

# SIGHTLINES

9



*I have seen  
I arrived this  
beautiful day  
looked as though  
with color  
how so much*

# SIGHTLINES



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# Contents

## by unit

### unit 1 Look

At the Bus Stop, One Autumn Morning <i>poetry</i> <i>M. W. Field</i> . . . . .	2
Gore <i>short story</i> <i>Sarah Ellis</i> . . . . .	3
Transformation Mask <i>visual</i> <i>traditional Haida mask</i> . . . . .	9
Lamb to the Slaughter <i>short story</i> <i>Roald Dahl</i> . . . . .	10
The Execution <i>poetry</i> <i>Alden Nowlan</i> . . . . .	19
The Conservationist <i>visual</i> <i>Boyd Webb</i> . . . . .	20
The Open Window <i>oral piece (stage adaptation)</i> <i>Henry Gilfond</i> . . . . .	22
The Last Saskatchewan Pirate <i>poetry (protest song)</i> <i>The Arrogant Worms</i> . . . . .	28
Messages Are Everywhere <i>visual</i> . . . . .	30
Coup de Grâce <i>poetry</i> <i>A. D. Hope</i> . . . . .	32
The Interlopers <i>short story</i> <i>"Saki" (H. H. Munro)</i> . . . . .	33
Once Upon a Time <i>short story</i> <i>Nadine Gordimer</i> . . . . .	39
Save the Moon for Kerdy Dickus <i>short story</i> <i>Tim Wynne-Jones</i> . . . . .	44



The Sacred Rac <i>non-fiction (anthropological report)</i> Patricia Hughes . . . . .	54
The Blue Bead <i>short story</i> Norah Burke . . . . .	56
The Toad <i>poetry (extended metaphor)</i> Juan José Arreola, translated by W. S. Merwin. . . . .	63
Think Like a Weightlifter, Think Like a Woman <i>poetry</i> Kate Braid . . . . .	64
What Happened During the Ice Storm <i>short story (vignette)</i> Jim Heynen . . . . .	66

## unit 2

# Look closely

Two Prisoners <i>poetry</i> Raymond Souster . . . . .	70
Our Appearance... <i>non-fiction (quotation)</i> Kahlil Gibran . . . . .	71
Eggs in Egg Crate <i>visual</i> Mary Pratt. . . . .	72
Living Life to the Max <i>non-fiction (profile)</i> Penny Williams . . . . .	73
I Live in a Language That's Not Mine <i>non-fiction (personal essay)</i> Carmen Rodriguez . . . . .	76
Golden Girl <i>short story</i> Gillian Chan . . . . .	78
Children to School <i>visual</i> Maud Lewis. . . . .	93
The Brute <i>oral piece (stage play)</i> Anton Chekhov, translated by Eric Bentley . . . . .	94
Crosswords <i>poetry (shape poem)</i> Gina Douthwaite . . . . .	109
To My Son <i>poetry</i> Helen Fogwill Porter . . . . .	110
Someone Who Used to Have Someone <i>poetry</i> Miriam Waddington . . . . .	111

Long, Long After School	<i>short story</i>	
Ernest Buckler		112
Imperfectly	<i>poetry (song lyric)</i>	
Ani DiFranco		117
All	<i>poetry</i>	
Leona Gom.		118
How to Tell Renata	<i>short story</i>	
Linda Holeman		119
Instructions to my Mother	<i>poetry</i>	
Marilyn Dumont		126
Messages Are Everywhere	<i>visual</i>	128
The Taste of Melon	<i>short story</i>	
Borden Deal.		130
I Was a Teenage Ingénue	<i>non-fiction (magazine article)</i>	
Leah Ross.		142
To Christine	<i>poetry</i>	
Susan Forde.		146
The Game	<i>non-fiction (book excerpt)</i>	
Ken Dryden		147
Commercial	<i>non-fiction (satire)</i>	
John Updike.		152

## unit 3

# Look back

Pangaea	<i>poetry</i>	
Sally Ito.		158
Tlingit National Anthem	<i>oral piece (traditional story)</i>	
as told by Robert Willard Jr.		160
Black Hull (from “Atlantic Elegy”)	<i>poetry (excerpt)</i>	
Harry Thurston		162
Iraweka, Mischief-maker	<i>short story (myth)</i>	
retold by Philip Sherlock		164
How Rocks Were Born	<i>oral piece (myth)</i>	
translated by Lawrence Millman		168

Postcards to Pele <i>non-fiction (magazine article)</i> <i>James Houston</i> . . . . .	170
Beside a Stone... <i>poetry (haiku)</i> <i>Christine M. Krishnasami</i> . . . . .	173
The Song of The Lambton Worm <i>poetry (ballad)</i> <i>Anonymous</i> . . . . .	174
Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady <i>short story (romance)</i> <i>retold by Selina Hastings, illustrated by Juan Wijngaard.</i> . . . . .	176
Habitant Farm <i>visual</i> <i>Cornelius Krieghoff.</i> . . . . .	183
The Highwayman <i>poetry</i> <i>Alfred Noyes</i> . . . . .	184
Messages Are Everywhere <i>visual.</i> . . . . .	188
In the Silence <i>short story</i> <i>Peggy S. Curry</i> . . . . .	190
The Time of the Wolves <i>short story</i> <i>Marcia Muller</i> . . . . .	198
The Fighting Days <i>oral piece (play excerpt)</i> <i>Wendy Lill</i> . . . . .	210
Myself <i>visual</i> <i>Paraskeva Clark</i> . . . . .	215
In Service <i>poetry</i> <i>Maxine Tynes</i> . . . . .	216
The Jade Peony <i>short story</i> <i>Wayson Choy</i> . . . . .	218
Equal Opportunity <i>poetry</i> <i>Jim Wong-Chu.</i> . . . . .	226
Montreal 1962 <i>short story</i> <i>Sauna Singh Baldwin</i> . . . . .	227
Granny Glover's Dream <i>poetry</i> <i>Al Pittman</i> . . . . .	231
Looking Back <i>poetry</i> <i>Enos D. Watts</i> . . . . .	232
Desperate Measures <i>non-fiction (historical account)</i> <i>Alan Shadrake</i> . . . . .	234

Small Mercies: A Boy After War	<i>non-fiction (autobiography)</i>	
Ernest Hillen		241

## unit 4

# Look beyond

Walking Through a Wall	<i>poetry (imaginative description)</i>	
Louis Jenkins		250
Dreamworld	<i>non-fiction (personal essay)</i>	
Sharon Butala		252
The Bridge Builder	<i>short story</i>	
Margaret Mahy		254
The Child, The Future	<i>visual</i>	
George Littlechild		262
The Dream	<i>non-fiction (memoir)</i>	
Sandra Bezic		264
In Praise of Dreams	<i>poetry</i>	
Wisława Szymborska		266
Sophie, 1990	<i>short story</i>	
Marian Engel		268
Digital Bullies	<i>non-fiction (feature article)</i>	
Simona Chiose		272
Where's Sommy? The Cyber-stalker Dodges His Hi-tech Pursuers/Cyber-Trickster Caught	<i>non-fiction (newspaper reports)</i>	
Robert Brehl/Canadian Press		277
Welcome to Cyberspace	<i>visual</i>	
Mirko Illić/Alex Arce		282
The Curio Shop	<i>short story</i>	
William Kotzwinkle		284
The Armies of the Moon	<i>poetry</i>	
Gwendolyn MacEwen		288
Hello, Out There! The New Science of Astrobiology	<i>non-fiction (magazine article)</i>	
Tara Weingarten		289



Sentry <i>short story</i>	
<i>Fredric Brown</i> . . . . .	292
Voice Mail and the Mating Ritual <i>non-fiction (editorial)</i>	
<i>Annelies Pool</i> . . . . .	294
Messages Are Everywhere <i>visual</i> . . . . .	296
New Terra <i>poetry</i>	
<i>Nigel Darbasie</i> . . . . .	298
The Trouble with Tribbles <i>oral piece (TV script)</i>	
<i>David Gerrold</i> . . . . .	299
No Renewal <i>short story</i>	
<i>Spider Robinson</i> . . . . .	322
Living to 100 <i>oral piece (commencement speech)</i>	
<i>David J. Mahoney</i> . . . . .	327

