Grey Beaver never petted nor caressed. Perhaps it was the weight of his hand, perhaps his justice, perhaps the sheer power of him, and perhaps it was all these things that influenced White Fang; for a certain tie of attachment was forming between him and his surly lord.

CHAPTER XVI THE MAD GOD

This man was called "Beauty" by the other men of the fort. No one knew his first name, and in general he was known in the country as Beauty Smith. But he was anything save a beauty. To antithesis was due his naming. He was preeminently unbeautiful. Nature had been niggardly with him. He was a small man to begin with; and upon his meagre frame was deposited an even more strikingly meagre head. Its apex might be likened to a point. In fact, in his boyhood, before he had been named Beauty by his fellows, he had been called "Pinhead."

CHAPTER XVII THE REIGN OF HATE

The men outside shouted and applauded, while Beauty Smith, in an ecstasy of delight, gloated over the rippling and manging performed by White Fang. There was no hope for the mastiff from the first. He was too ponderous and slow. In the end, while Beauty Smith beat White Fang back with a club, the mastiff was dragged out by its owner. Then there was a payment of bets, and money clinked in Beauty Smith's hand. If Beauty Smith had in him a devil, White Fang had another; and the two of them raged against each other unceasingly. In the days before, White Fang had had the wisdom to cower down and submit to a man with a club in his hand; but this wisdom now left him. The mere

sight of Beauty Smith was sufficient to send him into transports of fury. And when they came to close quarters, and he had been beaten back by the club, he went on growling and snarling, and showing his fangs. The last growl could never be extracted from him. No matter how terribly he was beaten, he had always another growl; and when Beauty Smith gave up and withdrew, the defiant growl followed after him, or White Fang sprang at the bars of the cage bellowing his hatred.

CHAPTER XX THE LOVE-MASTER

He licked his chops and waited. The god (Weedon Scott) went on talking. In his voice was kindness—something of which White Fang had no experience whatever. And within him it aroused feelings which he had likewise never experienced before. He was aware of a certain strange satisfaction, as though some need were being gratified, as though some void in his being were being filled. Then again came the prod of his instinct and the warning of past experience. The gods were ever crafty, and they had unguessed ways of attaining their ends.

But the god talked on softly, and ever the hand rose and fell with non-hostile pats. White Fang experienced dual feelings. It was distasteful to his instinct. It restrained him, opposed the will of him toward personal liberty. And yet it was not physically painful. On the contrary, it was even pleasant, in a physical way. The patting movement slowly and carefully changed to a rubbing of the ears about their bases, and the physical pleasure even increased a little. Yet he continued to fear, and he stood on guard, expectant of unguessed evil, alternately suffering and enjoying as one feeling or the other came uppermost and swayed him.

CHAPTER XXIV THE CALL OF KIND

And yet he remained somehow different from other dogs. He knew the law even better than did the dogs that had known no other life, and he observed the law more punctiliously; but still there was about him a suggestion of lurking ferocity, as though the Wild still lingered in him and the wolf in him merely slept.

CHAPTER XXV THE SLEEPING WOLF

Hand-clapping and pleased cries from the gods greeted the performance. He was surprised, and looked at them in a puzzled way. Then his weakness asserted itself, and he lay down, his ears cocked, his head on one side, as he watched the puppy. The other puppies came sprawling toward him, to Collie's great disgust; and he gravely permitted them to clamber and tumble over him. At first, amid the applause of the gods, he betrayed a trifle of his old self-consciousness and awkwardness. This passed away as the puppies' antics and mauling continued, and he lay with half-shut patient eyes, drowsing in the sun.

TASKS AND QUESTIONS

1. Provide a brief synopsis of the story making use of the chapter titles.

PART I: The Wild

The Trail of the Meat	.....
The She-Wolf	.....
The Hunger Cry	.....

PART II: Born of the Wild

The Battle of the Fangs	.....
The Lair	.....
The Gray Cub	.....
The Wall of the World	.....
The Law of Meat	.....

PART III: The Gods of the Wild

The Makers of Fire	.....
The Bondage	.....
The Outcast	.....
The Trail of the Gods	.....
The Covenant	.....
The Famine	.....

PART IV: The Superior Gods

The Enemy of His Kind	.....
The Mad God	.....
The Reign of Hate	.....
The Clinging Death	.....
The Indomitable	.....
The Love-Master	.....

PART V: The Tame

The Long Trail	.....
The Southland	.....
The God's Domain	.....
The Call of Kind	.....
The Sleeping Wolf	.....

2. Summarise the central themes of the novel.
3. Who is the narrator of the novel?
4. Contrast White Fang's different masters and the impact of their treatment on White Fang.
5. Give examples of the laws of the wild that can be found throughout the novel.
6. Suggest didactic application of selected chapters or excerpts.
7. Search for naturalistic depiction of the setting, characters and their relationships (man – animal; animal – animal).

Anna Sewell (1820 – 1878)

“There is no religion without love, and people may talk as much as they like about their religion, but if it does not teach them to be good and kind to man and beast, it is all a sham.”

Black Beauty

01 My Early Home

The first place that I can well remember was a large pleasant meadow with a pond of clear water in it. Some shady trees leaned over it, and rushes and water-lilies grew at the deep end. Over the hedge on one side we looked into a plowed field, and on the other we looked over a gate at our master's house, which stood by the roadside; at the top of the meadow was a grove of fir trees, and at the bottom a running brook overhung by a steep bank.

“I wish you to pay attention to what I am going to say to you. The colts who live here are very good colts, but they are cart-horse colts, and of course they have not learned manners. You have been well-bred and well-born; your father has a great name in these parts, and your grandfather won the cup two years at the Newmarket races; your grandmother had the sweetest temper of any horse I ever knew, and I think you have never seen me kick or bite. I hope you will grow up gentle and good, and never learn bad ways; do your work with a good will, lift your feet up well when you trot, and never bite or kick even in play.”

I have never forgotten my mother's advice; I knew she was a wise old horse, and our master thought a great deal of her. Her name was Duchess, but he often called her Pet.

03 My Breaking In

I was now beginning to grow handsome; my coat had grown fine and soft, and was bright black. I had one white foot and a pretty white star on my forehead. I was thought very handsome; my master would not sell me till I was four years old; he said lads ought not to work like men, and colts ought not to work like horses till they were quite grown up.

Every one may not know what breaking in is, therefore I will describe it. It means to teach a horse to wear a saddle and bridle, and to carry on his back a man, woman or child; to go just the way they wish, and to go quietly. Besides this he has to learn to wear a collar, a crupper, and a breeching, and to stand still while they are put on; then to have a cart or a chaise fixed behind, so that he cannot walk or trot without dragging it after him; and he must go fast or slow, just as his driver wishes. He must never start at what he sees, nor speak to other horses, nor bite, nor kick, nor have any will of his own; but always do his master's will, even though he may be very tired or hungry; but the worst of

all is, when his harness is once on, he may neither jump for joy nor lie down for weariness. So you see this breaking in is a great thing.

08 Ginger's Story Continued

"I like to toss my head about and hold it as high as any horse; but fancy now yourself, if you tossed your head up high and were obliged to hold it there, and that for hours together, not able to move it at all, except with a jerk still higher, your neck aching till you did not know how to bear it. Besides that, to have two bits instead of one—and mine was a sharp one, it hurt my tongue and my jaw, and the blood from my tongue colored the froth that kept flying from my lips as I chafed and fretted at the bits and rein. It was worst when we had to stand by the hour waiting for our mistress at some grand party or entertainment, and if I fretted or stamped with impatience the whip was laid on. It was enough to drive one mad."

18 Going for the Doctor

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.

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.

19 Only Ignorance

"But if you think I am hard on the boy I will try to give him a good word to-morrow—that is, I mean if Beauty is better."

"Well, John, thank you. I knew you did not wish to be too hard, and I am glad you see it was only ignorance."

John's voice almost startled me as he answered:

"Only ignorance! only ignorance! how can you talk about only ignorance? Don't you know that it is the worst thing in the world, next to wickedness?—and which does the most mischief heaven only knows. If people can say, 'Oh! I did not know, I did not mean any harm,' they think it is all right."

20 Joe Green

The note was delivered, and we were quietly returning when we came to the brick-field. Here we saw a cart heavily laden with bricks; the wheels had stuck fast in the stiff mud of some deep ruts, and the carter was shouting and flogging the two horses unmercifully. Joe pulled up. It was a sad sight. There were the two horses straining and struggling with all their might to drag the cart out, but they could not move it; the sweat streamed from their legs and flanks, their sides heaved, and every muscle was strained, while the man, fiercely pulling at the head of the fore horse, swore and lashed most brutally.

“Hold hard,” said Joe; “don’t go on flogging the horses like that; the wheels are so stuck that they cannot move the cart.”

The man took no heed, but went on lashing.

“Stop! Pray stop!” said Joe. “I’ll help you to lighten the cart; they can’t move it now.”

“Mind your own business, you impudent young rascal, and I’ll mind mine!” The man was in a towering passion and the worse for drink, and laid on the whip again. Joe turned my head, and the next moment we were going at a round gallop toward the house of the master brick-maker. I cannot say if John would have approved of our pace, but Joe and I were both of one mind, and so angry that we could not have gone slower.

The house stood close by the roadside. Joe knocked at the door, and shouted, “Halloo! Is Mr. Clay at home?” The door was opened, and Mr. Clay himself came out.

“Halloo, young man! You seem in a hurry; any orders from the squire this morning?”

“No, Mr. Clay, but there’s a fellow in your brick-yard flogging two horses to death. I told him to stop, and he wouldn’t; I said I’d help him to lighten the cart, and he wouldn’t; so I have come to tell you. Pray, sir, go.” Joe’s voice shook with excitement.

“Thank ye, my lad,” said the man, running in for his hat; then pausing for a moment, “Will you give evidence of what you saw if I should bring the fellow up before a magistrate?”

“That I will,” said Joe, “and glad too.” The man was gone, and we were on our way home at a smart trot.

25 Reuben Smith

If Smith had been in his right senses he would have been sensible of something wrong in my pace, but he was too drunk to notice.

Beyond the turnpike was a long piece of road, upon which fresh stones had just been laid—large sharp stones over which no horse could be driven quickly without risk of danger. Over this road, with one shoe gone, I was forced to gallop at my utmost speed, my rider meanwhile cutting into me with his whip, and with wild curses urging me to go still faster. Of course my shoeless foot suffered dreadfully; the hoof was broken and split down to the very quick, and the inside was terribly cut by the sharpness of the stones.

This could not go on; no horse could keep his footing under such circumstances; the pain was too great. I stumbled, and fell with violence on both my knees.

49 My Last Home

I was led to my new home, placed in a comfortable stable, fed, and left to myself. The next day, when the groom was cleaning my face, he said: “That is just the star that ‘Black Beauty’ had; he is much the same height, too. I wonder where he is now.” A little further on he came to the place in my neck where I was bled and where a little knot was left in the skin. He almost started, and began to look me over carefully, talking to himself.

“White star in the forehead, one white foot on the off side, this little knot just in that place;” then looking at the middle of my back—“and, as I am alive, there is that little patch of white hair that John used to call ‘Beauty’s three-penny bit’. It must be ‘Black Beauty’! Why, Beauty! Beauty! do

you know me?—little Joe Green, that almost killed you?” And he began patting and patting me as if he was quite overjoyed.

I could not say that I remembered him, for now he was a fine grown young fellow, with black whiskers and a man’s voice, but I was sure he knew me, and that he was Joe Green, and I was very glad. I put my nose up to him, and tried to say that we were friends. I never saw a man so pleased.

Willie always speaks to me when he can, and treats me as his special friend. My ladies have promised that I shall never be sold, and so I have nothing to fear; and here my story ends. My troubles are all over, and I am at home; and often before I am quite awake, I fancy I am still in the orchard at Birtwick, standing with my old friends under the apple-trees.

TASKS AND QUESTIONS

1. Discuss author’s motivation for writing an autobiography of a horse.
2. In your opinion, what has made the book a children’s literary classics?
3. Sewell came from a Quaker background. What influences can we find in her novel?
4. Provide a brief synopsis of the story.
5. Specify features of the setting of place and the setting of time.
6. What are the parallels between a child and a horse that Sewell depicts in her novel?
7. How are horses and human beings contrasted?
8. Is there a parallel between a horse and a machine?
9. Where can we see didacticism of the novel?
10. Comment on the following contrasts: ignorance and knowledge; drunk and sober, the young and the old.
11. Specify cruel treatment as it is displayed in the book.
12. Point to the differences between horses as portrayed in the book.
13. Summarise central themes of the story.
14. Suggest didactic application of selected chapters or excerpts.

MYTHS, LEGENDS AND GHOST STORIES

Myths, or ancient mythological stories, used to provide religious explanations of phenomena that were possibly not understood and couldn’t have been explained any other way, e.g. where people came from, how the world began, natural forces, etc. These stories were shared by a particular group of people, thus they were culturally marked and were part of their cultural identity. Myths are populated with gods and goddesses, ancestors and heroes with supernatural powers dealing with providence. Stories are often symbolic and timeless, not fixed in a certain chronology of time. Greek myths, which inspired and motivated members of society to behave correctly and obey their gods, have survived up to the modern era, are even part of pop culture. Among plentiful examples are Pandora’s Box or Daedalus and Icarus.

A **legend** is a story that is told as a real historical event, set in a definite period, often populated both by real and fictional (legendary) characters; in contrast to a myth, a legend doesn’t provide an

explanation for something. A legend may or may not be a made up version of a real historical event. Well-known and popular legends in the Anglo-American literary tradition are the legends of Robin Hood or the legends about King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table as well as the truly American legends by Washington Irving like *Rip van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

A ghost story is basically a story about ghosts, haunted place or person, with the intention to frighten or entertain or sometimes even to educate the reader; the tale is based rather on imagination than on fact. Ghost stories are often placed within the genre of horror story or gothic fiction; some share features with science-fiction. Tales about ghosts are as old as human culture itself, as a distinguished literary form reached its peak in the late 19th and early 20th century. Among the beloved classics are the tales by M. R. James like *Oh, Whistle, And I'll Come to You, My Lad* or *Wailing Well*, but also stories like *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens or *The Canterville Ghost* by Oscar Wilde.

Washington Irving (1783 – 1859)

“Great minds have purposes; others have wishes.”

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

From the listless repose of the place, and the peculiar character of its inhabitants, who are descendants from the original Dutch settlers, this sequestered glen has long been known by the name of SLEEPY HOLLOW, and its rustic lads are called the Sleepy Hollow Boys throughout all the neighboring country. A drowsy, dreamy influence seems to hang over the land, and to pervade the very atmosphere. Some say that the place was bewitched by a High German doctor, during the early days of the settlement; others, that an old Indian chief, the prophet or wizard of his tribe, held his powwows there before the country was discovered by Master Hendrick Hudson. Certain it is, the place still continues under the sway of some witching power, that holds a spell over the minds of the good people, causing them to walk in a continual reverie. They are given to all kinds of marvelous beliefs; are subject to trances and visions, and frequently see strange sights, and hear music and voices in the air. The whole neighborhood abounds with local tales, haunted spots, and twilight superstitions; stars shoot and meteors glare oftener across the valley than in any other part of the country, and the nightmare, with her whole ninefold, seems to make it the favorite scene of her gambols. The dominant spirit, however, that haunts this enchanted region, and seems to be commander-in-chief of all the powers of the air, is the apparition of a figure on horseback, without a head. It is said by some to be the ghost of a Hessian trooper, whose head had been carried away by a cannon-ball, in some nameless battle during the Revolutionary War, and who is ever and anon seen by the country folk hurrying along in the gloom of night, as if on the wings of the wind. His haunts are not confined to the valley, but extend at times to the adjacent roads, and especially to the vicinity of a church at no great distance. Indeed, certain of the most authentic historians of those parts, who have been careful in collecting and collating the floating facts concerning this spectre, allege that the body of the trooper having been buried in the churchyard, the ghost rides forth to the scene of battle in nightly quest of his head, and that the rushing speed with which he sometimes passes along the Hollow, like a midnight blast, is owing to his being belated, and in a hurry to get back to the churchyard before daybreak.