# Contents

## by genre

### short stories

Gore	<i>Sarah Ellis</i>	3
Lamb to the Slaughter	<i>Roald Dahl</i>	10
The Interlopers	<i>“Saki” (H.H. Munro)</i>	33
Once Upon a Time	<i>Nadine Gordimer</i>	39
Save the Moon for Kerdy Dickus	<i>Tim Wynne-Jones</i>	44
The Blue Bead	<i>Norah Burke</i>	56
What Happened During the Ice storm (vignette)	<i>Jim Heynen</i>	66
Golden Girl	<i>Gillian Chan</i>	78
Long, Long After School	<i>Ernest Buckler</i>	112
How to Tell Renata	<i>Linda Holeman</i>	119
The Taste of Melon	<i>Borden Deal</i>	130
Irraweka, Mischief-maker (myth)	<i>Philip Sherlock</i>	164
Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady (romance)	<i>Selina Hastings,</i> <i>illustrated by Juan Wijngaard</i>	176
In the Silence	<i>Peggy S. Curry</i>	190
The Time of the Wolves	<i>Marcia Muller</i>	198
The Jade Peony	<i>Wayson Choy</i>	218
Montreal 1962	<i>Shauna Singh Baldwin</i>	227
The Bridge Builder	<i>Margaret Mahy</i>	254
Sophie, 1990	<i>Marian Engel</i>	268
The Curio Shop	<i>William Kotzwinkle</i>	284
Sentry	<i>Fredric Brown</i>	292
No Renewal	<i>Spider Robinson</i>	322

### poetry

At the Bus Stop, One Autumn Morning	<i>M.W. Field</i>	2
The Execution	<i>Alden Nowlan</i>	19

The Last Saskatchewan Pirate (protest song) <i>The Arrogant Worms</i> . . . . .	28
Coup de Grâce <i>A. D. Hope</i> . . . . .	32
The Toad (extended metaphor) <i>Juan José Arreola</i> , <i>translated by W. S. Merwin</i> . . . . .	63
Think Like a Weightlifter, Think Like a Woman <i>Kate Braid</i> . . . . .	64
Two Prisoners <i>Raymond Souster</i> . . . . .	70
Crosswords (shape poem) <i>Gina Douthwaite</i> . . . . .	109
To My Son <i>Helen Fogwill Porter</i> . . . . .	110
Someone Who Used to Have Someone <i>Miriam Waddington</i> . . . . .	111
Imperfectly (song lyric) <i>Ani DiFranco</i> . . . . .	117
All <i>Leona Gom</i> . . . . .	118
Instructions to my Mother <i>Marilyn Dumont</i> . . . . .	126
To Christine <i>Susan Forde</i> . . . . .	146
Pangaea <i>Sally Ito</i> . . . . .	158
Black Hull (from “Atlantic Elegy”) (excerpt) <i>Harry Thurston</i> . . . . .	162
Beside a Stone... (haiku) <i>Christine M. Krishnasami</i> . . . . .	173
The Song of The Lambton Worm (ballad) <i>Anonymous</i> . . . . .	174
The Highwayman <i>Alfred Noyes</i> . . . . .	184
In Service <i>Maxine Tynes</i> . . . . .	216
Equal Opportunity <i>Jim Wong-Chu</i> . . . . .	226
Granny Glover’s Dream <i>Al Pittman</i> . . . . .	231
Looking Back <i>Enos D. Watts</i> . . . . .	232
Walking Through a Wall (imaginative description) <i>Louis Jenkins</i> . . . . .	250
In Praise of Dreams <i>Wisława Szymborska</i> . . . . .	266
The Armies of the Moon <i>Gwendolyn MacEwen</i> . . . . .	288
New Terra <i>Nigel Darbasie</i> . . . . .	298

## non-fiction

The Sacred Rac (anthropological report) <i>Patricia Hughes</i> . . . . .	54
Our Appearance (quotation) <i>Kahlil Gibran</i> . . . . .	71
Living Life to the Max (profile) <i>Penny Williams</i> . . . . .	73
I Live in a Language That’s Not Mine (personal essay) <i>Carmen Rodriguez</i> .	76
I Was a Teenage Ingénue (magazine article) <i>Leah Ross</i> . . . . .	142
The Game (book excerpt) <i>Ken Dryden</i> . . . . .	147
Commercial (satire) <i>John Updike</i> . . . . .	152

Postcards to Pele (magazine article) <i>James Houston</i> . . . . .	170
Desperate Measures (historical account) <i>Alan Shadrake</i> . . . . .	234
Small Mercies: A Boy After War (autobiography) <i>Ernest Hillen</i> . . . . .	241
Dreamworld (personal essay) <i>Sharon Butala</i> . . . . .	252
The Dream (memoir) <i>Sandra Bezic</i> . . . . .	264
Digital Bullies (magazine article) <i>Simona Chiose</i> . . . . .	272
Where's Sommy? The Cyber-stalker Dodges His Hi-tech Pursuers/Cyber-Trickster Caught (newspaper reports) <i>Robert Brehl/Canadian Press</i> . . . . .	277
Hello, Out There! The New Science of Astrobiology (magazine article) <i>Tara Weingarten</i> . . . . .	289
Voice Mail and the Mating Ritual (editorial) <i>Annelies Pool</i> . . . . .	294

## oral pieces

The Open Window (stage adaptation) <i>Henry Gilfond</i> . . . . .	22
The Brute (stage play) <i>Anton Chekhov, translated by Eric Bentley</i> . . . . .	94
Tlingit National Anthem (traditional story) <i>Robert Willard Jr.</i> . . . . .	160
How Rocks Were Born (myth) <i>translated by Lawrence Millman</i> . . . . .	168
The Fighting Days (play excerpt) <i>Wendy Lill</i> . . . . .	210
The Trouble with Tribbles (TV Script) <i>David Gerrold</i> . . . . .	299
Living to 100 (commencement speech) <i>David J. Mahoney</i> . . . . .	327

## visuals

Transformation Mask <i>traditional Haida mask</i> . . . . .	9
The Conservationist <i>Boyd Webb</i> . . . . .	20
Messages Are Everywhere . . . . .	30
Eggs in Egg Crate <i>Mary Pratt</i> . . . . .	72
The Schoolyard <i>Maud Lewis</i> . . . . .	93
Messages Are Everywhere . . . . .	128
Habitant Farm <i>Cornelius Krieghoff</i> . . . . .	183
Messages Are Everywhere . . . . .	188
Myself <i>Paraskeva Clark</i> . . . . .	215
The Child, The Future <i>George Littlechild</i> . . . . .	262
Welcome to Cyberspace <i>Mirko Illic/Alex Arce</i> . . . . .	282
Messages Are Everywhere . . . . .	296

# WELCOME TO SIGHTLINES

The *SightLines* student anthologies offer a wide range of high quality, high-interest literature by both new and established Canadian and world writers. Each *SightLines* anthology features the following:

- A wide range of texts:
  - fiction, including short stories, poems, drama
  - non-fiction, including essays, newspaper, and magazine articles
  - stand-alone visuals such as paintings, photographs, and technical art
  - transactional texts such as instructional material, web-site pages, graphs and charts
- A wide range of reading levels
- Texts geared to a wide variety of learning styles
- Learning goals called “Focus Your Learning” and activities for each selection
- Tables of contents by theme and genre
- Author/artist biographies

# 1 Look



Want a taste of something different? These selections will shock, amuse, and surprise you as they challenge your assumptions and reveal unexpected twists and turns. Prepare yourself for a weird and wonderful adventure... This unit will encourage you to look—and look again—at plot twists, surprises, double takes, and messages of social change.





# At the Bus Stop, One Autumn Morning

M. W. FIELD

It began at the back of my neck.

I was thinking about relaxing  
stony muscles there  
when prehistoric points began emerging.  
They flared  
up the back of my head, down  
my vertabrae, off in a triangle  
studded tail. My spine lost  
its S-curve, so I tucked my thickening  
hind legs underneath and sat down.  
Flicked my powerful green tail twice  
and wrapped it round my feet.  
Arms had lengthened  
my jaw relaxed and expanded: gone  
were the grinding molars. I yawned.  
by the bus shelter:  
a stegosaurus, observing  
the smells and colours of the opening  
sky, shifting  
my weight on my forefeet.

No buses came.

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- respond imaginatively
- infer meaning based on clues in the text
- analyse the use of metaphor
- write a transformation poem

## Activities

1. What animal would you choose to transform into, if you had the opportunity? Write a response, explaining why you chose that animal and what it represents to you.
2. In discussion with a partner, build a profile of the character in the poem, based on clues in the text itself. Do you imagine he or she is young or old? Happy or depressed? Satisfied or dissatisfied with life? Share your interpretation with a partner and compare your responses.
3. People have long associated certain emotions or qualities with particular animals. For example, dogs are considered loyal. Brainstorm a list of qualities associated with dinosaurs. Which of these qualities do you think are relevant to the poem? Discuss with a partner.
4. Write a transformation poem based on your experience as an adolescent. Choose an appropriate setting for your transformation, and decide what animal or form your hero will change into (or from). Present your poem as reader's theatre for the class.

# Gore

SARAH ELLIS



Twins have a very special bond. Together from their earliest moments of consciousness, they are true soul-mates. Linked by feelings of deep kinship and love, mutually attuned with an almost magic sensitivity, they often feel like two halves of the same person.

Twins separated at birth who meet as adults often discover amazing coincidences in their lives. They both have wives named Linda and sons called Hamish. At their weddings both of their best men wore kilts. They both have Maine coon cats and use an obscure Finnish brand of aftershave. This proves that the twin relationship is one of the strongest in the world, overriding individual personality and the forces of upbringing and environment.

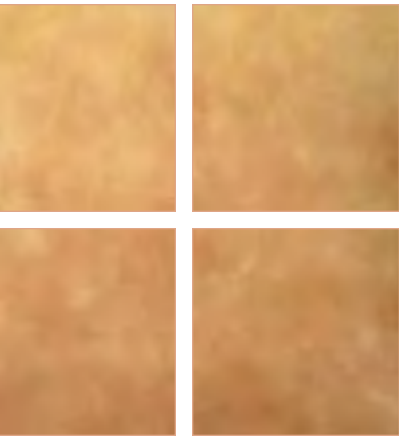
Horse patooties.

Soul-mates? Sometimes I can't believe that Lucas and I are in the same family, much less twins. In fact, there have been times when I've wondered if Lucas and I are even of the same species. I'm pretty much a basic homo

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- discuss the appeal of horror stories and films
- compare two characters
- assess the use of figurative language
- analyse the pace of the story



sapiens. Lucas is more like an unevolved thugoid. I've heard that there are some photos of twins in the womb that show them hugging. If someone had taken a photo of Lucas and me in there I'll bet dollars to doughnuts it would have shown him bashing me on the head.

Lucas must have grabbed all the good nutrition in there, too, because he's a lot bigger, faster, and stronger than me. I don't stand a chance on the bashing, kicking, running away, immobilizing-your-opponent-in-a-half-nelson front. As the years have passed, my two areas of superior firepower, an extensive vocabulary and a gift for voice impersonation, have sometimes proved inadequate. I have been forced to take up psychological warfare.

Lucas attacks without provocation. The other day, for example, I'm sitting reading. I finally got the new R. L. Tankard out of the library and it is extremely choice. There's this girl and she has a babysitting job in this glam apartment building, on the twenty-sixth floor. When she arrives, the baby is already asleep so she hasn't actually seen it. She's watching TV in a darkened room and she thinks she hears a noise from the baby.

*"She muted the TV for a minute and in the sudden silence she heard the noise again, but louder. It was a heavy wet noise, like the sound of a big piece of raw meat being flung to the floor. She stared at the door to the nursery. It was outlined in a thin band of crepuscular light. She stood up and, with her heart pounding in her ears, she approached the room ..."*

Isn't that excellent? I read it again. Sometimes I like to do that with R. L. Tankard—slow it down by reading the best parts twice before I turn the page. "Crepuscular." I roll the word around in my mouth like a hard candy. Who cares what it means? "... like a big piece of raw meat being flung to the floor." Choice.

Then, WHAP! Lucas leans over the back of the chair, rips the book from my hands, runs into the bathroom, and slams the door. I'm after him in a second but of course by the time I get there he has it locked. I learned years ago that you can click open our bathroom door with a knife. I learned this about two minutes after Lucas learned that you can wedge the bathroom door shut by pulling open the top drawer of the vanity.

I kick the door. "Give me my book back, you grommet-head."

"Make me."

I just hate that, the way Lucas can sound so smug. If possible I would appeal to a higher authority. I have no shame about finking, whining, telling, etc., when it comes to Lucas. I use whatever counter-weapons I have at my disposal. With Lucas as a brother it is sometimes necessary to have referees. I'm not ashamed to stand behind an adult peace-keeping force. Lucas regards this as an act of cowardice and wimpiness. He tries to shame me. "Why don't you run to Mummy?" But I don't care. I figure it is like some small but extremely valuable country calling on the United Nations

when attacked by an aggressor. Unfortunately, in this case, the peace-keeping forces are out at Mega-Foods doing the Saturday shop.

I try to plan a strategy. At least it keeps my mind off what is happening behind the door of that baby's room, in that crepuscular light. The carrot or the stick? Or, to put it another way, the chocolate cheesecake or the Uzi? I could try the chocolate cheesecake of false bribery. Such as, "Lucas, just give me my book and I'll do your poop-scooping in the backyard this week." This technique has lost its effectiveness through overuse, however. Even Lucas, microbrain that he is, doesn't fall for that one any more.

So what about the Uzi. "Lucas, if you don't give me back my book this minute I'm going to tell Dad that you ..." What? I've used up the fact that Lucas was the one who let the rabbit into Mum's office where he ate through her modem cord. I've already gotten my mileage out of the time he tried to photocopy his bum on the photocopier at the public library. I've used up everything I know about Lucas's sins, crimes, misdemeanors and shady dealings.

I collapse on the couch in despair. I am a stealth bomber with no aviation fuel. I am a pioneer with no powder for my musket. I am a merry man (well, OK, merry woman) with an empty quiver. I am weaponless.

Not quite.

"Rats. Lucas, there's someone at the door. I'll get it but I'm warning you, Lucas, if you're not out of there by the time I get back, you're toast."

"Yeah, with peanut butter."

I run to the door. The doorbell gives three loud blats.

"Just a minute. Coming!" I open the door.

There are two, no, three of them. The faces are hooded and I only catch a glimpse but it is enough to make me step back in horror, as though a huge hand has given me a push. This is my first mistake, leaving me a split second too late to push the door shut.

They are inside. They are silent.

"Hey, hold it, you can't do that. Get out of here. Help!"

I pull myself together and try to fool them. "Dad!"

The front door clicks quietly shut behind them. I race around the corner into the hall and fall against the bathroom door. I strain to hear.

Nothing.

"Lucas," I yell-whisper.

Lucas's bored voice makes its way out of the bathroom. "Forget it, Amy, you're not fooling anybody."

"Lucas, I mean it. Let me in. Please. Those faces. They're not ... aagh." A shadow falls into the hallway. I grab the doorknob and screw my eyes shut.

The first thing is the smell. The fetid stench. The noxious reek. It is the smell of something dead, sweet and rotten. It rolls into the hall like a huge



wave, breaking over my head, flowing into my mouth and nose until it becomes a taste. I am drowning. I gasp, dragging the air painfully into my lungs.

"Very dramatic, Lady Macbeth."

I find a voice. "Lucas, can't you smell it?"

Lucas giggles and flushes the toilet. "Now I can't."

Then something ice-cold and soft and damp fixes itself around my wrist like a bracelet and begins to pull my fingers away from the door. I hold on, unable to talk, unable to breathe.

And then the voice. The voice as dry and white as paper. "Come with us, we need you. We need your being."

A cold sweat breaks out over my entire body. I grab at the door one last time as my slippery fingers slide off the knob. I grasp at anything. My fingernails scratch across the shiny surface. The door rattles.