In this by-place of nature there abode, in a remote period of American history, that is to say, some thirty years since, a worthy wight of the name of Ichabod Crane, who sojourned, or, as he expressed it, “tarried,” in Sleepy Hollow, for the purpose of instructing the children of the vicinity. He was a native of Connecticut, a State which supplies the Union with pioneers for the mind as well as for the forest, and sends forth yearly its legions of frontier woodmen and The Legend of Sleepy Hollow country schoolmasters. The cognomen of Crane was not inapplicable to his person. He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole frame most loosely hung together. His head was small, and flat at top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long snipe nose, so that it looked like a weather-cock perched upon his spindle neck to tell which way the wind blew. To see him striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for the genius of famine descending upon the earth, or some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield.

From his half-itinerant life, also, he was a kind of traveling gazette, carrying the whole budget of local gossip from house to house, so that his appearance was always greeted with satisfaction. He was, moreover, esteemed by the women as a man of great erudition, for he had read several books quite through, and was a perfect master of Cotton Mather’s “History of New England Witchcraft,” in which, by the way, he most firmly and potently believed.

Among the musical disciples who assembled, one evening in each week, to receive his instructions in psalmody, was Katrina Van Tassel, the daughter and only child of a substantial Dutch farmer. She was a booming lass of fresh eighteen; plump as a partridge; ripe and melting and rosycheeked as one of her father’s peaches, and universally famed, not merely for her beauty, but her vast expectations. She was withal a little of a coquette, as might be perceived even in her dress, which was a mixture of ancient and modern fashions, as most suited to set off her charms. She wore the ornaments of pure yellow gold, which her greatgreat-grandmother had brought over from Saar dam; the tempting stomacher of the olden time, and withal a provokingly short petticoat, to display the prettiest foot and ankle in the country round. Ichabod Crane had a soft and foolish heart towards the sex; and it is not to be wondered at, that so tempting a morsel soon found favor in his eyes, more especially after he had visited her in her paternal mansion.

Among these, the most formidable was a burly, roaring, roystering blade, of the name of Abraham, or, according to the Dutch abbreviation, Brom Van Brunt, the hero of the country round which rang with his feats of strength and hardihood. He was broad-shouldered and double-jointed, with short curly black hair, and a bluff but not unpleasant countenance, having a mingled air of fun and arrogance. From his Herculean frame and great powers of limb he had received the nickname of BROM BONES, by which he was universally known.

Ichabod, who had no relish for this strange midnight companion, and bethought himself of the adventure of Brom Bones with the Galloping Hessian, now quickened his steed in hopes of leaving him behind. The stranger, however, quickened his horse to an equal pace. Ichabod pulled up, and fell into a walk, thinking to lag behind, — the other did the same. His heart began to sink within him; he endeavored to resume his psalm tune, but his parched tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he could not utter a stave. There was something in the moody and dogged silence of this pertinacious companion that was mysterious and appalling. It was soon fearfully accounted for. On mounting a rising ground, which brought the figure of his fellow-traveller in relief against the sky, gigantic in

height, and muffled in a cloak, Ichabod was horror-struck on perceiving that he was headless! but his horror was still more increased on observing that the head, which should have rested on his shoulders, was carried before him on the pommel of his saddle!

“If I can but reach that bridge,” thought Ichabod, “I am safe.” Just then he heard the black steed panting and blowing close behind him; he even fancied that he felt his hot breath. Another convulsive kick in the ribs, and old Gunpowder sprang upon the bridge; he thundered over the resounding planks; he gained the opposite side; and now Ichabod cast a look behind to see if his pursuer should vanish, according to rule, in a flash of fire and brimstone. Just then he saw the goblin rising in his stirrups, and in the very act of hurling his head at him. Ichabod endeavored to dodge the horrible missile, but too late. It encountered his cranium with a tremendous crash, —he was tumbled headlong into the dust, and Gunpowder, the black steed, and the goblin rider, passed by like a whirlwind. The next morning the old horse was found without his saddle, and with the bridle under his feet, soberly cropping the grass at his master’s gate. Ichabod did not make his appearance at breakfast; dinner-hour came, but no Ichabod.

An inquiry was set on foot, and after diligent investigation they came upon his traces. In one part of the road leading to the church was found the saddle trampled in the dirt; the tracks of horses’ hoofs deeply dented in the road, and evidently at furious speed, were traced to the bridge, beyond which, on the bank of a broad part ooe the brook, where the water ran deep and black, was found the hat of the unfortunate Ichabod, and close beside it a shattered pumpkin.

Brom Bones, too, who, shortly after his rival’s disappearance conducted the blooming Katrina in triumph to the altar, was observed to look exceedingly knowing whenever the story of Ichabod was related, and always burst into a hearty laugh at the mention of the pumpkin; which led some to suspect that he knew more about the matter than he chose to tell.

Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900)

The Canterville Ghost

I

When Mr. Hiram B. Otis, the American Minister, bought Canterville Chase, every one told him he was doing a very foolish thing, as there was no doubt at all that the place was haunted. Indeed, Lord Canterville himself, who was a man of the most punctilious honour, had felt it his duty to mention the fact to Mr. Otis when they came to discuss terms.

“My Lord,” answered the Minister, “I will take the furniture and the ghost at a valuation. I have come from a modern country, where we have everything that money can buy; and with all our spry young fellows painting the Old World red, and carrying off your best actors and prima-donnas, I reckon that if there were such a thing as a ghost in Europe, we’d have it at home in a very short time in one of our public museums, or on the road as a show.”

Many American ladies on leaving their native land adopt an appearance of chronic ill-health, under the impression that it is a form of European refinement, but Mrs. Otis had never fallen into this error.

She had a magnificent constitution, and a really wonderful amount of animal spirits. Indeed, in many respects, she was quite English, and was an excellent example of the fact that we have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language. Her eldest son, christened Washington by his parents in a moment of patriotism, which he never ceased to regret, was a fair-haired, rather good-looking young man, who had qualified himself for American diplomacy by leading the German at the Newport Casino for three successive seasons, and even in London was well known as an excellent dancer. Gardenias and the peerage were his only weaknesses. Otherwise he was extremely sensible. Miss Virginia E. Otis was a little girl of fifteen, lithe and lovely as a fawn, and with a fine freedom in her large blue eyes. She was a wonderful Amazon, and had once raced old Lord Bilton on her pony twice round the park, winning by a length and a half, just in front of the Achilles statue, to the huge delight of the young Duke of Cheshire, who proposed for her on the spot, and was sent back to Eton that very night by his guardians, in floods of tears. After Virginia came the twins, who were usually called "The Star and Stripes," as they were always getting swished. They were delightful boys, and, with the exception of the worthy Minister, the only true republicans of the family.

Suddenly Mrs. Otis caught sight of a dull red stain on the floor just by the fireplace, and, quite unconscious of what it really signified, said to Mrs. Umney, "I am afraid something has been spilt there." "Yes, madam," replied the old housekeeper in a low voice, "blood has been spilt on that spot." "How horrid!" cried Mrs. Otis; "I don't at all care for bloodstains in a sitting room. It must be removed at once." The old woman smiled, and answered in the same low, mysterious voice, "It is the blood of Lady Eleanore de Canterville, who was murdered on that very spot by her own husband, Sir Simon de Canterville, in 1575. Sir Simon survived her nine years, and disappeared suddenly under very mysterious circumstances. His body has never been discovered, but his guilty spirit still haunts the Chase. The bloodstain has been much admired by tourists and others, and cannot be removed." "That is all nonsense," cried Washington Otis; "Pinkerton's Champion Stain Remover and Paragon Detergent will clean it up in no time," and before the terrified housekeeper could interfere, he had fallen upon his knees, and was rapidly scouring the floor with a small stick of what looked like a black cosmetic. In a few moments no trace of the blood-stain could be seen.

II

Some time after, Mr. Otis was awakened by a curious noise in the corridor, outside his room. It sounded like the clank of metal, and seemed to be coming nearer every moment. He got up at once, struck a match, and looked at the time. It was exactly one o'clock. He was quite calm, and felt his pulse, which was not at all feverish. The strange noise still continued, and with it he heard distinctly the sound of footsteps. He put on his slippers, took a small oblong phial out of his dressingcase, and opened the door. Right in front of him he saw, in the wan moonlight, an old man of terrible aspect. His eyes were as red burning coals; long grey hair fell over his shoulders in matted coils; his garments, which were of antique cut, were soiled and ragged, and from his wrists and ankles hung heavy manacles and rusty gyves. "My dear sir," said Mr. Otis, "I really must insist on your oiling those chains, and have brought you for that purpose a small bottle of the Tammany Rising Sun Lubricator."

For a moment the Canterville ghost stood quite motionless in natural indignation; then, dashing the bottle violently upon the polished floor, he fled down the corridor, uttering hollow groans, and emitting a ghastly green light. Just, however, as he reached the top of the great oak staircase, a door was flung open, two little white-robed figures appeared, and a large pillow whizzed past his head!

There was evidently no time to be lost, so, hastily adopting the Fourth dimension of Space as a means of escape, he vanished through the wainscoting, and the house became quite quiet. On reaching a small secret chamber in the left wing, he leaned up against a moonbeam to recover his breath, and began to try and realize his position. Never, in a brilliant and uninterrupted career of three hundred years, had he been so grossly insulted.

IV

The next day the ghost was very weak and tired. The terrible excitement of the last four weeks was beginning to have its effect. His nerves were completely shattered, and he started at the slightest noise. For five days he kept his room, and at last made up his mind to give up the point of the bloodstain on the library floor. If the Otis family did not want it, they clearly did not deserve it. They were evidently people on a low, material plane of existence, and quite incapable of appreciating the symbolic value of sensuous phenomena. The question of phantasmic apparitions, and the development of astral bodies, was of course quite a different matter, and really not under his control. It was his solemn duty to appear in the corridor once a week, and to gibber from the large oriel window on the first and third Wednesdays in every month, and he did not see how he could honourably escape from his obligations. It is quite true that his life had been very evil, but, upon the other hand, he was most conscientious in all things connected with the supernatural. For the next three Saturdays, accordingly, he traversed the corridor as usual between midnight and three o'clock, taking every possible precaution against being either heard or seen. He removed his boots, trod as lightly as possible on the old wormeaten boards, wore a large black velvet cloak, and was careful to use the Rising Sun Lubricator for oiling his chains.

At last everything was ready, and he was very pleased with his appearance. The big leather riding-boots that went with the dress were just a little too large for him, and he could only find one of the two horse-pistols, but, on the whole, he was quite satisfied, and at a quarter-past one he glided out of the wainscoting and crept down the corridor. On reaching the room occupied by the twins, which I should mention was called the Blue Bed Chamber, on account of the colour of its hangings, he found the door just ajar. Wishing to make an effective entrance, he flung it wide open, when a heavy jug of water fell right down on him, wetting him to the skin, and just missing his left shoulder by a couple of inches. At the same moment he heard stifled shrieks of laughter proceeding from the four-post bed. The shock to his nervous system was so great that he fled back to his room as hard as he could go, and the next day he was laid up with a severe cold. The only thing that at all consoled him in the whole affair was the fact that he had not brought his head with him, for, had he done so, the consequences might have been very serious.

V

A few days after this, Virginia and her curly-haired cavalier went out riding on Brockley meadows, where she tore her habit so badly in getting through a hedge that, on their return home, she made up her mind to go up by the back staircase so as not to be seen. As she was running past the Tapestry Chamber, the door of which happened to be open, she fancied she saw some one inside, and thinking it was her mother's maid, who sometimes used to bring her work there, looked in to ask her to mend her habit. To her immense surprise, however, it was the Canterville Ghost himself! He was sitting by the window, watching the ruined gold of the yellowing trees fly through the air, and the red leaves dancing madly down the long avenue. His head was leaning on his hand, and his whole attitude was one of extreme depression. Indeed, so forlorn, and so much out of repair did he look, that little

Virginia, whose first idea had been to run away and lock herself in her room, was filled with pity, and determined to try and comfort him.

“Oh, I hate the cheap severity of abstract ethics! My wife was very plain, never had my ruffs properly starched, and knew nothing about cookery. Why, there was a buck I had shot in Hogley Woods, a magnificent pricket, and do you know how she had it sent to table? However, it is no matter now, for it is all over, and I don’t think it was very nice of her brothers to starve me to death, though I did kill her.” “Starve you to death? Oh, Mr. Ghost—I mean Sir Simon, are you hungry? I have a sandwich in my case. Would you like it?”

“You know nothing about it, and the best thing you can do is to emigrate and improve your mind. My father will be only too happy to give you a free passage, and though there is a heavy duty on spirits of every kind, there will be no difficulty about the Custom House, as the officers are all Democrats. Once in New York, you are sure to be a great success. I know lots of people there who would give a hundred thousand dollars to have a grandfather, and much more than that to have a family ghost.” “I don’t think I should like America.” “I suppose because we have no ruins and no curiosities,” said Virginia, satirically. “No ruins! No curiosities!” answered the Ghost; “you have your navy and your manners.”

“Far away beyond the pine-woods,” he answered, in a low, dreamy voice, “there is a little garden. There the grass grows long and deep, there are the great white stars of the hemlock flower, there the nightingale sings all night long. All night long he sings, and the cold crystal moon looks down, and the yew-tree spreads out its giant arms over the sleepers.” Virginia’s eyes grew dim with tears, and she hid her face in her hands. “You mean the Garden of Death,” she whispered. “Yes, death. Death must be so beautiful. To lie in the soft brown earth, with the grasses waving above one’s head, and listen to silence. To have no yesterday, and no to-morrow. To forget time, to forget life, to be at peace. You can help me. You can open for me the portals of death’s house, for love is always with you, and love is stronger than death is.”

“They mean,” he said, sadly, “that you must weep with me for my sins, because I have no tears, and pray with me for my soul, because I have no faith, and then, if you have always been sweet, and good, and gentle, the angel of death will have mercy on me. You will see fearful shapes in darkness, and wicked voices will whisper in your ear, but they will not harm you, for against the purity of a little child the powers of Hell cannot prevail.”

VII

There had been a great deal of difficulty at first about the inscription on Sir Simon’s tombstone, but finally it had been decided to engrave on it simply the initials of the old gentleman’s name, and the verse from the library window. “He made me see what Life is, and what Death signifies, and why Love is stronger than both.”

M. R. James (1862 – 1936)

“I heard one cry in the night, and I heard one laugh afterwards. If I cannot forget that, I shall not be able to sleep again.”

Wailing Well

In the year 19— there were two members of the Troop of Scouts attached to a famous school, named respectively Arthur Wilcox and Stanley Judkins. They were the same age, boarded in the same house, were in the same division, and naturally were members of the same patrol. They were so much alike in appearance as to cause anxiety and trouble, and even irritation, to the masters who came in contact with them. But oh how different were they in their inward man, or boy!

As a Scout, Wilcox secured every badge and distinction for which he competed. The Cookery Badge, the Map-making Badge, the Life-saving Badge, the Badge for picking up bits of newspaper, the Badge for not slamming the door when leaving pupil-room, and many others.

Stanley Judkins, like Arthur Wilcox, attracted the attention of the authorities; but in quite another fashion. [...] As a Scout, Stanley Judkins secured no badge save those which he was able to abstract from members of other patrols. In the cookery competition he was detected trying to introduce squibs into the Dutch oven of the next-door competitors. In the tailoring competition he succeeded in sewing two boys together very firmly, with disastrous effect when they tried to get up. For the Tidiness Badge he was disqualified, because, in the Midsummer schooltime, which chanced to be hot, he could not be dissuaded from sitting with his fingers in the ink: as he said, for coolness' sake. For one piece of paper which he picked up, he must have dropped at least six banana skins or orange peels.

So it is that we find him at the beginning of the Midsummer Holidays of 19— at the Scouts' camp in the beautiful district of W (or X) in the county of D (or Y).

It was a lovely morning, and Stanley Judkins and one or two of his friends — for he still had friends — lay basking on the top of the down. Stanley was lying on his stomach with his chin propped on his hands, staring into the distance.

“I wonder what that place is,” he said.

“Which place?” said one of the others.

“That sort of clump in the middle of the field down there.”

“Oh, ah! How should I know what it is?”

“What do you want to know for?” said another.

“I don't know: I like the look of it. What's it called? Nobody got a map?” said Stanley. “Call yourselves Scouts!”

“Here’s a map all right,” said Wilfred Pipsqueak, ever resourceful, “and there’s the place marked on it. But it’s inside the red ring. We can’t go there.”

“Who cares about a red ring?” said Stanley. “But it’s got no name on your silly map.”

“Well, you can ask this old chap what it’s called if you’re so keen to find out.” “This old chap” was an old shepherd who had come up and was standing behind them.

“Good morning, young gents,” he said, “you’ve got a fine day for your doin’s, ain’t you?”

“Yes, thank you,” said Algernon de Montmorency, with native politeness. “Can you tell us what that clump over there’s called? And what’s that thing inside it?”

“Course I can tell you,” said the shepherd. “That’s Wailin’ Well, that is. But you ain’t got no call to worry about that.”

“Is it a well in there?” said Algernon. “Who uses it?”

The shepherd laughed. “Bless you,” he said, “there ain’t from a man to a sheep in these parts uses Wailin’ Well, nor haven’t done all the years I’ve lived here.”

“Well, there’ll be a record broken to-day, then,” said Stanley Judkins, “because I shall go and get some! water out of it for tea!”

“Yes,” said Wilfred, “but I see there’s tracks in it. Someone must go through it sometimes.”

“Tracks!” said the shepherd. “I believe you I Four tracks: three women and a man.”

“And what were they like? Do tell us!” said Algernon and Wilfred eagerly.

“Rags and bones, young gentlemen: all four of ‘em: flutterin’ rags and whity bones. It seemed to me as if I could hear ‘em clackin’ as they got along. Very slow they went, and lookin’ from side to side.”

“What were their faces like? Could you see?”

“They hadn’t much to call faces,” said the shepherd, “but I could seem to see as they had teeth.”

The boys pondered for some moments on what they had heard: after which Wilfred said: “And why’s it called Wailing Well?”

“If you was round here at dusk of a winter’s evening, you wouldn’t want to ask why,” was all the shepherd said.

“Yes, it’s him, and he’s making straight for the trees,” said Wilfred.

At this moment Algernon, who had been staring with all his might, broke into a scream.

“What’s that on the track? On all fours — O, it’s the woman. O, don’t let me look at her! Don’t let it happen!” And he rolled over, clutching at the grass and trying to bury his head in it.

“Stop that!” said Mr. Hope Jones loudly — but it was no use. “Look here,” he said, “I must go down there. You stop here, Wilfred, and look after that boy. Wilcox, you run as hard as you can to the camp and get some help.”

With a sudden and dreadful sinking at the heart, he caught sight of someone among the trees, waiting: and again of someone — another of the hideous black figures — working slowly along the track from another side of the held, looking from side to side, as the shepherd had described it. Worst of all, he saw a fourth — unmistakably a man this time — rising out of the bushes a few yards behind the wretched Stanley, and painfully, as it seemed, crawling into the track. On all sides the miserable victim was cut off.

It was too late. The crouched figure behind Stanley sprang at him and caught him about the waist. The dreadful one that was standing waving her arms waved them again, but in exultation. The one that was lurking among the trees shuffled forward, and she too stretched out her arms as if to clutch at something coming her way; and the other, farthest off, quickened her pace and came on, nodding gleefully. The boys took it all in in an instant of terrible silence, and hardly could they breathe as they watched the horrid struggle between the man and his victim. Stanley struck with his can, the only weapon he had. The rim of a broken black hat fell off the creature’s head and showed a white skull with stains that might be wisps of hair. By this time one of the women had reached the pair, and was pulling at the rope that was coiled about Stanley’s neck. Between them they overpowered him in a moment: the awful screaming ceased, and then the three passed within the circle of the clump of firs.

They had just entered the field when they met Mr. Hope Jones. Over his shoulder hung the corpse of Stanley Judkins. He had cut it from the branch to which he found it hanging, waving to and fro. There was not a drop of blood in the body.

On the following day Mr. Hope Jones sallied forth with an axe and with the expressed intention of cutting down every tree in the clump, and of burning every bush in the field. He returned with a nasty cut in his leg and a broken axe-helve. Not a spark of fire could he light, and on no single tree could he make the least impression.

I have heard that the present population of the Wailing Well field consists of three women, a man, and a boy.

TASKS AND QUESTIONS

1. In all these works, comment on the importance of the setting (both time and place), identify main themes, provide description of characters (both appearance and personality; where applicable, comment on the parallels between the appearance and personality or name); discuss the relationships among characters; identify and interpret symbols in the given stories.

2. The Legend of Sleepy Hollow:
 - a. What romantic features can be found in the story?
 - b. What role does the Headless Horseman play in the story?
 - c. What comic features are to be found in the story?
3. The Canterville Ghost:
 - a. Which English and American features are satirized in the story?
 - b. Find examples of Wilde's wit and humor; think of its purpose.
 - c. Design some activities for ELT classroom.
4. Wailing Well
 - a. How does the author create and maintain suspense?
 - b. Think of the story in terms of a dramatic plot structure and identify its main points.
 - c. Is there a didactic purpose in this short story?

POETRY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

Reading, reciting, interpreting or writing poetry in an ELT class is often seen as too challenging and often neglected. But once you let yourself captivated, the benefits are beyond doubt. Poetry makes you think of language in many different and inspiring ways.

It's usually recommended to start with short and humorous poems that best engage learner's attention and interest. There are many benefits of teaching and learning poetry in an ELT classroom, among them the following ones: poetry as a source for teaching grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation; as a source for building confidence; developing further interest for literature and creative writing or remembering a lesson.

A. A. Milne

“Did you ever stop to think, and forget to start again?”

Waiting at the Window

These are my two drops of rain
Waiting on the window-pane.

I am waiting here to see
Which the winning one will be.

Both of them have different names.
One is John and one is James.

All the best and all the worst
Comes from which of them is first.

James has just begun to ooze.
He's the one I want to lose.

John is waiting to begin.
He's the one I want to win.

James is going slowly on.
Something sort of sticks to John.

John is moving off at last.
James is going pretty fast.

Is he going fast enough?
(James has found a piece of fluff.)

John is rushing down the pane.
James is going slow again.

John has quickly hurried by.
(James was talking to a fly.)

James has met a sort of smear.
John is getting very near.

John is there, and John has won!
Look! I told you! Here's the sun!

Edward Lear

“And who so happy, – O who, / As the Duck and the Kangaroo?”

The Owl and the Pussycat

I

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea

In a beautiful pea green boat,
They took some honey, and plenty of money,
 Wrapped up in a five pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
 And sang to a small guitar,
‘O lovely Pussy! O Pussy my love,
 What a beautiful Pussy you are,
 You are,
 You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!’

II

Pussy said to the Owl, ‘You elegant fowl!
 How charmingly sweet you sing!
O let us be married! too long we have tarried:
 But what shall we do for a ring?’
They sailed away, for a year and a day,
 To the land where the Bong-tree grows
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood
 With a ring at the end of his nose,
 His nose,
 His nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.

III

‘Dear pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
Your ring?’ Said the Piggy, ‘I will.’
So they took it away, and were married next day
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.
They dined on mince, and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon,
The moon,
The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

Hilaire Belloc

“Any subject can be made interesting, and therefore any subject can be made boring.”

Matilda

WHO TOLD LIES, AND WAS BURNED TO DEATH

MATILDA told such Dreadful Lies,
It made one Gasp and Stretch one’s Eyes;
Her Aunt, who, from her Earliest Youth,
Had kept a Strict Regard for Truth,
Attempted to Believe Matilda:
The effort very nearly killed her,
And would have done so, had not She
Discovered this Infirmity.
For once, towards the Close of Day,
Matilda, growing tired of play,
And finding she was left alone,
Went tiptoe to the Telephone
And summoned the Immediate Aid
Of London’s Noble Fire-Brigade.
Within an hour the Gallant Band
Were pouring in on every hand,
From Putney, Hackney Downs, and Bow.
With Courage high and Hearts a-glow,
They galloped, roaring through the Town,
“Matilda’s House is Burning Down!”
Inspired by British Cheers and Loud
Proceeding from the Frenzied Crowd,
They ran their ladders through a score
Of windows on the Ball Room Floor;
And took Peculiar Pains to Souse

The Pictures up and down the House,
Until Matilda’s Aunt succeeded
In showing them they were not needed;
And even then she had to pay
To get the Men to go away!

It happened that a few Weeks later
Her Aunt was off to the Theatre
To see that Interesting Play
The Second Mrs. Tanqueray.
She had refused to take her Niece
To hear this Entertaining Piece:
A Deprivation Just and Wise
To Punish her for Telling Lies.
That Night a Fire *did* break out—
You should have heard Matilda Shout!
You should have heard her Scream and Bawl,
And throw the window up and call
To People passing in the Street—
(The rapidly increasing Heat
Encouraging her to obtain
Their confidence)—but all in vain!
For every time she shouted “Fire!”
They only answered “Little Liar!”
And therefore when her Aunt returned,

Matilda, and the House, were Burned.

Lynley Dodd

Schnitzel von Krumm's Basketwork

Sausage dog, Schnitzel von Krumm, is outraged when his family decides to replace his worn out, beaten up old basket. The new bed doesn't look right, feel right – or smell right! Something must be done...

“Yuk!” said his family

the very same day.

“Time to say no –

this beaten-up basket

He tried it for size;

must INSTANTLY go.

there was room for his tum

it's scruffy, it's dirty,

but it didn't smell friendly

it's hopelessly small

to Schnitzel von Krumm.

and we really can't have

The basket was smart

such a smell

and a much better fit-

in the hall.”

was it cosy and comforting?

So they lifted the basket

NO

and took it away

not a bit.

and bought him another

Roald Dahl

“And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it.”

Television

The most important thing we've learned,
So far as children are concerned,
Is never, NEVER, NEVER let
Them near your television set—
Or better still, just don't install
The idiotic thing at all.
In almost every house we've been,
We've watched them gaping at the screen.
They loll and slop and lounge about,
And stare until their eyes pop out.

(Last week in someone's place we saw
A dozen eyeballs on the floor.)
They sit and stare and stare and sit
Until they're hypnotised by it,
Until they're absolutely drunk
With all that shocking ghastly junk.
Oh yes, we know it keeps them still,
They don't climb out the window sill,
They never fight or kick or punch,
They leave you free to cook the lunch

And wash the dishes in the sink—
 But did you ever stop to think,
 To wonder just exactly what
 This does to your beloved tot?
 IT ROTTS THE SENSE IN THE HEAD!
 IT KILLS IMAGINATION DEAD!
 IT CLOGS AND CLUTTERS UP THE
 MIND!
 IT MAKES A CHILD SO DULL AND
 BLIND
 HE CAN NO LONGER UNDERSTAND
 A FANTASY, A FAIRYLAND!
 HIS BRAIN BECOMES AS SOFT AS
 CHEESE!
 HIS POWERS OF THINKING RUST AND
 FREEZE!
 HE CANNOT THINK—HE ONLY SEES!
 ‘All right!’ you’ll cry. ‘All right!’ you’ll say,
 ‘But if we take the set away,
 What shall we do to entertain
 Our darling children? Please explain!’
 We’ll answer this by asking you,
 ‘What used the darling ones to do?
 ‘How used they keep themselves contented
 Before this monster was invented?’
 Have you forgotten? Don’t you know?
 We’ll say it very loud and slow:
 THEY... USED... TO... READ! They’d
 READ and READ,
 AND READ and READ, and then proceed
 To READ some more. Great Scott! Gadzooks!
 One half their lives was reading books!
 The nursery shelves held books galore!
 Books cluttered up the nursery floor!
 And in the bedroom, by the bed,
 More books were waiting to be read!
 Such wondrous, fine, fantastic tales
 Of dragons, gypsies, queens, and whales
 And treasure isles, and distant shores

Pig – Roald Dahl

In England once there lived a big
 And wonderfully clever pig.
 To everybody it was plain
 That Piggy had a massive brain.
 He worked out sums inside his head,
 There was no book he hadn’t read.
 He knew what made an airplane fly,

Where smugglers rowed with muffled oars,
 And pirates wearing purple pants,
 And sailing ships and elephants,
 And cannibals crouching ‘round the pot,
 Stirring away at something hot.
 (It smells so good, what can it be?
 Good gracious, it’s Penelope.)
 The younger ones had Beatrix Potter
 With Mr. Tod, the dirty rotter,
 And Squirrel Nutkin, Pigling Bland,
 And Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle and—
 Just How The Camel Got His Hump,
 And How the Monkey Lost His Rump,
 And Mr. Toad, and bless my soul,
 There’s Mr. Rat and Mr. Mole—
 Oh, books, what books they used to know,
 Those children living long ago!
 So please, oh please, we beg, we pray,
 Go throw your TV set away,
 And in its place you can install
 A lovely bookshelf on the wall.
 Then fill the shelves with lots of books,
 Ignoring all the dirty looks,
 The screams and yells, the bites and kicks,
 And children hitting you with sticks—
 Fear not, because we promise you
 That, in about a week or two
 Of having nothing else to do,
 They’ll now begin to feel the need
 Of having something to read.
 And once they start—oh boy, oh boy!
 You watch the slowly growing joy
 That fills their hearts. They’ll grow so keen
 They’ll wonder what they’d ever seen
 In that ridiculous machine,
 That nauseating, foul, unclean,
 Repulsive television screen!
 And later, each and every kid
 Will love you more for what you did.

He knew how engines worked and why.
 He knew all this, but in the end
 One question drove him round the bend:
 He simply couldn’t puzzle out
 What LIFE was really all about.
 What was the reason for his birth?
 Why was he placed upon this earth?