"Lucas!"

Lucas laughs.

The thing moves me to the living room. Not roughly. Like a powerful, persistent and silent wind. I force my eyes open but I can't seem to focus. The room is shimmering like a mirage on a hot road. I am lying on the floor and the ceiling is pulsing slowly. The strong, crepuscular wind pushes me to the floor. I am pinned, paralyzed, frozen with terror. My heartbeat pounds in my ears.

The paper voice is louder. "Eat. Of. Our. Food." Each word is a little island of sound, a pebble dropped into a pool.

The ceiling disappears and a face looms above me. A smooth white mask, skin stretched across sharp bones. Bright yellow eyes that stare unblinking, like a baby or a reptile. Thick shiny brown hair. The echo of the smell of decay. I feel something being held to my lips. I lock my jaw and squeeze my lips shut.

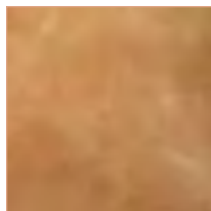
The voice is louder, booming. "Eat. Of. Our. Food."

I see movement in the shiny brown hair. Movement that ceases the moment I look directly at it. I want to close my eyes but my eyelids are stiff and wooden. The movement increases. Shiny, brown, undulating, dancing like a thing alive.

Or many things alive.

Pink rat eyes. A scream consumes me, vomiting up from every part of my body. And into my open mouth falls a greasy, slimy goblet of ooze. I flail my head from side to side and try to spit it out but it turns to a thick, viscous, glutinous, sticky liquid that coats my mouth, rises up the back of my nose and clings to my teeth. I retch. I gag.

The mask floats once more above me. Its smoothness has now exploded into a cobweb of wrinkles, an old crazed china plate. The hair has turned





dead-rat grey. Beads of milky liquid ooze out of the yellow eyes, now dull and bloodshot, and begin to rain down upon my face. They are warm, then cold and solid. The quavery, rusty voice floats down to me, "You. Are. The. New. One. Now."

With a strength I didn't know I had, I force myself up. I beat away the mask face and push aside the shimmering air of the room through which my scream is still echoing. Chairs and side tables fall as I crash past them. Magazines fly through the air and crash against the walls.

"Hey, fink-face! What are you doing out there? Demolition derby?" I have no voice to answer Lucas.

I reach the phone in the hall just outside the bathroom door. I grab the receiver. I dial Emergency. I wait through a century of rings. Finally someone answers.

"Do you wish police, ambulance, or fire?"

My voice is choked with sobs. "Police, oh, police. Please, hurry."

Click. The line goes dead. Cold, gentle fingers touch the back of my neck. I drop the receiver which swings like a pendulum, banging against the wall, a dull, hollow sound.

I fall to the ground like a stone, like a piece of raw meat, and bury my face in my hands. My hands smell like skunk cabbage, no, like swamp water, no, like the bacon that somebody forgot in the back of the fridge. My face is smooth and cold and becoming more solid every second. My hair begins to move on my scalp.

They have me. I am becoming one of them. I feel my brain hardening inside my head.

I hold onto one thought. My dear twin. My brother. My boon companion. Fellow traveller on the road of life. Oh, God, don't let them take Lucas.

I try to picture the bathroom window. Oh, please, let him be skinny enough to get through it. My mouth is becoming rigid. I use up my last human words, "Lucas, break the window. Get out. For pity's sake, don't come out here."

Then silence. The only sound is the telephone receiver thudding against the wall.

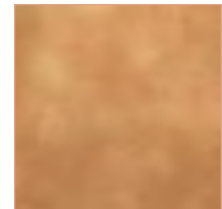
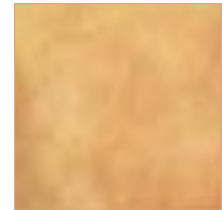
"Amy? You're just kidding, aren't you? That was pretty good. You know if you weren't so funny-looking you could probably become an actress."

Silence.

Lucas's voice shrinks. "Amy? Amy, come on. Quit it."

*Beep, beep, beep.* The telephone's humanoid voice rings out in the silent hall. "Please hang up and try your call again. If you need assistance dial your operator. Please hang up now." *Beep, beep, beep.*

The bathroom door opens slowly. I'm curled up behind it. I hold my breath. Two steps, that's all I need. Two measly steps.





“Amy?”

Two steps it is. I grab the door, swing around it, jump into the bathroom, and turn the lock.

Success! Triumph! Oh, happiness, oh, joy! I shake my own hand.

I slurp some cold water from the tap. My throat hurts a bit from that final scream. But it was worth it. It was one of the better screams of my career. There’s something to be said for really scaring yourself.

R. L. Tankard is sitting on the back of the toilet. I open him up. R. L. Tankard is such a good writer that he can make you forget all about what’s going on around you. He can make you forget, for example, a flipped-out twin brother using inappropriate language on the other side of the bathroom door. Listen. He’s already repeating himself. Really, his repertoire of invective is pathetically inadequate. He should do more reading to increase his word power.

I settle down on the bathmat and find my page. So—what *was* in that baby’s room? ■

## Activities

1. With a partner, discuss the appeal of horror stories or films. Why do so many people enjoy being scared by these kinds of stories? After your discussion, compare your ideas with those of another pair of students.
2. Compare the characteristics of the twins, Lucas and Amy. Use evidence from the story to back up your analysis.
3. This story contains many examples of similes and metaphors. Find as many examples as you can of each. Select two of each type that you feel are particularly effective, and explain the reason for your choices.
4. **a)** With a partner, take turns reading the story out loud. Listen for places where the narrative slows down or speeds up, and explain what techniques the author uses to convey the change of pace.  
**b)** Choose a section of the story that contains a change in pace, and try reading it aloud as a monologue. Use voice, gesture, pauses, and facial expression as well as the tone of your voice to convey the shifts in mood.

# Transformation Mask



Canadian Museum of  
Civilization CMC VII-B-20  
(586-386 closed, 586-387  
open)



## Focus Your Learning

Analysing this visual will help you:

- summarize and record
- compare

## Activities

1.
  - a) Study the use of colour, texture, and pattern on each form of the mask. Explain how they are used.
  - b) Provide a summary of your observations.
  - c) How do colour, texture, and pattern add to the meaning of the mask?
2.
  - a) Compare the two forms of the Haida mask using a 3-column chart.

Mask	Similarities	Differences
1		
2		

- b) What does each form communicate?
- c) In your opinion, which form is more intriguing? Explain why you think the way you do.

# Lamb to the Slaughter

ROALD DAHL



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- evaluate a character's actions
- compare interpretations of character
- discuss the significance of the narrator
- analyse the use of irony
- experiment with film techniques

The room was warm and clean, the curtains drawn, the two table lamps alight—hers and the one by the empty chair opposite. On the sideboard behind her, two tall glasses, soda water, whisky. Fresh ice cubes in the Thermos bucket.

Mary Maloney was waiting for her husband to come home from work.

Now and again she would glance up at the clock, but without anxiety, merely to please herself with the thought that each minute gone by made it nearer the time when he would come. There was a slow smiling air about her, and about everything she did. The drop of the head as she bent over her sewing was curiously tranquil. Her skin—for this was her sixth month with child—had acquired a wonderful translucent quality, the mouth was

soft, and the eyes, with their new placid look, seemed larger, darker than before.

When the clock said ten minutes to five, she began to listen, and a few moments later, punctually as always, she heard the tires on the gravel outside, and the car door slamming, the footsteps passing the window, the key turning in the lock. She laid aside her sewing, stood up, and went forward to kiss him as he came in.

"Hullo, darling," she said.

"Hullo," he answered.

She took his coat and hung it in the closet. Then she walked over and made the drinks, a strongish one for him, a weak one for herself; and soon she was back again in her chair with the sewing, and he in the other, opposite, holding the tall glass with both his hands, rocking it so the ice cubes tinkled against the side.