His giant brain went round and round.
 Alas, no answer could be found.
 Till suddenly one wondrous night.
 All in a flash he saw the light.
 He jumped up like a ballet dancer
 And yelled, "By gum, I've got the answer!"
 "They want my bacon slice by slice
 To sell at a tremendous price!
 They want my tender juicy chops
 To put in all the butcher's shops!
 They want my pork to make a roast
 And that's the part'll cost the most!
 They want my sausages in strings!
 They even want my chitterlings!
 The butcher's shop! The carving knife!
 That is the reason for my life!"
 Such thoughts as these are not designed
 To give a pig great piece of mind.
 Next morning, in comes Farmer Bland,

A pail of pigswill in his hand,
 And piggy with a mighty roar,
 Bashes the farmer to the floor...
 Now comes the rather grizzly bit
 So let's not make too much of it,
 Except that you must understand
 That Piggy did eat Farmer Bland,
 He ate him up from head to toe,
 Chewing the pieces nice and slow.
 It took an hour to reach the feet,
 Because there was so much to eat,
 And when he finished, Pig, of course,
 Felt absolutely no remorse.
 Slowly he scratched his brainy head
 And with a little smile he said,
 "I had a fairly powerful hunch
 That he might have me for his lunch.
 And so, because I feared the worst,
 I thought I'd better eat him first."

TASKS AND QUESTIONS

Comment on the given poems from the perspective of their subject, style and application in ELT classroom. Design tasks for ELT classroom, taking into consideration the following: objective of a lesson; theme of a lesson; time needed; age group; proficiency level; types of activities [pre-; while; post-] etc. Similarly, be prepared for a classroom simulation and a classroom discussion.

NONSENSE LITERATURE

Literary nonsense can't be perceived as a text devoid of meaning and seriousness. Nonsense is a genre full of playfulness; it toys with words, meanings, ideas and plots, it plays with reader's logics and expectations, it gives the reader creative stimuli for tricky interpretation, but mainly, as in the case of Victorian masters of nonsense such as Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll, it primarily seeks to entertain, and so it does. Linguistic and literary conventions are intentionally distorted, new realms constructed, gates to imagination wide open.

Edward Lear

The Jumblies

I

They went to sea in a Sieve, they did,
 In a Sieve they went to sea:
 In spite of all their friends could say,
 On a winter's morn, on a stormy day,
 In a Sieve they went to sea!

And when the Sieve turned round and round,
And every one cried, 'You'll all be drowned!'
They called aloud, 'Our Sieve ain't big,
But we don't care a button! we don't care a fig!
In a Sieve we'll go to sea!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

II

They sailed away in a Sieve, they did,
In a Sieve they sailed so fast,
With only a beautiful pea-green veil
Tied with a riband by way of a sail,
To a small tobacco-pipe mast;
And every one said, who saw them go,
'O won't they be soon upset, you know!
For the sky is dark, and the voyage is long,
And happen what may, it's extremely wrong
In a Sieve to sail so fast!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

III

The water it soon came in, it did,
The water it soon came in;
So to keep them dry, they wrapped their feet
In a pinky paper all folded neat,
And they fastened it down with a pin.
And they passed the night in a crockery-jar,
And each of them said, 'How wise we are!
Though the sky be dark, and the voyage be long,
Yet we never can think we were rash or wrong,
While round in our Sieve we spin!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

IV

And all night long they sailed away;
And when the sun went down,
They whistled and warbled a moony song
To the echoing sound of a coppersy gong,
In the shade of the mountains brown.
'O Timballo! How happy we are,
When we live in a Sieve and a crockery-jar,
And all night long in the moonlight pale,
We sail away with a pea-green sail,
In the shade of the mountains brown!'
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

V

They sailed to the Western Sea, they did,
To a land all covered with trees,
And they bought an Owl, and a useful Cart,
And a pound of Rice, and a Cranberry Tart,
And a hive of silvery Bees.
And they bought a Pig, and some green Jack-daws,
And a lovely Monkey with lollipop paws,
And forty bottles of Ring-Bo-Ree,
And no end of Stilton Cheese.
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

VI

And in twenty years they all came back,
In twenty years or more,
And every one said, 'How tall they've grown!
For they've been to the Lakes, and the Terrible Zone,
And the hills of the Chankly Bore!'
And they drank their health, and gave them a feast
Of dumplings made of beautiful yeast;
And every one said, 'If we only live,
We too will go to sea in a Sieve,—
To the hills of the Chankly Bore!'
Far and few, far and few,

Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
And they went to sea in a Sieve.

Lewis Carroll

“Sentence first, verdict afterwards.”

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

Chapter 1 – Down the Rabbit-Hole

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had no pictures or conversations in it, “and what is the use of a book,” thought Alice “without pictures or conversation?”

So she was considering in her own mind (as well as she could, for the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid), whether the pleasure of making a daisy – chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, when suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.

There was nothing so *very* remarkable in that; nor did Alice think it so *very* much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, “Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!” (when she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural); but when the Rabbit actually *took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket*, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, for it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it, and burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and fortunately was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge.

In another moment down went Alice after it, never once considering how in the world she was to get out again.

The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down a very deep well.

Chapter 2 – The Pool of Tears

Alice took up the fan and gloves, and, as the hall was very hot, she kept fanning herself all the time she went on talking: “Dear, dear! How queer everything is to-day! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I’ve been changed in the night? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I’m not the same, the next question is, Who in the world am I? Ah, THAT’S the great puzzle!” And she began thinking over all the children she knew that were of the same age as herself, to see if she could have been changed for any of them.

Chapter 3 – A Caucus-Race and a Long Tale

“What IS a Caucus-race?” said Alice; not that she wanted much to know, but the Dodo had paused as if it thought that **SOMEBODY** ought to speak, and no one else seemed inclined to say anything.

“Why,” said the Dodo, “the best way to explain it is to do it.” (And, as you might like to try the thing yourself, some winter day, I will tell you how the Dodo managed it.)

First it marked out a race-course, in a sort of circle, (“the exact shape doesn’t matter,” it said,) and then all the party were placed along the course, here and there. There was no “One, two, three, and away,” but they began running when they liked, and left off when they liked, so that it was not easy to know when the race was over. However, when they had been running half an hour or so, and were quite dry again, the Dodo suddenly called out “The race is over!” and they all crowded round it, panting, and asking, “But who has won?”

This question the Dodo could not answer without a great deal of thought, and it sat for a long time with one finger pressed upon its forehead (the position in which you usually see Shakespeare, in the pictures of him), while the rest waited in silence. At last the Dodo said, “**EVERYBODY** has won, and all must have prizes.”

“But who is to give the prizes?” quite a chorus of voices asked.

“Why, **SHE**, of course,” said the Dodo, pointing to Alice with one finger; and the whole party at once crowded round her, calling out in a confused way, “Prizes! Prizes!”

Alice had no idea what to do, and in despair she put her hand in her pocket, and pulled out a box of comfits, (luckily the salt water had not got into it), and handed them round as prizes. There was exactly one a-piece all round.

Chapter 5 – Advice from a Caterpillar

The Caterpillar and Alice looked at each other for some time in silence: at last the Caterpillar took the hookah out of its mouth, and addressed her in a languid, sleepy voice.

“Who are **YOU**?” said the Caterpillar.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, “I—I hardly know, sir, just at present—at least I know who I **WAS** when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.”

“What do you mean by that?” said the Caterpillar sternly. “Explain yourself!”

“I can’t explain **MYSELF**, I’m afraid, sir” said Alice, “because I’m not myself, you see.”

“I don’t see,” said the Caterpillar.

“I’m afraid I can’t put it more clearly,” Alice replied very politely, “for I can’t understand it myself to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing.”

“It isn’t,” said the Caterpillar.

This time Alice waited patiently until it chose to speak again. In a minute or two the Caterpillar took the hookah out of its mouth and yawned once or twice, and shook itself. Then it got down off the mushroom, and crawled away in the grass, merely remarking as it went, "One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter."

"One side of WHAT? The other side of WHAT?" thought Alice to herself.

"Of the mushroom," said the Caterpillar, just as if she had asked it aloud; and in another moment it was out of sight.

Alice remained looking thoughtfully at the mushroom for a minute, trying to make out which were the two sides of it; and as it was perfectly round, she found this a very difficult question.

Chapter 7 – A Mad Tea-Party

There was a table set out under a tree in front of the house, and the March Hare and the Hatter were having tea at it: a Dormouse was sitting between them, fast asleep, and the other two were using it as a cushion, resting their elbows on it, and talking over its head. "Very uncomfortable for the Dormouse," thought Alice; "only, as it's asleep, I suppose it doesn't mind."

The table was a large one, but the three were all crowded together at one corner of it: "No room! No room!" they cried out when they saw Alice coming. "There's PLENTY of room!" said Alice indignantly, and she sat down in a large arm-chair at one end of the table.

"Have some wine," the March Hare said in an encouraging tone.

Alice looked all round the table, but there was nothing on it but tea. "I don't see any wine," she remarked.

"There isn't any," said the March Hare.

"Then it wasn't very civil of you to offer it," said Alice angrily.

"It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited," said the March Hare.

"I didn't know it was YOUR table," said Alice; "it's laid for a great many more than three."

"Your hair wants cutting," said the Hatter. He had been looking at Alice for some time with great curiosity, and this was his first speech.

"You should learn not to make personal remarks," Alice said with some severity; "it's very rude."

The Hatter opened his eyes very wide on hearing this; but all he SAID was, "Why is a raven like a writing-desk?"

"Come, we shall have some fun now!" thought Alice. "I'm glad they've begun asking riddles.—I believe I can guess that," she added aloud.

“Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?” said the March Hare.

“Exactly so,” said Alice.

“Then you should say what you mean,” the March Hare went on.

“I do,” Alice hastily replied; “at least—at least I mean what I say—that’s the same thing, you know.”

“Not the same thing a bit!” said the Hatter. “You might just as well say that ‘I see what I eat’ is the same thing as ‘I eat what I see’!”

“You might just as well say,” added the March Hare, “that ‘I like what I get’ is the same thing as ‘I get what I like’!”

“You might just as well say,” added the Dormouse, who seemed to be talking in his sleep, “that ‘I breathe when I sleep’ is the same thing as ‘I sleep when I breathe’!”

‘It IS the same thing with you,’ said the Hatter, and here the conversation dropped, and the party sat silent for a minute, while Alice thought over all she could remember about ravens and writing-desks, which wasn’t much.

Chapter 12 – Alice’s Evidence

“No, no!” said the Queen. “Sentence first—verdict afterwards.”

“Stuff and nonsense!” said Alice loudly. “The idea of having the sentence first!”

“Hold your tongue!” said the Queen, turning purple.

“I won’t!” said Alice.

“Off with her head!” the Queen shouted at the top of her voice. Nobody moved.

“Who cares for you?” said Alice, (she had grown to her full size by this time.) “You’re nothing but a pack of cards!”

At this the whole pack rose up into the air, and came flying down upon her: she gave a little scream, half of fright and half of anger, and tried to beat them off, and found herself lying on the bank, with her head in the lap of her sister, who was gently brushing away some dead leaves that had fluttered down from the trees upon her face.

“Wake up, Alice dear!” said her sister; “Why, what a long sleep you’ve had!”

“Oh, I’ve had such a curious dream!” said Alice, and she told her sister, as well as she could remember them, all these strange Adventures of hers that you have just been reading about; and when she had finished, her sister kissed her, and said, “It WAS a curious dream, dear, certainly: but now run in to your tea; it’s getting late.” So Alice got up and ran off, thinking while she ran, as well she might, what a wonderful dream it had been.

But her sister sat still just as she left her, leaning her head on her hand, watching the setting sun, and thinking of little Alice and all her wonderful Adventures, till she too began dreaming after a fashion, and this was her dream:—

First, she dreamed of little Alice herself, and once again the tiny hands were clasped upon her knee, and the bright eager eyes were looking up into hers—she could hear the very tones of her voice, and see that queer little toss of her head to keep back the wandering hair that WOULD always get into her eyes—and still as she listened, or seemed to listen, the whole place around her became alive the strange creatures of her little sister’s dream.

The long grass rustled at her feet as the White Rabbit hurried by—the frightened Mouse splashed his way through the neighbouring pool—she could hear the rattle of the teacups as the March Hare and his friends shared their never-ending meal, and the shrill voice of the Queen ordering off her unfortunate guests to execution—once more the pig-baby was sneezing on the Duchess’s knee, while plates and dishes crashed around it—once more the shriek of the Gryphon, the squeaking of the Lizard’s slate-pencil, and the choking of the suppressed guinea-pigs, filled the air, mixed up with the distant sobs of the miserable Mock Turtle.

So she sat on, with closed eyes, and half believed herself in Wonderland, though she knew she had but to open them again, and all would change to dull reality—the grass would be only rustling in the wind, and the pool rippling to the waving of the reeds—the rattling teacups would change to tinkling sheep-bells, and the Queen’s shrill cries to the voice of the shepherd boy—and the sneeze of the baby, the shriek of the Gryphon, and all thy other queer noises, would change (she knew) to the confused clamour of the busy farm-yard—while the lowing of the cattle in the distance would take the place of the Mock Turtle’s heavy sobs.

TASKS AND QUESTIONS

1. The Jumblies:

- a. The Jumblies are sometimes labeled as a “paradise poem”. Try to reason why.
- b. How essential are Lear’s drawings for negotiating the meaning of his words?
- c. Discuss the effect the absurd nonsense works of Lear may have had on the outwardly polished Victorian society.

2. Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland

- a. Before answering the following questions, analyze the novel from the perspective of setting, characters, themes and symbols.
- b. Think of the plot in terms of its structure and comment on its distortions. Prepare synopsis of each chapter, concentrating on absurd events and situations.

	absurd events and situations
Down the Rabbit-Hole
The Pool of Tears

A Caucus-Race and a Long Tale	.....
The Rabbit Sends in a Little Bill	.....
Advice from a Caterpillar	.....
Pig and Pepper	.....
A Mad Tea-Party	.....
The Queen's Croquet-Ground	.....
The Mock Turtle's Story	.....
The Lobster Quadrille	.....
Who Stole the Tarts?	.....
Alice's Evidence	.....

- c. Identify “doubling characters” in the novel.
- d. What might be the function of poems in the novel?
- e. Identify some of the linguistic jokes in the novel. Compare them with their equivalents in Slovak translations.

FANTASY LITERATURE

The Jungle Book; The Tale of Peter Rabbit; Doctor Doolittle; Stuart Little; Winnie-the-Pooh; Peter Pan; Mary Poppins; The Lord of the Rings; The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe; The Wizard of Oz or The BFG are but a few examples of the almost infinite and extremely varied list that can be roofed under the term “fantasy”. Fantasy being a form of speculative fiction, introduces the reader to new, incredible, often bizarre worlds, blends realistic and fantastic elements into one complex imagination-stimulating whole. These impossible worlds are inhabited by impossible creatures like wizards, fairies, dragons, ogres, talking beasts, etc. Concerning the function of fantasy, it ranks from pure entertainment to promotion of high moral principles and values. The stories would also differ in the level of fantastic element included and naturally, in their form or subgenre. New laws, rules, languages, even histories are an essential part of many fantastic stories, too.

Roald Dahl

The BFG

The characters in this book are:

HUMANS:

THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND

MARY, the Queen's maid

MR TIBBS, the Palace butler

THE HEAD OF THE ARMY

THE HEAD OF THE AIR FORCE

And, of course, SOPHIE, an orphan

GIANTS:

THE FLESHLUMPEATER

THE BONECRUNCHER

THE MANHUGGER

THE CHILDCHEWER

THE MEATDRIPPER

THE GIZZARDGULPER

THE MAIDMASHER

THE BLOODBOTTLER

THE BUTCHER BOY

And, of course, THE BFG

The Witching Hour

Sophie couldn't sleep.

A brilliant moonbeam was slanting through a gap in the curtains. It was shining right on to her pillow.

The other children in the dormitory had been asleep for hours.

Sophie closed her eyes and lay quite still. She tried very hard to doze off.

It was no good. The moonbeam was like a silver blade slicing through the room on to her face.

The house was absolutely silent. No voices came up from downstairs. There were no footsteps on the floor above either.

The window behind the curtain was wide open, but nobody was walking on the pavement outside. No cars went by on the street. Not the tiniest sound could be heard anywhere. Sophie had never known such a silence.

Perhaps, she told herself, this was what they called the witching hour.

The witching hour, somebody had once whispered to her, was a special moment in the middle of the night when every child and every grown-up was in a deep deep sleep, and all the dark things came out from hiding and had the world to themselves.

The Snatch

The awful thing was that Sophie knew exactly what was going on although she couldn't see it happening. She knew that a Monster (or Giant) with an enormous long pale wrinkly face and dangerous eyes had plucked her from her bed in the middle of the witching hour and was now carrying her out through the window smothered in a blanket.

What actually happened next was this. When the Giant had got Sophie outside, he arranged the blanket so that he could grasp all the four corners of it at once in one of his huge hands, with Sophie imprisoned inside. In the other hand he seized the suitcase and the long trumpet thing and off he ran.

The BFG

The Giant picked up the trembling Sophie with one hand and carried her across the cave and put her on the table.

Now he really is going to eat me, Sophie thought.

The Giant sat down and stared hard at Sophie. He had truly enormous ears. Each one was as big as the wheel of a truck and he seemed to be able to move them inwards and outwards from his head as he wished.

"I is hungry!" the Giant boomed. He grinned, showing massive square teeth. The teeth were very white and very square and they sat in his mouth like huge slices of white bread.

"P... please don't eat me," Sophie stammered.

The Giant let out a bellow of laughter. "Just because I is a giant, you think I is a man-gobbling cannybull!" he shouted. "You is about right! Giants is all cannybully and murderful! And they *does* gobble up human beans! We is in Giant Country now! Giants is everywhere around! Out there us has the famous Bonecrunching Giant! Bonecrunching Giant crunches up two wopsey whiffing human beans for supper every night! Noise is earbursting! Noise of crunching bones goes crackety-crack for miles around!"

"Owch!" Sophie said.

"Bonecrunching Giant only gobbles human beans from Turkey," the Giant said. "Every night Bonecruncher is galloping off to Turkey to gobble Turks."

Sophie's sense of patriotism was suddenly so bruised by this remark that she became quite angry. "Why Turks?" she blurted out. "What's wrong with the English?"

"Bonecrunching Giant says Turks is tasting oh ever so much juicier and more scrumdiddlyumptious! Bonecruncher says Turkish human beans has a glamourly flavour. He says Turks from Turkey is tasting of turkey."

The Marvellous Ears

"You is a norphan?"

"Yes."

"How many is there in there?"

"Ten of us," Sophie said. "All little girls."

"Was you happy there?" the BFG asked.

"I hated it," Sophie said. "The woman who ran it was called Mrs Clonkers and if she caught you breaking any of the rules, like getting out of bed at night or not folding up your clothes, you got punished."

"How is you getting punished?"

"She locked us in the dark cellar for a day and a night without anything to eat or drink."

"The rotten old rotrasper!" cried the BFG.

"If you is really wanting to know what I am doing in your village," the BFG said, "I is blowing a dream into the bedroom of those children."

"*Blowing a dream?*" Sophie said. "What *do* you mean?"

"I is a dream-blowing giant," the BFG said. "When all the other giants is galloping off every what way and which to swollop human beans, I is scuddling away to other places to blow dreams into the bedrooms of sleeping children. Nice dreams. Lovely golden dreams. Dreams that is giving the dreamers a happy time."

Snozzcumbers

"But if you don't eat people like all the others," Sophie said, "then what *do* you live on?"

"That is a squelching tricky problem around here," the BFG answered. "In this sloshflunking Giant Country, happy eats like pineapples and pigwinkles is simply not growing. Nothing is growing except for one extremely icky-poo vegetable. It is called the snozzcumber."

"The snozzcumber!" cried Sophie. "There's no such thing."

The BFG looked at Sophie and smiled, showing about twenty of his square white teeth. "Yesterday," he said, "we was not believing in giants, was we? Today we is not believing in snozzcumbers. Just because we happen not to have actually *seen* something with our own two little winkles, we think it is not existing."

Froboscottle and Whizzpoppers

“Water?” said the BFG, frowning mightily. “What is water?”

“We drink it,” Sophie said. “What do you drink?”

“Froboscottle,” announced the BFG. “All giants is drinking froboscottle.”

“Very well, then. When you is drinking this cokey drink of yours,” said the BFG, “it is going straight down into your tummy. Is that right? Or is it left?”

“It’s right,” Sophie said.

“And the *bubbles* is going also into your tummy. Right or left?”

“Right again,” Sophie said.

“And the bubbles is fizzing upwards?”

“Of course,” Sophie said.

“Which means,” said the BFG, “that they will all come swishwiffing up your throat and out of your mouth and make a foulsome belchy burp!”

“That is often true,” Sophie said. “But what’s wrong with a little burp now and again? It’s sort of fun.”

“Burping is filthsome,” the BFG said. “Us giants is never doing it.”

“But with *your* drink,” Sophie said, “what was it you called it?”

“Froboscottle,” said the BFG.

“With froboscottle,” Sophie said, “the bubbles in your tummy will be going *downwards* and that could have a far nastier result.”

“Why nasty?” asked the BFG, frowning.

“Because,” Sophie said, blushing a little, “if they go down instead of up, they’ll be coming out somewhere else with an even louder and ruder noise.”

“A whizzpopper!” cried the BFG, beaming at her. “Us giants is making whizzpoppers all the time! Whizzpopping is a sign of happiness. It is music in our ears! You surely is not telling me that a little whizzpopping is forbidden among human beans?”

“It is considered extremely rude,” Sophie said.

Journey to Dream Country

“I is not understanding human beans at all,” the BFG said. “*You* is a human bean and you is saying it is grizzling and horrigust for giants to be eating human beans. Right or left?”

“Right,” Sophie said.

“But human beans is squishing *each other* all the time,” the BFG said. “They is shootling guns and going up in aerioplanes to drop their bombs on each other’s heads every week. Human beans is always killing other human beans.”

Dreams

“What amazes me,” Sophie said, “is how you ever learned to write in the first place.”

“Ah,” said the BFG. “I has been wondering how long it is before you is asking me that.”

“Considering you never went to school, I think it’s quite marvellous,” Sophie said. “How *did* you learn?”

The BFG crossed the cave and opened a tiny secret door in the wall. He took out a book, very old and tattered. By human standards, it was an ordinary sized book, but it looked like a postage stamp in his huge hand.

“One night,” he said, “I is blowing a dream through a window and I sees this book lying on the little boy’s bedroom table. I wanted it so very badly, you understand. But I is refusing to steal it. I would never do that.”

“So how did you get it?” Sophie asked.

“I *borrowed* it,” the BFG said, smiling a little. “Just for a short time I borrowed it.”

“How long have you had it?” Sophie asked.

“Perhaps only about eighty years,” said BFG. “Soon I shall be putting it back.”

“And that’s how you taught yourself to write?” Sophie asked him.

“I is reading it hundreds of times,” the BFG said. “And I is still reading it and teaching new words to myself and how to write them. It is the most scrumdiddlyumptious story.”

Sophie took the book out of his hand. *Nicholas Nickleby*,’ she read aloud.

“By Dahl’s Chickens,” the BFG said.

“Where is you off to tonight?” shouted the BFG.

“We is all of us flushbunking off to England tonight,” answered the Fleshlumpeater as they went galloping past. “England is a luctuous land and we is fancying a few nice little English chiddlers.”

“I,” shouted the Maidmasher, “is knowing where there is a gigglehouse for girls and I is guzzling myself full as a frothblower!”

“And I knows where there is a bogglebox for boys!” shouted the Gizzardgulper. “All I has to do is reach in and grab myself a handful! English boys is tasting extra lickswishy!”

In a few seconds, the nine galloping giants were out of sight.

“What *did* he mean?” Sophie said, poking her head out of the pocket. “What is a gigglehouse for girls?”

“He is meaning a girls’ school,” the BFG said. “He will be eating them by the bundle.”

“Oh no!” cried Sophie.

“And boys from a boys’ school,” said the BFG.

“It mustn’t happen!” Sophie cried out. “We’ve got to stop them! We can’t just sit here and do nothing!”

The Great Plan

The BFG sighed and shook his head firmly. ‘I has told you five or six times,’ he said, ‘and the third will be the last. I is *never* showing myself to human beans.’

“Why ever not?”

“If I do, they will be putting me in the zoo with all the jiggyraffes and cattypiddlers.”

“Nonsense,” Sophie said.

“And they will be sending *you* straight back to a norphanage,” the BFG went on. “Grown-up human beans is not famous for their kindnesses. They is all squifflerotters and grinksludgers.”

“That simply isn’t true!” Sophie cried angrily. “Some of them are very kind indeed.”

“Who?” the BFG said. “Name one.”

“The Queen of England,” Sophie said. “You can’t call her a squifflerotter or a grinksludger.”

“Well...” the BFG said.

“You can’t call her a squeakpip or a notmucher either,” Sophie said, getting angrier and angrier.

“The Fleshlumpeater is longing dearly to guzzle her up,” the BFG said, smiling a little now.

“Who, the *Queen*?” Sophie cried, aghast.

“Yes,” the BFG answered. “Fleshlumpeater says he is never eating a queen and he thinks perhaps she has an especially scrumdiddlyumptious flavour.”

“How dare he!” Sophie cried.

“But Fleshlumpeater says there is too many soldiers around her palace and he dursent try it.”

“He’d better not!” Sophie said.

“He is also saying he would like very much to guzzle one of the soldiers in his pretty red suit but he is worried about those big black furry hats they is wearing. He thinks they might be sticking in his throat.”

“I hope he chokes,” Sophie said.

“Fleshlumpeater is a very careful giant,” the BFG said.

Sophie was silent for a few moments. Then suddenly, in a voice filled with excitement, she cried out, “I’ve got it! By golly, I think I’ve got it!”

“Got what?” asked the BFG.

“The answer!” cried Sophie. “We’ll go to the Queen! It’s a terrific idea! If I went and told the Queen about these disgusting man-eating giants, I’m sure she’d do something about it!”

“You must then explain to the Queen in her dream that there is a Big Friendly Giant who can tell her where all those beasts are living, so that she can send her soldiers and her armies to capture them once and for all. And now let her dream one last and very important thing. Let her dream that there is a little girl called Sophie sitting on her window-sill who will tell her where the Big Friendly Giant is hiding.”

The Queen

“Oh, Majester!” cried the BFG. ‘Oh, Queen! Oh Monacher! Oh, Golden Sovereign! Oh, Ruler! Oh, Ruler of Straight Lines! Oh, Sultana! I is come here with my little friend Sophie... to give you a...’ The BFG hesitated, searching for the word.

“To give me *what?*” the Queen said.

“A *sistance*,” the BFG said, beaming.

The Queen looked puzzled.

“He sometimes speaks a bit funny, Your Majesty,” Sophie said. “He never went to school.”

“Then we must send him to school,” the Queen said. “We have some very good schools in this country.”

“I has great secrets to tell Your Majester,” the BFG said.

The Plan

It was an amazing spectacle, those nine helicopters winging through the sky, each with a trussed-up fifty-foot-long giant slung underneath it. The giants themselves must have found it an interesting experience. They never stopped bellowing, but their howls were drowned by the noise of the engines.

When it began to get dark, the helicopters switched on powerful searchlights and trained them on to the galloping giant so as to keep him in sight. They flew right through the night and arrived in England just as dawn was breaking.

The Author

The BFG expressed a wish to learn how to speak properly, and Sophie herself, who loved him as she would a father, volunteered to give him lessons every day. She even taught him how to spell and to write sentences, and he turned out to be a splendid intelligent pupil. In his spare time, he read books. He became a tremendous reader. He read all of Charles Dickens (whom he no longer called Dahl’s Chickens), and all of Shakespeare and literally thousands of other books. He also started to write essays about his own past life. When Sophie read some of them, she said, “These are very good. I think perhaps one day you could become a real writer.”

“Oh, I would love that!” cried the BFG. “Do you think I could?”

“I know you could,” Sophie said. “Why don’t you start by writing a book about you and me?”

“Very well,” the BFG said. “I’ll give it a try.”

So he did. He worked hard on it and in the end he completed it. Rather shyly, he showed it to the Queen. The Queen read it aloud to her grandchildren. Then the Queen said, "I think we ought to get this book printed properly and published so that other children can read it." This was arranged, but because the BFG was a very modest giant, he wouldn't put his own name on it. He used somebody else's name instead.

But where, you might ask, is this book that the BFG wrote?

It's right here. You've just finished reading it.

TASKS AND QUESTIONS

1. Comment on the following features of Dahl's work, support your comments with specific episodes and quotations:
 - a. Violence and humor blended together;
 - b. Exaggeration and caricature;
 - c. Surprising plot;
 - d. Unexpected ending;
 - e. Expressive language;
 - f. Fantasy in reality;
 - g. Depiction of adults;
 - h. Language humor.
2. Provide brief synopsis of the story and summarise its central themes.
3. Create The BFG vocabulary list and compare it with Slovak translations of the publication.

MULTICULTURAL FICTION

Multicultural fiction is not an established formal genre, but its existence shouldn't be neglected at all. Multicultural fiction offers the reader an insight into different cultures and aims to promote development of cultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, cultural knowledge and critical thinking, too. The reader considers similarities and differences in lifestyle, beliefs, traditions or habits and naturally develops their intercultural communicative competence.

The protagonist comes usually from the minority culture. He/she is often more mature than their age would indicate and often experiences clash of the minority and majority culture, struggles with cultural differences and their own cultural identity. The antagonist may be represented by someone from majority culture, often it's represented by the system itself, e.g. government.

The Education of Little Tree – A. E. Carter

“Ye see, Little Tree, ain’t no way of learning, except by letting ye do.”

The Way

It had taken Granma, sitting in the rocker that creaked with her slight weight as she worked and hummed, while the pine knots spluttered in the fireplace, a week of evenings to make the boot moccasins. With a hook knife, she had cut the deer leather and made the strips that she wove around the edges. When she had finished, she soaked the moccasins in water and I put them on wet and walked them dry, back and forth across the floor, until they fitted soft and giving, light as air.

This morning I slipped the moccasins on last after I had jumped into my overalls and buttoned my jacket. It was dark and cold – too early even for the morning whisper wind to stir the trees.

Granpa had said I could go with him on the high trail, if I got up, and he had said he would not wake me.

“A man rises of his own will in the morning,” he had spoken down to me and he did not smile. But Granpa had made many noises in his rising, bumping the wall of my room and talking uncommonly loud to Granma, and so I had heard, and I was first out, waiting with the hounds in the darkness.

“So ye’re up.” Granpa sounded surprised.

“Yes, sir,” I said, and kept the proud out of my voice.

Granpa pointed his finger at the hounds jumping and prancing around us. “Ye’ll stay,” he ordered, and they tucked in their tails and whined and begged and Ol’ Maud set up a howl. But they didn’t follow us. They stood, all together in a hopeless little bunch, and watched us leave the clearing.

I had been up the low trail that followed the bank of the spring branch, twisting and turning with the hollow until it broke out into a meadow where Granpa had his barn and kept his mille and cow. But this was the high trail that forked off to the right and took to the side of the mountain, sloping always upward as it traveled along the hollow. I trotted behind Granpa and I could feel the upward slant of the trail.