For her, this was always a blissful time of day. She knew he didn't want to speak much until the first drink was finished, and she, on her side, was content to sit quietly, enjoying his company after the long hours alone in the house. She loved to luxuriate in the presence of this man, and to feel—almost as a sunbather feels the sun—that warm male glow that came out of him to her when they were alone together. She loved him for the way he sat loosely in a chair, for the way he came in a door, or moved slowly across the room with long strides. She loved the intent, far look in his eyes when they rested on her, the funny shape of the mouth, and especially, the way he remained silent about his tiredness, sitting still with himself until the whisky had taken some of it away.

"Tired, darling?"

"Yes," he said. "I'm tired." And as he spoke, he did an unusual thing. He lifted his glass and drained it in one swallow although there was still half of it, at least half of it, left. She wasn't really watching him but she knew what he had done because she heard the ice cubes falling back against the bottom of the empty glass when he lowered his arm. He paused a moment, leaning forward in the chair, then he got up and went slowly over to fetch himself another.

"I'll get it!" she cried, jumping up.

"Sit down," he said.

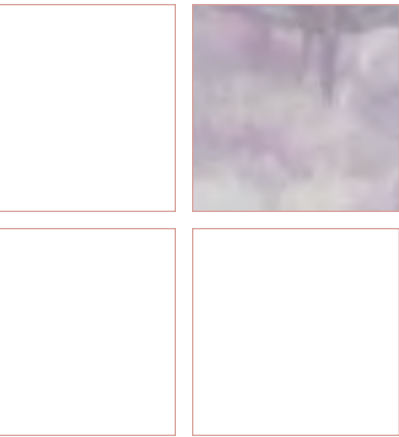
When he came back, she noticed that the new drink was dark amber with the quantity of whisky in it.

"Darling, shall I get your slippers?"

"No."

She watched him as he began to sip the dark yellow drink, and she could see little oily swirls in the liquid because it was so strong.

"I think it's a shame," she said, "that when a policeman gets to be as



senior as you, they keep him walking about on his feet all day long."

He didn't answer, so she bent her head again and went on with her sewing; but each time he lifted the drink to his lips, she heard the ice cubes clicking against the side of the glass.

"Darling," she said. "Would you like me to get you some cheese? I haven't made any supper because it's Thursday."

"No," he said.

"If you're too tired to eat out," she went on, "it's still not too late. There's plenty of meat and stuff in the freezer, and you can have it right here and not even move out of the chair."

Her eyes waited on him for an answer, a smile, a little nod, but he made no sign.

"Anyway," she went on, "I'll get you some cheese and crackers first."

"I don't want it," he said.

She moved uneasily in her chair, the large eyes still watching his face. "But you *must* have supper. I can easily do it here. I'd like to do it. We can have lamp chops. Or pork. Anything you want. Everything's in the freezer."

"Forget it," he said.

"But darling, you *must* eat! I'll fix it anyway, and then you can have it or not, as you like."

She stood up and placed her sewing on the table by the lamp.

"Sit down," he said. "Just for a minute, sit down."

It wasn't till then that she began to get frightened.

"Go on," he said. "Sit down."

She lowered herself back slowly into the chair, watching him all the time with those large, bewildered eyes. He had finished the second drink and was staring down into the glass, frowning.

"Listen," he said, "I've got something to tell you."

"What is it, darling? What's the matter?"

He had become absolutely motionless, and he kept his head down so that the light from the lamp beside him fell across the upper part of his face, leaving the chin and mouth in shadow. She noticed there was a little muscle moving near the corner of his left eye.

"This is going to be a bit of a shock to you, I'm afraid," he said. "But I've thought about it a good deal and I've decided the only thing to do is tell you right away. I hope you won't blame me too much."

And he told her. It didn't take long, four or five minutes at most, and she sat very still through it all, watching him with a kind of dazed horror as he went further and further away from her with each word.

"So there it is," he added. "And I know it's kind of a bad time to be telling you, but there simply wasn't any other way. Of course I'll give you

money and see you're looked after. But there needn't really be any fuss. I hope not anyway. It wouldn't be very good for my job."

Her first instinct was not to believe any of it, to reject it all. It occurred to her that perhaps he hadn't even spoken, that she herself had imagined the whole thing. Maybe, if she went about her business and acted as though she hadn't been listening, then later, when she sort of woke up again, she might find none of it had every happened.

"I'll get the supper," she managed to whisper, and this time he didn't stop her.

When she walked across the room she couldn't feel her feet touching the floor. She couldn't feel anything at all—except a slight nausea and a desire to vomit. Everything was automatic now—down the stairs to the cellar, the light switch, the deep freeze, the hand inside the cabinet taking hold of the first object it met. She lifted it out, and looked at it. It was wrapped in paper, so she took off the paper and looked at it again.

A leg of lamb.

All right then, they would have lamb for supper. She carried it upstairs, holding the thin bone-end of it with both her hands, and as she went through the living-room, she saw him standing over by the window with his back to her, and she stopped.

"For God's sake," he said, hearing her, but not turning around. "Don't make supper for me. I'm going out."

At that point, Mary Maloney simply walked up behind him and without any pause she swung the big frozen leg of lamb high in the air and brought it down as hard as she could on the back of his head.

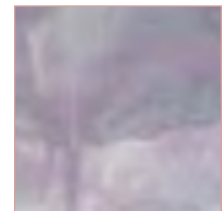
She might just as well have hit him with a steel club.

She stepped back a pace, waiting, and the funny thing was that he remained standing there for at least four or five seconds, gently swaying. Then he crashed to the carpet.

The violence of the crash, the noise, the small table overturning, helped bring her out of the shock. She came out slowly, feeling cold and surprised, and she stood for a while blinking at the body, still holding the ridiculous piece of meat tight with both hands.

All right, she told herself. So I've killed him.

It was extraordinary, now, how clear her mind became all of a sudden. She began thinking very fast. As the wife of a detective, she knew quite well what the penalty would be. That was fine. It made no difference to her. In fact, it would be a relief. On the other hand, what about the child? What were the laws about murderers with unborn children? Did they kill them both—mother and child? Or did they wait until the tenth month? What did they do?





Mary Maloney didn't know. And she certainly wasn't prepared to take a chance.

She carried the meat into the kitchen, placed it in a pan, turned the oven on high, and shoved it inside. Then she washed her hands and ran upstairs to the bedroom. She sat down before the mirror, tidied her hair, touched up her lips and face. She tried a smile. It came out rather peculiar. She tried again.

"Hullo Sam," she said brightly, aloud.

The voice sounded peculiar too.

"I want some potatoes please, Sam. Yes, and I think a can of peas."

That was better. Both the smile and the voice were coming out better now. She rehearsed it several times more. Then she ran downstairs, took her coat, went out the back door, down the garden, into the street.

It wasn't six o'clock yet and the lights were still on in the grocery shop.

"Hullo Sam," she said brightly, smiling at the man behind the counter.

"Why, good evening, Mrs. Maloney. How're *you*?"

"I want some potatoes please, Sam. Yes, and I think a can of peas."

The man turned and reached up behind him on the shelf for the peas.

"Patrick's decided he's tired and doesn't want to eat out tonight," she told him. "We usually go out Thursdays, you know, and now he's caught me without any vegetables in the house."

"Then how about meat, Mrs. Maloney?"

"No, I've got meat, thanks. I got a nice leg of lamb, from the freezer."

"Oh."

"I don't much like cooking it frozen, Sam, but I'm taking a chance on it this time. You think it'll be all right?"

"Personally," the grocer said, "I don't believe it makes any difference. You want these Idaho potatoes?"

"Oh yes, that'll be fine. Two of those."

"Anything else?" The grocer cocked his head on one side, looking at her pleasantly. "How about afterwards? What you going to give him for afterwards?"

"Well—what would you suggest, Sam?"

The man glanced around his shop. "How about a nice big slice of cheese-cake? I know he likes that."

"Perfect," she said. "He loves it."

And when it was all wrapped and she had paid, she put on her brightest smile and said, "Thank you, Sam. Good night."

"Good night, Mrs. Maloney. And thank *you*."