I could feel something more, as Granma said I would.

Mon-o-lab, the earth mother, came to me through my moccasins. I could feel her push and swell here, and sway and give there... and the roots that veined her body and the life of the water-blood, deep inside her. She was warm and springy and bounced me on her breast, as Granma said she would.

The cold air steamed my breath in clouds and the spring branch fell far below us. Bare tree branches dripped water from ice prongs that teathed their sides, and as we walked higher there was ice on the trail. Gray light eased the darkness away.

Granpa stopped and pointed by the side of the trail. "There she is-turkey run-see?" I dropped to my hands and knees and saw the tracks: little stick-like impressions coming out from a center hub.

"Now," Granpa said, "we'll fix the trap." And he moved off the trail until he found a stump hole.

We cleaned it out, first the leaves, and then Granpa pulled out his long knife and cut into the spongy ground and we scooped out the dirt, scattering it among the leaves. When the hole was deep, so that I couldn't see over the rim, Granpa pulled me out and we dragged tree branches to cover it and, over these spread armfuls of leaves. Then, with his long knife, Granpa dug a trail sloping downward into the hole and back toward the turkey run. He took the grains of red Indian corn from his pocket and scattered them down the trail, and threw a handful into the hole.

"Now we will go," he said, and set off again up the high trail. Ice, spewed from the earth like frosting, crackled under our feet. The mountain opposite us moved closer as the hollow far below became a narrow slit, showing the spring branch like the edge of a steel knife, sunk in the bottom...

We sat down in the leaves, off the trail, just as the first sun touched the top of the mountain across the hollow. From his pocket Granpa pulled out a sour biscuit and deer meat for me, and we watched the mountain while we ate.

The sun hit the top like an explosion, sending showers of glitter and sparkle into the air. The sparkling of the icy trees hurt the eyes to look, and it moved down the mountain like a wave as the sun backed the night shadow down and down. A crow scout sent three hard calls through the air, warning we were there.

And now the mountain popped and gave breathing sighs that sent little puffs of steam into the air. She pinged and murmured as the sun released the trees from their death armor of ice.

Granpa watched, same as me, and listened as the sounds grew with the morning wind that set up a low whistle in the trees.

"She's coming alive," he said, soft and low, without taking his eyes from the mountain.

"Yes, sir," I said, "she's coming alive." And I knew right then that me and Granpa had us an understanding that most folks didn't know.

The night shadow backed down and across a little meadow, heavy with grass and shining in the sun bath. Granpa pointed. There was quail fluttering and jumping in the grass, feeding on the seeds. Then he pointed up toward the icy blue sky.

There were no clouds but at first I didn't see the speck that came over the rim. It grew larger. Facing into the sun, so that the shadow did not go before him, the bird sped down the side of the mountain; a skier on the treetops, wings half-folded... like a brown bullet... faster and faster, toward the quail.

Granpa chuckled. "It's 01' Tal-con, the hawk."

The quail rose in a rush and sped into the trees-but one was slow. The hawk hit. Feathers flew into the air and then the birds were on the ground; the hawk's head rising and falling with the death blows. In a moment he rose with the dead quail clutched in his claws, back up the side of the mountain and over the rim.

I didn't cry, but I know I looked sad, because Granpa said, "Don't feel sad, Little Tree. It is The Way. Tal-con caught the slow and so the slow will raise no children who are also slow. Tal-con lives by The Way. He helps the quail."

Granpa dug a sweet root from the ground with his knife and peeled it so that it dripped with its juicy winter cache of life. He cut it in half and handed me the heavy end.

"It is The Way," he said softly. "Take only what ye need. When ye take the deer, do not take the best. Take the smaller and the slower and then the deer will grow stronger and always give you meat. Pa-koh, the panther, knows and so must ye."

And he laughed. "Only Ti-bi, the bee, stores more than he can use, and so he is robbed by the bear, and the 'coon, and the Cherokee. It is so with people who store and fat themselves with more than their share. They will have it taken from them. And there will be wars over it, and they will make long talks, trying to hold more than their share. They will say a flag stands for their right to do this, and men will die because of the words and the flag, but they will not change the rules of The Way."

We went back down the trail, and the sun was high over us when we reached the turkey trap. We could hear them before we saw the trap. They were in there, gobbling and making loud whistles of alarm.

"Ain't no closing over the door, Granpa," I said. "Why don't they just lower their heads and come out?"

Granpa stretched full length into the hole and pulled out a big squawking turkey, tied his legs with a thong, and grinned up at me.

"Ol' Tel-qui is like some people. Since he knows everything, he won't never look down to see what's around him. Got his head stuck up in the air too high to learn anything."

Granpa laid them out on the ground, legs tied. There were six of them, and now he pointed down at them. "They're all about the same age... ye can tell by the thickness of the combs. We only need three so now ye choose, Little Tree."

I walked around them, flopping on the ground. I squatted and studied them, and walked around them again. I had to be careful. I got down on my hands and knees and crawled among them, until I had pulled out the three smallest I could find.

Granpa said nothing. He pulled the thongs from the legs of the others and they took to wing, beating down the side of the mountain. He slung two of the turkeys over his shoulder. "Can ye carry the other?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," I said, not sure that I had done right. A slow grin broke Granpa's bony face. "If ye was not Little Tree I would call ye Little Hawk."

I followed Granpa down the trail. The turkey was heavy, but it felt good over my shoulder. The sun had tilted toward the farther mountain and drifted through the branches of the trees beside the trail, making burnt gold patterns where we walked. The wind had died in the late afternoon of winter, and I heard Granpa, ahead of me, humming a tune. I would have liked to live that time forever... for I knew I had pleased Granpa. I had learned The Way.

TASKS AND QUESTIONS

1. Where and when is the novel set? Are there contrasting settings? How important is the setting (both time and place)?
2. Provide brief synopsis of the novel and summarise its central themes.
3. Comment on the following ideas portrayed in Carter's work, support your comments with specific episodes and quotations.
 - a. Indian life and Indian values (perception of life and death, man and nature relationship, Indian traditions, Indian history, etc.);
 - b. Family relationships and friendships;
 - c. Contradictions between Indians and White Americans;
 - d. Indians' attitude toward religion and church;
 - e. Search for identity;
 - f. Individual against society;
 - g. Heroism and strong will.
4. Working with the chapter "The Way" answer the following question (always support your answers with suitable quotations).
 - a. What is "The Way"?
 - b. How is the relationship between men and animals explained in "The Way"?
 - c. Has Little Tree learnt "The Way"?

ADVENTURE FICTION

The genre of adventure fiction could be roughly described as follows. It's focused on a central character's (a hero, less frequently a heroine) risky and dangerous struggle and accomplishment of assigned tasks, often taking place in extreme or exotic environment, which adds to the thrill, the unknown and the unexpected. Adventure novels are usually populated with flat, stereotypical, clearcut characters; it's usually only the protagonist who transforms – matures throughout the novel. The hero is looked at as an example of moral commitment, courage and justice. Each story is filled with action, the pacing is quick, full of twists. Adventure fiction has been addressing juvenile readers since the publications of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), *Gulliver's Travels* (1726); or *Treasure Island* (1883).

R. L. Stevenson

"Fiction is to the grown man what play is to the child; it is there that he changes the atmosphere and tenor of his life."

Treasure Island

To The Hesitating Purchaser:

If sailor tales to sailor tunes,
Storm and adventure, heat and cold,
If schooners, islands, and maroons,
And buccaneers, and buried gold,
And all the old romance, retold
Exactly in the ancient way,
Can please, as me they pleased of old,
The wiser youngsters of today:

—So be it, and fall on! If not,
If studious youth no longer crave,
His ancient appetites forgot,
Kingston, or Ballantyne the brave,
Or Cooper of the wood and wave:
So be it, also! And may I
And all my pirates share the grave
Where these and their creations lie!

25

I Strike the Jolly Roger

I HAD scarce gained a position on the bowsprit when the flying jib flapped and filled upon the other tack, with a report like a gun. The schooner trembled to her keel under the reverse, but next moment, the other sails still drawing, the jib flapped back again and hung idle.

This had nearly tossed me off into the sea; and now I lost no time, crawled back along the bowsprit, and tumbled head foremost on the deck.

I was on the lee side of the forecastle, and the mainsail, which was still drawing, concealed from me a certain portion of the after-deck. Not a soul was to be seen. The planks, which had not been swabbed since the mutiny, bore the print of many feet, and an empty bottle, broken by the neck, tumbled to and fro like a live thing in the scuppers.

Suddenly the HISPANIOLA came right into the wind. The jibs behind me cracked aloud, the rudder slammed to, the whole ship gave a sickening heave and shudder, and at the same moment the main-boom swung inboard, the sheet groaning in the blocks, and showed me the lee after-deck.

There were the two watchmen, sure enough: red-cap on his back, as stiff as a handspike, with his arms stretched out like those of a crucifix and his teeth showing through his open lips; Israel Hands propped against the bulwarks, his chin on his chest, his hands lying open before him on the deck, his face as white, under its tan, as a tallow candle.

For a while the ship kept bucking and sidling like a vicious horse, the sails filling, now on one tack, now on another, and the boom swinging to and fro till the mast groaned aloud under the strain. Now and again too there would come a cloud of light sprays over the bulwark and a heavy blow of the ship's bows against the swell; so much heavier weather was made of it by this great rigged ship than by my home-made, lop-sided coracle, now gone to the bottom of the sea.

At every jump of the schooner, red-cap slipped to and fro, but—what was ghastly to behold—neither his attitude nor his fixed teeth-disclosing grin was anyway disturbed by this rough usage. At every jump too, Hands appeared still more to sink into himself and settle down upon the deck, his feet sliding ever the farther out, and the whole body canting towards the stern, so that his face became, little by little, hid from me; and at last I could see nothing beyond his ear and the frayed ringlet of one whisker.

At the same time, I observed, around both of them, splashes of dark blood upon the planks and began to feel sure that they had killed each other in their drunken wrath.

While I was thus looking and wondering, in a calm moment, when the ship was still, Israel Hands turned partly round and with a low moan writhed himself back to the position in which I had seen him first. The moan, which told of pain and deadly weakness, and the way in which his jaw hung open went right to my heart. But when I remembered the talk I had overheard from the apple barrel, all pity left me.

I walked aft until I reached the main-mast.

“Come aboard, Mr. Hands,” I said ironically.

He rolled his eyes round heavily, but he was too far gone to express surprise. All he could do was to utter one word, “Brandy.”

It occurred to me there was no time to lose, and dodging the boom as it once more lurched across the deck, I slipped aft and down the companion stairs into the cabin.

It was such a scene of confusion as you can hardly fancy. All the lockfast places had been broken open in quest of the chart. The floor was thick with mud where ruffians had sat down to drink or consult after wading in the marshes round their camp. The bulkheads, all painted in clear white and beaded round with gilt, bore a pattern of dirty hands. Dozens of empty bottles clinked together in

corners to the rolling of the ship. One of the doctor's medical books lay open on the table, half of the leaves gutted out, I suppose, for pipelights. In the midst of all this the lamp still cast a smoky glow, obscure and brown as umber.

I went into the cellar; all the barrels were gone, and of the bottles a most surprising number had been drunk out and thrown away. Certainly, since the mutiny began, not a man of them could ever have been sober.

Foraging about, I found a bottle with some brandy left, for Hands; and for myself I routed out some biscuit, some pickled fruits, a great bunch of raisins, and a piece of cheese. With these I came on deck, put down my own stock behind the rudder head and well out of the coxswain's reach, went forward to the water-breaker, and had a good deep drink of water, and then, and not till then, gave Hands the brandy.

He must have drunk a gill before he took the bottle from his mouth.

"Aye," said he, "by thunder, but I wanted some o' that!"

I had sat down already in my own corner and begun to eat.

"Much hurt?" I asked him.

He grunted, or rather, I might say, he barked.

"If that doctor was aboard," he said, "I'd be right enough in a couple of turns, but I don't have no manner of luck, you see, and that's what's the matter with me. As for that swab, he's good and dead, he is," he added, indicating the man with the red cap. "He warn't no seaman anyhow. And where mought you have come from?"

"Well," said I, "I've come aboard to take possession of this ship, Mr. Hands; and you'll please regard me as your captain until further notice."

He looked at me sourly enough but said nothing. Some of the colour had come back into his cheeks, though he still looked very sick and still continued to slip out and settle down as the ship banged about.

"By the by," I continued, "I can't have these colours, Mr. Hands; and by your leave, I'll strike 'em. Better none than these."

And again dodging the boom, I ran to the colour lines, handed down their cursed black flag, and chucked it overboard.

"God save the king!" said I, waving my cap. "And there's an end to Captain Silver!"

He watched me keenly and slyly, his chin all the while on his breast.

"I reckon," he said at last, "I reckon, Cap'n Hawkins, you'll kind of want to get ashore now. S'pose we talks."

“Why, yes,” says I, “with all my heart, Mr. Hands. Say on.” And I went back to my meal with a good appetite.

“This man,” he began, nodding feebly at the corpse — “O’Brien were his name, a rank Irishman—this man and me got the canvas on her, meaning for to sail her back. Well, HE’S dead now, he is—as dead as bilge; and who’s to sail this ship, I don’t see. Without I gives you a hint, you ain’t that man, as far’s I can tell. Now, look here, you gives me food and drink and a old scarf or ankecher to tie my wound up, you do, and I’ll tell you how to sail her, and that’s about square all round, I take it.”

“I’ll tell you one thing,” says I: “I’m not going back to Captain Kidd’s anchorage. I mean to get into North Inlet and beach her quietly there.”

“To be sure you did,” he cried. “Why, I ain’t sich an infernal lubber after all. I can see, can’t I? I’ve tried my fling, I have, and I’ve lost, and it’s you has the wind of me. North Inlet? Why, I haven’t no ch’ice, not I! I’d help you sail her up to Execution Dock, by thunder! So I would.”

Well, as it seemed to me, there was some sense in this. We struck our bargain on the spot. In three minutes I had the HISPANIOLA sailing easily before the wind along the coast of Treasure Island, with good hopes of turning the northern point ere noon and beating down again as far as North Inlet before high water, when we might beach her safely and wait till the subsiding tide permitted us to land.

Then I lashed the tiller and went below to my own chest, where I got a soft silk handkerchief of my mother’s. With this, and with my aid, Hands bound up the great bleeding stab he had received in the thigh, and after he had eaten a little and had a swallow or two more of the brandy, he began to pick up visibly, sat straighter up, spoke louder and clearer, and looked in every way another man.

The breeze served us admirably. We skimmed before it like a bird, the coast of the island flashing by and the view changing every minute. Soon we were past the high lands and bowling beside low, sandy country, sparsely dotted with dwarf pines, and soon we were beyond that again and had turned the corner of the rocky hill that ends the island on the north.

I was greatly elated with my new command, and pleased with the bright, sunshiny weather and these different prospects of the coast. I had now plenty of water and good things to eat, and my conscience, which had smitten me hard for my desertion, was quieted by the great conquest I had made. I should, I think, have had nothing left me to desire but for the eyes of the coxswain as they followed me derisively about the deck and the odd smile that appeared continually on his face. It was a smile that had in it something both of pain and weakness—a haggard old man’s smile; but there was, besides that, a grain of derision, a shadow of treachery, in his expression as he craftily watched, and watched, and watched me at my work.