And now, she told herself as she hurried back, all she was doing now, she was returning home to her husband and he was waiting for his supper; and she must cook it good, and make it as tasty as possible because the

poor man was tired; and if, when she entered the house, she happened to find anything unusual, or tragic, or terrible, then naturally it would be a shock and she'd become frantic with grief and horror. Mind you, she wasn't *expecting* to find anything. She was just going home with the vegetables. Mrs. Patrick Maloney going home with the vegetables on Thursday evening to cook supper for her husband.

That's the way, she told herself. Do everything right and natural. Keep things absolutely natural and there'll be no need for any acting at all.

Therefore, when she entered the kitchen by the back door, she was humming a little tune to herself and smiling.

"Patrick!" she called. "How are you, darling?"

She put the parcel down on the table and went through into the living-room; and when she saw him lying there on the floor with his legs doubled up and one arm twisted back underneath his body, it really was rather a shock. All the old love and longing for him welled up inside her, and she ran over to him, knelt down beside him, and began to cry her heart out. It was easy. No acting was necessary.

A few minutes later she got up and went to the phone. She knew the number of the police station, and when the man at the other end answered, she cried to him, "Quick! Come quick! Patrick's dead!"

"Who's speaking?"

"Mrs. Maloney. Mrs. Patrick Maloney."

"You mean Patrick Maloney's dead?"

"I think so," she sobbed. "He's lying on the floor and I think he's dead."

"Be right over," the man said.

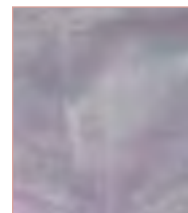
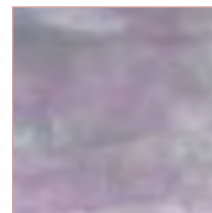
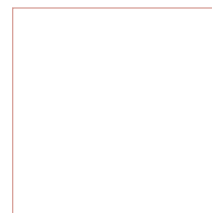
The car came very quickly, and when she opened the front door, two policemen walked in. She knew them both—she knew nearly all the men at that precinct—and she fell right into Jack Noonan's arms, weeping hysterically. He put her gently into a chair, then went over to join the other one, who was called O'Malley, kneeling by the body.

"Is he dead?" she cried.

"I'm afraid he is. What happened?"

Briefly, she told her story about going out to the grocer and coming back to find him on the floor. While she was talking, crying and talking, Noonan discovered a small patch of congealed blood on the dead man's head. He showed it to O'Malley who got up at once and hurried to the phone.

Soon, other men began to come into the house. First a doctor, then two detectives, one of whom she knew by name. Later, a police photographer arrived and took pictures, and a man who knew about fingerprints. There was a great deal of whispering and muttering beside the corpse, and the detectives kept asking her a lot of questions. But they always treated her kindly. She told her story again, this time right from the beginning, when



Patrick had come in, and she was sewing, and he was tired, so tired he hadn't wanted to go out for supper. She told how she'd put the meat in the oven—"it's there now, cooking"—and how she'd slipped out to the grocer for vegetables, and come back to find him lying on the floor.

"Which grocer?" one of the detectives asked.

She told him, and he turned and whispered something to the other detective who immediately went outside into the street.

In fifteen minutes he was back with a page of notes and there was more whispering, and through her sobbing she heard a few of the whispered phrases—acted quite normal ... very cheerful ... wanted to give him a good supper ... peas ... cheesecake ... impossible that she ..."

After a while, the photographer and the doctor departed and two other men came in and took the corpse away on a stretcher. Then the fingerprint man went away. The two detectives remained, and so did the two policemen. They were exceptionally nice to her, and Jack Noonan asked if she wouldn't rather go somewhere else, to her sister's house perhaps, or to his own wife who would take care of her and put her up for the night.

No, she said. She didn't feel she could move even a yard at the moment. Would they mind awfully if she stayed just where she was until she felt better? She didn't feel too good at the moment, she really didn't.

Then hadn't she better lie down on the bed? Jack Noonan asked.

No, she said, she'd like to stay right where she was, in this chair. A little later perhaps, when she felt better, she would move.

So they left her there while they went about their business, searching the house. Occasionally one of the detectives asked her another question. Sometimes Jack Noonan spoke to her gently as he passed by. Her husband, he told her, had been killed by a blow on the back of the head administered with a heavy blunt instrument, almost certainly a large piece of metal. They were looking for the weapon. The murderer may have taken it with him, but on the other hand he may've thrown it away or hidden it somewhere on the premises.

"It's the old story," he said. "Get the weapon, and you've got the man."

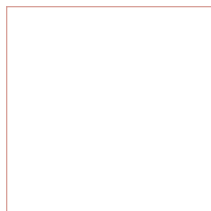
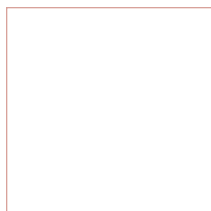
Later, one of the detectives came up and sat beside her. Did she know, he asked, of anything in the house that could've been used as the weapon? Would she mind having a look around to see if anything was missing—a very big spanner, for example, or a heavy metal vase.

They didn't have any heavy metal vases, she said.

"Or a big spanner?"

She didn't think they had a big spanner. But there might be some things like that in the garage.

The search went on. She knew that there were other policemen in the garden all around the house. She could hear their footsteps on the gravel



outside, and sometimes she saw the flash of a torch through a chink in the curtains. It began to get late, nearly nine she noticed by the clock on the mantel. The four men searching the rooms seemed to be growing weary, a trifle exasperated.

"Jack," she said, the next time Sergeant Noonan went by. "Would you mind giving me a drink?"

"Sure I'll give you a drink. You mean this whisky?"

"Yes, please. But just a small one. It might make me feel better."

He handed her the glass.

"Why don't you have one yourself," she said. "You must be awfully tired. Please do. You've been very good to me."

"Well," he answered. "It's not strictly allowed, but I might take just a drop to keep me going."

One by one the others came in and were persuaded to take a little nip of whisky. They stood around rather awkwardly with the drinks in their hands, uncomfortable in her presence, trying to say consoling things to her. Sergeant Noonan wandered into the kitchen, came out quickly and said, "Look, Mrs. Maloney. You know that oven of yours is still on, and the meat still inside."

"Oh *dear* me!" she cried. "So it is!"

"I better turn it off for you, hadn't I?"

"Will you do that, Jack. Thank you so much."

When the sergeant returned the second time, she looked at him with her large, dark eyes. "Jack Noonan," she said.

"Yes?"

"Would you do me a small favour—you and these others?"

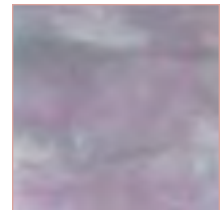
"We can try, Mrs. Maloney."

"Well," she said. "Here you all are, and good friends of dear Patrick's too, and helping to catch the man who killed him. You must be terribly hungry by now because it's long past your suppertime, and I know Patrick would never forgive me, God bless his soul, if I allowed you to remain in his house without offering you decent hospitality. Why don't you eat up that lamb that's in the oven? It'll be cooked just right by now."

"Wouldn't dream of it," Sergeant Noonan said.

"Please," she begged. "Please eat it. Personally I couldn't touch a thing, certainly not what's been in the house when he was here. But it's all right for you. It'd be a favour to me if you'd eat it up. Then you can go on with your work again afterwards."

There was a good deal of hesitating among the four policemen, but they were clearly hungry, and in the end they were persuaded to go into the kitchen and help themselves. The woman stayed where she was, listening to them through the open door, and she could hear them speaking among



themselves, their voices thick and sloppy because their mouths were full of meat.

"Have some more, Charlie?"

"No. Better not finish it."

"She *wants* us to finish it. She said so. Be doing her a favour."

"OK then. Give me some more."

"That's the hell of a big club the guy must've used to hit poor Patrick," one of them was saying. "The doc says his skull was smashed all to pieces just like from a sledgehammer."

"That's why it ought to be easy to find."

"Exactly what I say."

"Whoever done it, they're not going to be carrying a thing like that around with them longer than they need."

One of them belched.

"Personally, I think it's right here on the premises."

"Probably right under our very noses. What you think, Jack?"

And in the other room, Mary Maloney began to giggle. ■

## Activities

1. Write a response to the story, defending or condemning Mary Maloney's actions. Base your response on details from the story and your own opinion.
2. Make a list of adjectives or phrases that describe the relationship between Mary Maloney and her husband before the murder. Compare your list with that of a partner, and discuss any differences in opinion that they reveal.
3. With a partner, discuss the role of the narrator in the story. Is the narrator omniscient, or is the story told from a particular point of view? Find examples in the text that reveal the narrative point of view, and assess the impact of the narrator's perspective on the effectiveness of the story. Record your thought in a short written analysis.
4. Dramatic irony occurs when the reader of a story has information that other characters do not have. The effect of irony can be humorous or tragic, or a combination of the two. Identify the irony in this story and how it is created, using specific examples from the text. Then evaluate the effect of the irony on the tone of the piece.
5. Work with a partner to write a script for a film version of one scene from the story. Include directions for camera angles, lighting, scenery, dialogue, props, and any music you might use to reinforce the mood and create interest.

# The Execution

ALDEN NOWLAN

On the night of the execution  
a man at the door  
mistook me for the coroner.  
"Press," I said.

But he didn't understand. He led me  
into the wrong room  
where the sheriff greeted me:  
"You're late, Padre."

"You're wrong," I told him. "I'm Press."  
"Yes, of course, Reverend Press."  
We went down the stairway.

"Ah, Mr. Ellis," said the Deputy.  
"Press!" I shouted. But he shoved me  
through a black curtain.  
The lights were so bright  
I couldn't see the faces  
of the men sitting  
opposite. But, thank God, I thought  
they can see me!

"Look!" I cried. "Look at my face!  
Doesn't anybody know me?"

Then a hood covered my head.  
"Don't make it harder for us," the  
hangman whispered.



## Focus Your Learning

Studying this poem will help you:

- read closely to interpret meaning
- write a poem to express your feelings

## Activities

1. Think of a situation in which you have been misunderstood, or blamed for something you did not do. Write a poem based on the incident you described.
2. Present the poem as reader's theatre. Choose props, sound effects, music, and lighting that will help to dramatize the theme of the poem.



# *The Conservationist*



Courtesy of the artist, Boyd Webb.

## BOYD WEBB



### Focus Your Learning

Viewing this photograph will help you:

- interpret conflicting views
- prepare a personal response

### Activities

1. These two people represent different ideas; in a chart, outline the main points of each person's viewpoint.
2. Put yourself in this picture. Prepare a monologue, in either poetry or prose, in which you express your strong feelings about the issue depicted by the artist.

# The Open Window

HENRY GILFOND



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this play will help you:

- reflect on your own experience
- analyse character
- examine techniques that communicate meaning

## CHARACTERS

*MRS. SAPPLETON*

*MR. SAPPLETON*

*RONNIE, Mrs. Sappleton's young brother*

*DONALD, another of Mrs. Sappleton's brothers*

*VERA, Mrs. Sappleton's niece, about fifteen years old*

*MR. NUTTEL, a very nervous young man*

*The living room of the Sappleton country house, its large French window wide open.*

**VERA:** Won't you please come in.

**MR. NUTTEL:** (*Nervous, entering*) Thank you.

**VERA:** My aunt will be right down.

**MR. NUTTEL:** I'll wait.

**VERA:** Won't you sit down?

**VERA:** (*Sitting, nervously*) Thank you.

**VERA:** (*Dropping into another chair*) Meanwhile, you'll have to try to put up with me.

**MR. NUTTEL:** (*Nervously looking around, but politely*) I think I'll enjoy that.

**VERA:** Thank you. Do you know many people around here?

**MR. NUTTEL:** I don't know a soul.

**VERA:** (*To be sure*) Nobody?

**MR. NUTTEL:** My sister was here. About four years ago.

**VERA:** Oh?

**MR. NUTTEL:** Yes. She asked me to call on your aunt.

**VERA:** That was very nice of her.

**MR. NUTTEL:** I hope your aunt thinks so.

**VERA:** Oh, she will. But you've never met my aunt?

**MR. NUTTEL:** No, I've never met her.

**VERA:** You know nothing about her?

**MR. NUTTEL:** (*Nervously*) Should I?

**VERA:** You've never heard about the tragedy?

**MR. NUTTEL:** Tragedy?

**VERA:** My aunt's tragedy.

**MR. NUTTEL:** (*Nervously*) No. I never heard of her tragedy. I'm sorry.

**VERA:** (*Very quietly*) It happened just three years ago. That must have been just after your sister left us.

**MR. NUTTEL:** Yes, Yes, I'm very sorry to hear it. Perhaps I ought to go.

**VERA:** No, no, no! Please stay.

**MR. NUTTEL:** (*Not sure at all*) Tragedy, you said?

**VERA:** Very sad. Very sad.

**MR. NUTTEL:** (*Most uncomfortable*) Sorry, Sorry.



**VERA:** Have you wondered why we keep the window wide open on an October afternoon?

**MR. NUTTEL:** It's quite warm. It's quite warm for this time of the year.

**VERA:** But the window's always open.

**MR. NUTTEL:** Oh? (*Uneasily questioning*) The tragedy?

**VERA:** The tragedy.

**MR. NUTTEL:** I see. I see.

**VERA:** You can't. Not unless you know.

**MR. NUTTEL:** And I don't know. No, I don't know. Of course.

**VERA:** It was on an October morning that they went out through that window.

**MR. NUTTEL:** (*Looks nervously at the window*) They?

**VERA:** My uncle. That's Auntie's husband. And her two brothers.

**MR. NUTTEL:** (*Nervously*) Three of them?

**VERA:** (*nodding*) They walked right through that open window. With their guns. And their dog.

**MR. NUTTEL:** Hunting, I suppose?

**VERA:** Hunting.

**MR. NUTTEL:** Oh! October is the time of year for hunting.

**VERA:** It was exactly three years ago today. They walked through that window. (*Pause*) They never came back!

**MR. NUTTEL:** Oh?

**VERA:** They never came back.

**MR. NUTTEL:** Oh! They never came back?

**VERA:** No. (*Dramatically*) They got swallowed up in a swamp.

**MR. NUTTEL:** How dreadful!

**VERA:** It was terribly wet that year, you know. Places that were perfectly safe before suddenly gave way without warning.

**MR. NUTTEL:** Dreadful!

**VERA:** They never found the bodies.

**MR. NUTTEL:** Your poor aunt.



**VERA:** Yes, poor Auntie. That was the most awful part of it. They never found the bodies.

**MR. NUTTTEL:** (*With much feeling*) I'm deeply sorry.

**VERA:** There's more.

**MR. NUTTTEL:** You don't say!

**VERA:** There is.

**MR. NUTTTEL:** Oh?

**VERA:** Poor Auntie. She always thinks they'll come back. "They'll come back some day," she says. Her husband, her two brothers, and their little brown dog.

**MR. NUTTTEL:** Oh, my!

**VERA:** She thinks they'll come back and walk back into the house through that window again, the way they used to when they were alive. That's why the window is kept open. All year round.

**MR. NUTTTEL:** Poor woman.

**VERA:** Yes. Poor Auntie. She has told me so often how they went out, her husband with a white raincoat over his arm, and her brother Ronnie singing. He always sang, just to tease poor Auntie.

**MR. NUTTTEL:** What a pity!

**VERA:** Yes, and do you know (*Almost in a whisper*) sometimes, when it is very, very quiet here, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will come back, that the three of them, my uncle, and the two brothers, and the dog, *will* come back. Right through the window.

**MRS. SAPPLETON:** (*Entering suddenly*) I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. So good of your sister to send you here. I hope Vera has been amusing you.

**MR. NUTTTEL:** (*Carefully*) Vera has been very interesting.

**VERA:** Thank you.

**MR. NUTTTEL:** Thank you.

**MRS. SAPPLETON:** I hope you don't mind the open window.

**MR. NUTTTEL:** (*Quickly*) No, no! Not at all!



**MRS. SAPPLETON:** My husband and my two brothers will be home very soon. They've been hunting and they always come into the house through that open window.