TASKS AND QUESTIONS

1. Provide specific features of these various settings of the novel:

The Admiral Benbow Inn	.....
Hispaniola	.....
Treasure Island	.....

2. Provide brief synopsis of the story (concentrate on turns of events) and summarise central themes of the novel.
3. Identify some of the stereotypes of adventure fiction that can be found in the novel.
4. Comment on the transformation of the protagonist.
5. Why is the story narrated by Jim?
6. How is Ben Gunn depicted in the novel?
7. Compare Captain Smollett and Long John Silver.
8. What is ambiguous about the novel's ending?
9. Working with the chapter 25 "I Strike the Jolly Roger" answer the following questions (always supported by a suitable quote).
 - a. Look for sign of pirates' drunkenness.
 - b. After announcing himself the captain of Hispaniola, what did Jim immediately do?
 - c. What is Israel Hands' reaction to Jim being the new captain?
 - d. How would you call this newly established relationship between Jim and Israel Hands?

GIRLS' LITERATURE

The origination of books (novels in particular) aimed at girls' readers dates back to the second half of the 19th century. Content, themes, the heroine herself and possible moral and didactic application have reflected social, political and cultural possibilities women have had in society since the late 18th century (e.g. publication of *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*), through the late 19th century (e.g. *Little Women*; *Jane Eyre*), early 20th century (e.g. *Anne of Green Gables*) up to present-day variety of novels mainly of popular character. The roles of women, their position in the society, their rights, their duties, all is reflected in the novels of one or another era. The genres vary, too; e.g. sentimental novels, domestic novels or feminist novels.

L. M. Alcott

Little Women

"I am not afraid of storms for I am learning how to sail my ship."

CHAPTER ONE

"Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents," grumbled Jo, lying on the rug.

"It's so dreadful to be poor!" sighed Meg, looking down at her old dress.

"I don't think it's fair for some girls to have plenty of pretty things, and other girls nothing at all," added little Amy, with an injured sniff.

"We've got Father and Mother, and each other," said Beth contentedly from her corner.

The four young faces on which the firelight shone brightened at the cheerful words, but darkened again as Jo said sadly, "We haven't got Father, and shall not have him for a long time." She didn't say "perhaps never," but each silently added it, thinking of Father far away, where the fighting was.

Nobody spoke for a minute; then Meg said in an altered tone, "You know the reason Mother proposed not having any presents this Christmas was because it is going to be a hard winter for everyone; and she thinks we ought not to spend money for pleasure, when our men are suffering so in the army. We can't do much, but we can make our little sacrifices, and ought to do it gladly. But I am afraid I don't." And Meg shook her head, as she thought regretfully of all the pretty things she wanted.

"But I don't think the little we should spend would do any good. We've each got a dollar, and the army wouldn't be much helped by our giving that. I agree not to expect anything from Mother or you, but I do want to buy *UNDINE AND SINTRAM* for myself. I've wanted it so long," said Jo, who was a bookworm.

"I planned to spend mine in new music," said Beth, with a little sigh, which no one heard but the hearth brush and kettle holder.

"I shall get a nice box of Faber's drawing pencils. I really need them," said Amy decidedly.

"Mother didn't say anything about our money, and she won't wish us to give up everything. Let's each buy what we want, and have a little fun. I'm sure we work hard enough to earn it," cried Jo, examining the heels of her shoes in a gentlemanly manner.

"I know I do—teaching those tiresome children nearly all day, when I'm longing to enjoy myself at home," began Meg, in the complaining tone again.

"You don't have half such a hard time as I do," said Jo.

"How would you like to be shut up for hours with a nervous, fussy old lady, who keeps you trotting, is never satisfied, and worries you till you're ready to fly out the window or cry?"

"It's naughty to fret, but I do think washing dishes and keeping things tidy is the worst work in the world. It makes me cross, and my hands get so stiff, I can't practice well at all." And Beth looked at her rough hands with a sigh that any one could hear that time.

"I don't believe any of you suffer as I do," cried Amy, "for you don't have to go to school with impertinent girls, who plague you if you don't know your lessons, and laugh at your dresses, and label your father if he isn't rich, and insult you when your nose isn't nice."

"If you mean libel, I'd say so, and not talk about labels, as if Papa was a pickle bottle," advised Jo, laughing.

"I know what I mean, and you needn't be statirical about it. It's proper to use good words, and improve your vocabulary," returned Amy, with dignity.

"Don't peck at one another, children. Don't you wish we had the money Papa lost when we were little, Jo? Dear me! How happy and good we'd be, if we had no worries!" said Meg, who could remember better times.

“You said the other day you thought we were a deal happier than the King children, for they were fighting and fretting all the time, in spite of their money.”

“So I did, Beth. Well, I think we are. For though we do have to work, we make fun of ourselves, and are a pretty jolly set, as Jo would say.”

“Jo does use such slang words!” observed Amy, with a reproving look at the long figure stretched on the rug.

Jo immediately sat up, put her hands in her pockets, and began to whistle.

“Don’t, Jo. It’s so boyish!”

“That’s why I do it.”

“I detest rude, unladylike girls!”

“I hate affected, niminy-piminy chits!”

“Birds in their little nests agree,” sang Beth, the peacemaker, with such a funny face that both sharp voices softened to a laugh, and the “pecking” ended for that time.

“Really, girls, you are both to be blamed,” said Meg, beginning to lecture in her elder-sisterly fashion. “You are old enough to leave off boyish tricks, and to behave better, Josephine. It didn’t matter so much when you were a little girl, but now you are so tall, and turn up your hair, you should remember that you are a young lady.”

“I’m not! And if turning up my hair makes me one, I’ll wear it in two tails till I’m twenty,” cried Jo, pulling off her net, and shaking down a chestnut mane. “I hate to think I’ve got to grow up, and be Miss March, and wear long gowns, and look as prim as a China Aster! It’s bad enough to be a girl, anyway, when I like boy’s games and work and manners! I can’t get over my disappointment in not being a boy. And it’s worse than ever now, for I’m dying to go and fight with Papa. And I can only stay home and knit, like a poky old woman!”

TASKS AND QUESTIONS

1. Contrast the sisters from the perspective of their personality and ambition.

	Personality	Ambition
Josephine
Meg
Beth
Amy

2. What do we learn about position of women in the society of the presented era?

3. What does the title refer to?
4. What is the role of the Civil War in the novel?
5. Comment on the transformation of each of the March girls.
6. How is conformity and rebellion dealt with in the novel? Provide some examples.
7. What is the role of *Pilgrim's Progress* in Chapter 1?

BOYS' LITERATURE

There's often a blurry line between adventure fiction, which was introduced couple of chapters above, and so called boys' literature. Stories where the protagonist, the hero, is a boy, originated in the second half of the 19th century. Young male readers often seek identification with a heroic example and an adventure in books. All is offered in the stories with a boy protagonist. The most beloved classics like *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn* or the more up-to-date *The Catcher in the Rye*, still enjoy their popularity along with the most recent phenomenon of *Harry Potter* books.

Mark Twain

"A person who won't read has no advantage over one who can't read."

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

(Tom Sawyer's Comrade)

by
Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens)

NOTICE

PERSONS attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot.

BY ORDER OF THE AUTHOR,
Per G. G., Chief of Ordnance.

EXPLANATORY

IN this book a number of dialects are used, to wit: the Missouri negro dialect; the extremest form of the backwoods Southwestern dialect; the ordinary "Pike County" dialect; and four modified varieties of this last. The shadings have not been done in a haphazard fashion, or by guesswork; but

painstakingly, and with the trustworthy guidance and support of personal familiarity with these several forms of speech.

I make this explanation for the reason that without it many readers would suppose that all these characters were trying to talk alike and not succeeding.

THE AUTHOR.

Chapter 1

YOU don't know about me without you have read a book by the name of The Adventures of Tom Sawyer; but that ain't no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly. There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth.

Now the way that the book winds up is this: Tom and me found the money that the robbers hid in the cave, and it made us rich. We got six thousand dollars apiece—all gold. It was an awful sight of money when it was piled up. Well, Judge Thatcher he took it and put it out at interest, and it fetched us a dollar a day apiece all the year round—more than a body could tell what to do with. The Widow Douglas she took me for her son, and allowed she would sivilize me; but it was rough living in the house all the time, considering how dismal regular and decent the widow was in all her ways; and so when I couldn't stand it no longer I lit out. I got into my old rags and my sugar-hogshead again, and was free and satisfied. But Tom Sawyer he hunted me up and said he was going to start a band of robbers, and I might join if I would go back to the widow and be respectable. So I went back.

Chapter 2

“Now, we'll start this band of robbers and call it Tom Sawyer's Gang. Everybody that wants to join has got to take an oath, and write his name in blood.”

Everybody was willing. So Tom got out a sheet of paper that he had wrote the oath on, and read it. It swore every boy to stick to the band, and never tell any of the secrets; and if anybody done anything to any boy in the band, whichever boy was ordered to kill that person and his family must do it, and he mustn't eat and he mustn't sleep till he had killed them and hacked a cross in their breasts, which was the sign of the band. And nobody that didn't belong to the band could use that mark, and if he did he must be sued; and if he done it again he must be killed. And if anybody that belonged to the band told the secrets, he must have his throat cut, and then have his carcass burnt up and the ashes scattered all around, and his name blotted off of the list with blood and never mentioned again by the gang, but have a curse put on it and be forgot forever.

Everybody said it was a real beautiful oath, and asked Tom if he got it out of his own head. He said, some of it, but the rest was out of pirate-books and robber-books, and every gang that was high-toned had it.

Some thought it would be good to kill the FAMILIES of boys that told the secrets. Tom said it was a good idea, so he took a pencil and wrote it in. Then Ben Rogers says:

“Here's Huck Finn, he hain't got no family; what you going to do 'bout him?”

“Well, hain’t he got a father?” says Tom Sawyer.

“Yes, he’s got a father, but you can’t never find him these days. He used to lay drunk with the hogs in the tanyard, but he hain’t been seen in these parts for a year or more.”

They talked it over, and they was going to rule me out, because they said every boy must have a family or somebody to kill, or else it wouldn’t be fair and square for the others. Well, nobody could think of anything to do—everybody was stumped, and set still. I was most ready to cry; but all at once I thought of a way, and so I offered them Miss Watson—they could kill her. Everybody said:

“Oh, she’ll do. That’s all right. Huck can come in.”

Chapter 5

I HAD shut the door to. Then I turned around. and there he was. I used to be scared of him all the time, he tanned me so much. I reckoned I was scared now, too; but in a minute I see I was mistaken—that is, after the first jolt, as you may say, when my breath sort of hitched, he being so unexpected; but right away after I see I warn’t scared of him worth bothring about.

He was most fifty, and he looked it. His hair was long and tangled and greasy, and hung down, and you could see his eyes shining through like he was behind vines. It was all black, no gray; so was his long, mixed-up whiskers. There warn’t no color in his face, where his face showed; it was white; not like another man’s white, but a white to make a body sick, a white to make a body’s flesh crawl—a tree-toad white, a fish-belly white. As for his clothes—just rags, that was all. He had one ankle resting on t’other knee; the boot on that foot was busted, and two of his toes stuck through, and he worked them now and then. His hat was laying on the floor—an old black slouch with the top caved in, like a lid.

I stood a-looking at him; he set there a-looking at me, with his chair tilted back a little. I set the candle down. I noticed the window was up; so he had clumb in by the shed. He kept a-looking me all over. By and by he says:

“Starchy clothes—very. You think you’re a good deal of a big-bug, DON’T you?”

“Maybe I am, maybe I ain’t,” I says.

“Don’t you give me none o’ your lip,” says he. “You’ve put on considerable many frills since I been away. I’ll take you down a peg before I get done with you. You’re educated, too, they say—can read and write. You think you’re better’n your father, now, don’t you, because he can’t? I’LL take it out of you. Who told you you might meddle with such hifalut’n foolishness, hey?—who told you you could?”

“The widow. She told me.”

“The widow, hey?—and who told the widow she could put in her shovel about a thing that ain’t none of her business?”

“Nobody never told her.”

“Well, I’ll learn her how to meddle. And looky here—you drop that school, you hear? I’ll learn people to bring up a boy to put on airs over his own father and let on to be better’n what HE is. You lemme catch you fooling around that school again, you hear? Your mother couldn’t read, and she couldn’t write, nuther, before she died. None of the family couldn’t before THEY died. I can’t; and here you’re a-swelling yourself up like this. I ain’t the man to stand it—you hear? Say, lemme hear you read.”

I took up a book and begun something about General Washington and the wars. When I’d read about a half a minute, he fetched the book a whack with his hand and knocked it across the house. He says:

“It’s so. You can do it. I had my doubts when you told me. Now looky here; you stop that putting on frills. I won’t have it. I’ll lay for you, my smarty; and if I catch you about that school I’ll tan you good. First you know you’ll get religion, too. I never see such a son.”

He took up a little blue and yaller picture of some cows and a boy, and says:

“What’s this?”

“It’s something they give me for learning my lessons good.”

He tore it up, and says:

“I’ll give you something better—I’ll give you a cowhide.”

He set there a-mumblin’ and a-growlin’ a minute, and then he says:

“AIN’T you a sweet-scented dandy, though? A bed; and bedclothes; and a look’n’-glass; and a piece of carpet on the floor—and your own father got to sleep with the hogs in the tanyard. I never see such a son. I bet I’ll take some o’ these frills out o’ you before I’m done with you. Why, there ain’t no end to your airs—they say you’re rich. Hey?—how’s that?”

“They lie—that’s how.”

“Looky here—mind how you talk to me; I’m astandin’ about all I can stand now—so don’t gimme no sass. I’ve been in town two days, and I hain’t heard nothing but about you bein’ rich. I heard about it away down the river, too. That’s why I come. You git me that money to-morrow—I want it.”

“I hain’t got no money.”

“It’s a lie. Judge Thatcher’s got it. You git it. I want it.”

“I hain’t got no money, I tell you. You ask Judge Thatcher; he’ll tell you the same.”

“All right. I’ll ask him; and I’ll make him pungle, too, or I’ll know the reason why. Say, how much you got in your pocket? I want it.”

“I hain’t got only a dollar, and I want that to —“

“It don’t make no difference what you want it for—you just shell it out.”

He took it and bit it to see if it was good, and then he said he was going down town to get some whisky; said he hadn't had a drink all day. When he had got out on the shed he put his head in again, and cussed me for putting on frills and trying to be better than him; and when I reckoned he was gone he come back and put his head in again, and told me to mind about that school, because he was going to lay for me and lick me if I didn't drop that.

Chapter 8

I says:

“Hello, Jim!” and skipped out.

He bounced up and stared at me wild. Then he drops down on his knees, and puts his hands together and says:

“Doan' hurt me—don't! I hain't ever done no harm to a ghos'. I alwuz liked dead people, en done all I could for 'em. You go en git in de river agin, whah you b'longs, en doan' do nuffn to Ole Jim, 'at 'uz awluz yo' fren'.”

Well, I warn't long making him understand I warn't dead. I was ever so glad to see Jim. I warn't lonesome now. I told him I warn't afraid of HIM telling the people where I was. I talked along, but he only set there and looked at me; never said nothing. Then I says:

“It's good daylight. Le's get breakfast. Make up your camp fire good.”

“What's de use er makin' up de camp fire to cook strawbries en sich truck? But you got a gun, hain't you? Den we kin git sumfn better den strawbries.”

“Strawberries and such truck,” I says. “Is that what you live on?”

“I couldn' git nuffn else,” he says.

“Why, how long you been on the island, Jim?”

“I come heah de night arter you's killed.”

“What, all that time?”

“Yes—indeedy.”

“And ain't you had nothing but that kind of rubbage to eat?”

“No, sah—nuffn else.”

“Well, you must be most starved, ain't you?”

“I reck'n I could eat a hoss. I think I could. How long you ben on de islan'?”

“Since the night I got killed.”

“No! W’y, what has you lived on? But you got a gun. Oh, yes, you got a gun. Dat’s good. Now you kill sumfn en I’ll make up de fire.”

TASKS AND QUESTIONS

1. What features of Local Color can be found in the novel?
2. How is the issue of slavery treated in the novel?
3. What’s Huck’s position in the society?
4. Contrast Huck and Tom.
5. What forms the major conflict in the novel?
6. Find examples of Twain’s ironic wit.
7. Comment on moral values and hypocrisy of the society depicted in the novel.
8. What is the river Mississippi a symbol of? Are there any other symbols in the novel?
9. What might be the effect caused by usage of dialect in the novel?
10. What are the serious themes dealt with in the novel?
11. In Chapter 2 there is a mention of Huck’s father. How is he introduced?
12. Working with Chapter 8, select examples of Jim’s speech and modify it to standard English. Look for some typical features of the dialect and generalize them.

POPULAR LITERATURE

The genres of popular literature whether it be detective stories, thrillers, science-fiction, Western or say sport novels, all share certain universal features. Their main aim is to entertain and to attract as many readers as possible; the artistic quality being secondary. They all present flat characters, stereotypical figures used in a patterned-like manner in new and new stories. Basically, characters are black and white, often standing in clear opposition. The protagonist, after going through a series of tasks (their nature depending on the genre) is rewarded at the end of the story.

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes – A. C. Doyle

“It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data.”

The Adventure of the Speckled Band

On glancing over my notes of the seventy odd cases in which I have during the last eight years studied the methods of my friend Sherlock Holmes, I find many tragic, some comic, a large number merely strange, but none commonplace; for, working as he did rather for the love of his art than for the acquirement of wealth, he refused to associate himself with any investigation which did not tend towards the unusual, and even the fantastic. Of all these varied cases, however, I cannot recall any which presented more singular features than that which was associated with the well-known Surrey family of the Roylotts of Stoke Moran. The events in question occurred in the early days of my association with Holmes, when we were sharing rooms as bachelors in Baker Street. It is possible that I might have placed them upon record before, but a promise of secrecy was made at the time, from which I have only been freed during the last month by the untimely death of the lady to whom the pledge was given. It is perhaps as well that the facts should now come to light, for I have reasons to know that there are widespread rumours as to the death of Dr. Grimesby Roylott which tend to make the matter even more terrible than the truth.

It was early in April in the year '83 that I woke one morning to find Sherlock Holmes standing, fully dressed, by the side of my bed. He was a late riser, as a rule, and as the clock on the mantelpiece showed me that it was only a quarter-past seven, I blinked up at him in some surprise, and perhaps just a little resentment, for I was myself regular in my habits.

“Very sorry to knock you up, Watson,” said he, “but it’s the common lot this morning. Mrs. Hudson has been knocked up, she retorted upon me, and I on you.”

“What is it, then—a fire?”

“No; a client. It seems that a young lady has arrived in a considerable state of excitement, who insists upon seeing me. She is waiting now in the sitting-room. Now, when young ladies wander about the metropolis at this hour of the morning, and knock sleepy people up out of their beds, I presume that it is something very pressing which they have to communicate. Should it prove to be an interesting case, you would, I am sure, wish to follow it from the outset. I thought, at any rate, that I should call you and give you the chance.”

I had no keener pleasure than in following Holmes in his professional investigations, and in admiring the rapid deductions, as swift as intuitions, and yet always founded on a logical basis with which he unravelled the problems which were submitted to him. I rapidly threw on my clothes and was ready in a few minutes to accompany my friend down to the sitting-room. A lady dressed in black and heavily veiled, who had been sitting in the window, rose as we entered.

“Good-morning, madam,” said Holmes cheerily. “My name is Sherlock Holmes. This is my intimate friend and associate, Dr. Watson, before whom you can speak as freely as before myself. Ha! I am glad to see that Mrs. Hudson has had the good sense to light the fire. Pray draw up to it, and I shall order you a cup of hot coffee, for I observe that you are shivering.”

“It is not cold which makes me shiver,” said the woman in a low voice, changing her seat as requested.

“What, then?”

“It is fear, Mr. Holmes. It is terror.” She raised her veil as she spoke, and we could see that she was indeed in a pitiable state of agitation, her face all drawn and gray, with restless frightened eyes, like those of some hunted animal. Her features and figure were those of a woman of thirty, but her hair was shot with premature gray, and her expression was weary and haggard. Sherlock Holmes ran her over with one of his quick, all-comprehensive glances.

“You must not fear,” said he soothingly, bending forward and patting her forearm. “We shall soon set matters right, I have no doubt. You have come in by train this morning, I see.”

“You know me, then?”

“No, but I observe the second half of a return ticket in the palm of your left glove. You must have started early, and yet you had a good drive in a dog-cart, along heavy roads, before you reached the station.”

The lady gave a violent start and stared in bewilderment at my companion.

“There is no mystery, my dear madam,” said he, smiling. “The left arm of your jacket is spattered with mud in no less than seven places. The marks are perfectly fresh. There is no vehicle save a dog-cart which throws up mud in that way, and then only when you sit on the left-hand side of the driver.”

“Your sister is dead, then?”

“She died just two years ago, and it is of her death that I wish to speak to you. You can understand that, living the life which I have described, we were little likely to see anyone of our own age and position. We had, however, an aunt, my mother’s maiden sister, Miss Honoria Westphail, who lives near Harrow, and we were occasionally allowed to pay short visits at this lady’s house. Julia went there at Christmas two years ago, and met there a half-pay major of marines, to whom she became engaged. My stepfather learned of the engagement when my sister returned and offered no objection to the marriage; but within a fortnight of the day which had been fixed for the wedding, the terrible event occurred which has deprived me of my only companion.”

Sherlock Holmes had been leaning back in his chair with his eyes closed and his head sunk in a cushion, but he half opened his lids now and glanced across at his visitor.

“Pray be precise as to details,” said he.

“It is easy for me to be so, for every event of that dreadful time is seared into my memory. The manor-house is, as I have already said, very old, and only one wing is now inhabited. The bedrooms in this wing are on the ground floor, the sitting-rooms being in the central block of the buildings. Of these bedrooms the first is Dr. Roylott’s, the second my sister’s, and the third my own. There is no communication between them, but they all open out into the same corridor. Do I make myself plain?”

“Perfectly so.”

The windows of the three rooms open out upon the lawn. That fatal night Dr. Roylott had gone to his room early, though we knew that he had not retired to rest, for my sister was troubled by the smell of the strong Indian cigars which it was his custom to smoke. She left her room, therefore, and came into mine, where she sat for some time, chatting about her approaching wedding. At eleven o’clock she rose to leave me, but she paused at the door and looked back.

“Tell me, Helen,” said she, “have you ever heard anyone whistle in the dead of the night?”

“Never,” said I.

“I suppose that you could not possibly whistle, yourself, in your sleep?”

“Certainly not. But why?”

“Because during the last few nights I have always, about three in the morning, heard a low, clear whistle. I am a light sleeper, and it has awakened me. I cannot tell where it came from perhaps from the next room, perhaps from the lawn. I thought that I would just ask you whether you had heard it.”

“I could not sleep that night. A vague feeling of impending misfortune impressed me. My sister and I, you will recollect, were twins, and you know how subtle are the links which bind two souls which

are so closely allied. It was a wild night. The wind was howling outside, and the rain was beating and splashing against the windows. Suddenly, amid all the hubbub of the gale, there burst forth the wild scream of a terrified woman. I knew that it was my sister's voice. I sprang from my bed, wrapped a shawl round me, and rushed into the corridor. As I opened my door I seemed to hear a low whistle, such as my sister described, and a few moments later a clanging sound, as if a mass of metal had fallen. As I ran down the passage, my sister's door was unlocked, and revolved slowly upon its hinges. I stared at it horror-stricken, not knowing what was about to issue from it. By the light of the corridor-lamp I saw my sister appear at the opening, her face blanched with terror, her hands groping for help, her whole figure swaying to and fro like that of a drunkard. I ran to her and threw my arms round her, but at that moment her knees seemed to give way and she fell to the ground. She writhed as one who is in terrible pain, and her limbs were dreadfully convulsed. At first I thought that she had not recognized me, but as I bent over her she suddenly shrieked out in a voice which I shall never forget, 'Oh, my God! Helen! It was the band! The speckled band!' There was something else which she would fain have said, and she stabbed with her finger into the air in the direction of the doctor's room, but a fresh convulsion seized her and choked her words. I rushed out, calling loudly for my stepfather, and I met him hastening from his room in his dressing-gown. When he reached my sister's side she was unconscious, and though he poured brandy down her throat and sent for medical aid from the village, all efforts were in vain, for she slowly sank and died without having recovered her consciousness. Such was the dreadful end of my beloved sister."

"Ah, and what did you gather from this allusion to a band—a speckled band?"

"Sometimes I have thought that it was merely the wild talk of delirium, sometimes that it may have referred to some band of people, perhaps to these very gypsies in the plantation. I do not know whether the spotted handkerchiefs which so many of them wear over their heads might have suggested the strange adjective which she used."

"I am Dr. Grimesby Roylott, of Stoke Moran."

"Indeed, Doctor," said Holmes blandly. "Pray take a seat."

"I will do nothing of the kind. My stepdaughter has been here. I have traced her. What has she been saying to you?"

"It is a little cold for the time of the year," said Holmes.

"What has she been saying to you?" screamed the old man furiously.

"But I have heard that the crocuses promise well," continued my companion imperturbably.

"Ha! You put me off, do you?" said our new visitor, taking a step forward and shaking his hunting-crop. "I know you, you scoundrel! I have heard of you before. You are Holmes, the meddler."

My friend smiled.

"Holmes, the busybody!"

His smile broadened.

"Holmes, the Scotland Yard Jack-in-office!"

Holmes chuckled heartily. "Your conversation is most entertaining," said he. "When you go out close the door, for there is a decided draught."

"I will go when I have said my say. Don't you dare to meddle with my affairs. I know that Miss Stoner has been here. I traced her! I am a dangerous man to fall foul of! See here." He stepped swiftly forward, seized the poker, and bent it into a curve with his huge brown hands.

"See that you keep yourself out of my grip," he snarled, and hurling the twisted poker into the fireplace he strode out of the room.

"He seems a very amiable person," said Holmes, laughing. "I am not quite so bulky, but if he had remained I might have shown him that my grip was not much more feeble than his own." As he spoke he picked up the steel poker and, with a sudden effort, straightened it out again.

"We shall spend the night in your room, and we shall investigate the cause of this noise which has disturbed you."

"I believe, Mr. Holmes, that you have already made up your mind," said Miss Stoner, laying her hand upon my companion's sleeve.

"Perhaps I have."

"Then, for pity's sake, tell me what was the cause of my sister's death."

"I should prefer to have clearer proofs before I speak."

"You can at least tell me whether my own thought is correct, and if she died from some sudden fright."

"No, I do not think so. I think that there was probably some more tangible cause."

As we passed out he exchanged a few words with the landlord, explaining that we were going on a late visit to an acquaintance, and that it was possible that we might spend the night there. A moment later we were out on the dark road, a chill wind blowing in our faces, and one yellow light twinkling in front of us through the gloom to guide us on our sombre errand.

There was little difficulty in entering the grounds, for unrepaired breaches gaped in the old park wall. Making our way among the trees, we reached the lawn, crossed it, and were about to enter through the window when out from a clump of laurel bushes there darted what seemed to be a hideous and distorted child, who threw itself upon the grass with writhing limbs and then ran swiftly across the lawn into the darkness.

"My God!" I whispered; did you see it?

Holmes was for the moment as startled as I. His hand closed like a vise upon my wrist in his agitation. Then he broke into a low laugh and put his lips to my ear.

"It is a nice household," he murmured. "That is the baboon."

I had forgotten the strange pets which the doctor affected. There was a cheetah, too; perhaps we might find it upon our shoulders at any moment. I confess that I felt easier in my mind when, after following Holmes's example and slipping off my shoes, I found myself inside the bedroom. My companion noiselessly closed the shutters, moved the lamp onto the table, and cast his eyes round the room. All was as we had seen it in the daytime. Then creeping up to me and making a trumpet of his hand, he whispered into my ear again so gently that it was all that I could do to distinguish the words:

“The least sound would be fatal to our plans.”

I nodded to show that I had heard.

Suddenly there was the momentary gleam of a light up in the direction of the ventilator, which vanished immediately, but was succeeded by a strong smell of burning oil and heated metal. Someone in the next room had lit a dark-lantern. I heard a gentle sound of movement, and then all was silent once more, though the smell grew stronger. For half an hour I sat with straining ears. Then suddenly another sound became audible—a very gentle, soothing sound, like that of a small jet of steam escaping continually from a kettle. The instant that we heard it, Holmes sprang from the bed, struck a match, and lashed furiously with his cane at the bell-pull.

“You see it, Watson?” he yelled. “You see it?”

But I saw nothing. At the moment when Holmes struck the light I heard a low, clear whistle, but the sudden glare flashing into my weary eyes made it impossible for me to tell what it was at which my friend lashed so savagely. I could, however, see that his face was deadly pale and filled with horror and loathing. He had ceased to strike and was gazing up at the ventilator when suddenly there broke from the silence of the night the most horrible cry to which I have ever listened. It swelled up louder and louder, a hoarse yell of pain and fear and anger all mingled in the one dreadful shriek. They say that away down in the village, and even in the distant parsonage, that cry raised the sleepers from their beds. It struck cold to our hearts, and I stood gazing at Holmes, and he at me, until the last echoes of it had died away into the silence from which it rose.

“What can it mean?” I gasped.

“It means that it is all over,” Holmes answered.

It was a singular sight which met our eyes. On the table stood a dark-lantern with the shutter half open, throwing a brilliant beam of light upon the iron safe, the door of which was ajar. Beside this table, on the wooden chair, sat Dr. Grimesby Roylott clad in a long gray dressing-gown, his bare ankles protruding beneath, and his feet thrust into red heelless Turkish slippers. Across his lap lay the short stock with the long lash which we had noticed during the day. His chin was cocked upward and his eyes were fixed in a dreadful, rigid stare at the corner of the ceiling. Round his brow he had a peculiar yellow band, with brownish speckles, which seemed to be bound tightly round his head. As we entered he made neither sound nor motion.

“The band! The speckled band!” whispered Holmes.

I took a step forward. In an instant his strange headgear began to move, and there reared itself from among his hair the squat diamond-shaped head and puffed neck of a loathsome serpent.

“It is a swamp adder!” cried Holmes; “the deadliest snake in India. He has died within ten seconds of being bitten. Violence does, in truth, recoil upon the violent, and the schemer falls into the pit which he digs for another. Let us thrust this creature back into its den, and we can then remove Miss Stoner to some place of shelter and let the county police know what has happened.”

TASKS AND QUESTIONS

1. Demonstrations of mystery, thrill, power of Holmes’ deduction – give specific examples.
2. Characterise Holmes from the perspective of his personality and motivations.
3. Specify Holmes – Watson relationship.
4. What made Holmes suspect Dr. Roylotts of the terrible crime?
5. How does the author maintain suspense?
6. Summarise general features of popular detective stories that can be found in this particular piece.

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