**MR. NUTTEL:** (*Anxiously*) So Vera told me.

**MRS. SAPPLETON:** Of course. They've been out in the marshes. But what brings you to this part of the country?

**MR. NUTTEL:** (*Nervous*) Nothing at all. Nothing at all, really.

**MRS. SAPPLETON:** No?

**MR. NUTTEL:** Oh, I've been ill and the doctors think I need a rest, a complete rest. That's what they've ordered. I'm not to do any work, or think too much. I'm to keep away from any kind of excitement.

**MRS. SAPPLETON:** Really!

**MR. NUTTEL:** (*Very nervous*) No excitement at all.

**MRS. SAPPLETON:** (*Looking out the window, suddenly shouting*) Here they are!

**MR. NUTTEL:** (*Losing control*) Who?

**MRS. SAPPLETON:** My husband! My two brothers! And just in time for tea! Look how muddy those men are! I do hope they keep that dog out of here!

(*MR. NUTTEL, utterly panicked, runs out of the room.*)

**MRS. SAPPLETON:** I say! Mr. Nuttel!

**VERA:** He's gone.

**MRS. SAPPLETON:** (*As Mr. Sappleton and the two brothers enter*) A strange young man. (*To Ronnie, who is singing*) Now stop that foolish noise, or I'll send you to your room.

**MR. SAPPLETON:** (*The white raincoat on his arm*) Who was that young fellow who just flew out of here? Looked like he was trying to catch a train.

**MRS. SAPPLETON:** A very strange young man, indeed. A Mr. Nuttel. You might remember his sister. She was here about four years ago. All he talked about was his illness. Then he ran off without so much as a good-bye, You'd think he had seen a ghost.

**VERA:** (*Quietly*) I think it was the dog.

**MRS. SAPPLETON:** The little brown dog? That dog wouldn't hurt a mouse!



**VERA:** Mr. Nuttel's terribly afraid of dogs.

**MR. SAPPLETON:** Oh?

**VERA:** That's what he told me.

**MRS. SAPPLETON:** Strange young man. Tea?

**VERA:** He was hunted into a cemetery once, he told me—by a pack of wild dogs. He had to spend the whole night in an open grave, with all the dogs snarling at him. That's enough to make anyone afraid of dogs.

**MRS. SAPPLETON:** Now, Vera!

**VERA:** That's what he told me, Auntie!

**MRS. SAPPLETON:** That's one story of yours that I find very hard to believe, Vera.

**VERA:** But, Auntie!


**MRS. SAPPLETON:** But, Vera! ■

## Activities

1. Practical jokes can be funny, but they can also be cruel. Think of a time when you were the victim or perpetrator of a practical joke. Write a description of the incident, comparing it to the trick Vera plays on Mr. Nuttel. Which was more cruel? Which trick worked better? Were either or both of the jokes a bad idea?
2. Describe Vera's character and speculate on why she acts the way she does.
3. This play is written to be performed on stage. With a partner, discuss how you might adapt the story for television. Decide whether you want to highlight the comedic or the suspenseful aspect of the piece. Then consider ways you will do this, including camera angles, directions to actors, music, setting, and special effects. Rewrite the script as a TV screenplay, incorporating your ideas for production.

# The Last Saskatchewan Pirate

## THE ARROGANT WORMS



I used to be a farmer and I made a living fine  
I had a little stretch of land along the C.P. line  
But though I tried and tried the money wasn't there  
And bankers came and took my land and told me fair is fair  
I looked for every kind of job the answer always no  
"Hire you now?" they'd always laugh. "We just let twenty go."  
The government they promised me a measly little sum  
But I've got too much pride to end up just another bum  
Then I thought who gives a darn if all the jobs are gone  
I'm gonna be a pirate on the river Saskatchewan

*Chorus:*

*And it's a heave ho, high ho, coming down the plains  
Stealing wheat and barley and all the other grains  
And it's a ho hey, high hey, farmers bar your doors  
When you see the Jolly Roger on Regina's mighty shores*

Well you'd think the local farmers would think that I'm at large  
But just the other day I found an unprotected barge  
I snuck up right behind them and they were none the wiser  
I rammed their ship and sank it and stole their fertilizer  
A bridge outside of Moose Jaw spans a mighty river  
Farmers cross in so much fear their stomachs are a-quiver  
Cuz they know that Tractor Jack is hiding in the bay  
I'll jump the bridge and knock them cold and sail off with their hay

*Chorus*



Well Mountie Bob he chased me he was always at my throat  
He'd follow on the shoreline cuz he didn't own a boat  
But cutbacks were a-coming and the Mountie lost his job  
So now he's sailing with me and we call him Salty Bob  
A swinging sword, a skull and bones and pleasant company  
I never pay my income tax and forget the G.S.T.  
Prince Albert down to Saskatoon, the terror of the sea  
If you want to reach the Co-op, boy, you gotta get by me

*Chorus*

Well, pirate life's appealing but you won't just find it here  
I hear that in Alberta there's a band of buccaneers  
They roam the Athabasca from Smith to Fort Mackay  
And you're bound to lose your Stetson if you have to pass  
their way  
Winter is a-coming and a chill is in the breeze  
My pirate days are over once the river starts to freeze  
I'll be back in springtime but now I have to go  
I hear there's lots of plundering down in New Mexico

*Chorus*

**Focus Your Learning**

Reading these lyrics will help you:

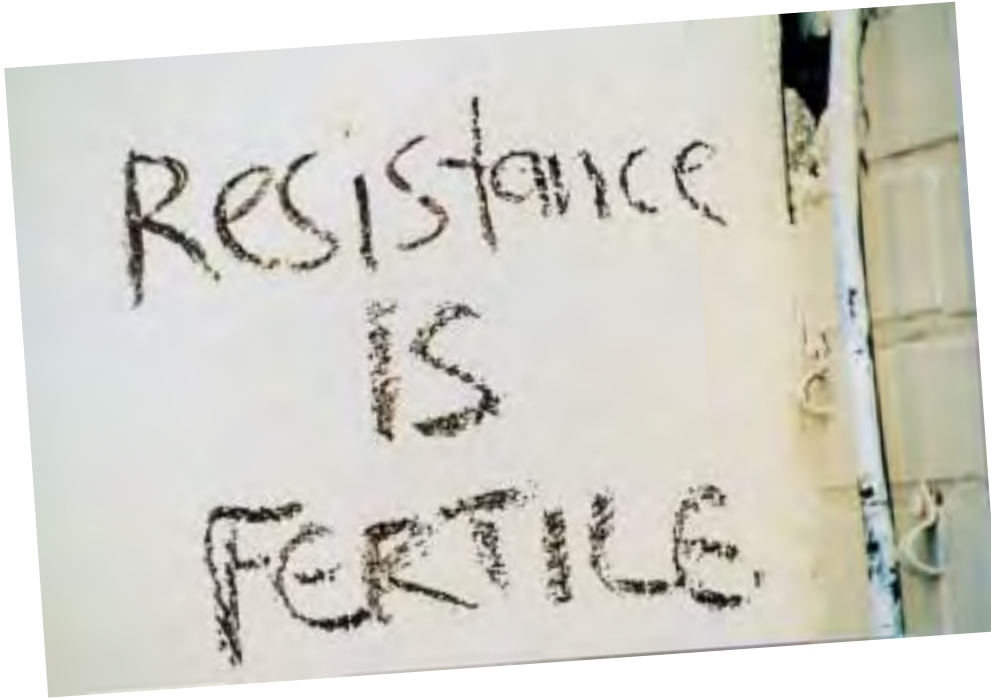
- explore how music can communicate meaning
- define satire
- write lyrics for a protest song

**A c t i v i t i e s**

1. How do you think the music for this song would sound? What instruments might be used? What tempo (fast or slow)? If possible, listen to part of the song on tape, and compare your predictions with the actual performance. Which version do you prefer: yours or the Arrogant Worms'?
2. With a partner, define satire, and create a convincing argument for why this piece can be considered a satire.
3. There is a longstanding tradition of using songs for social protest. Some protest songs are humorous, while others are rousing, angry, or solemn. Create your own lyrics for a protest song, on a topic of your choosing. If you wish, copy the metre from "The Last Saskatchewan Pirate" or from another protest song.



# Messages Are Everywhere

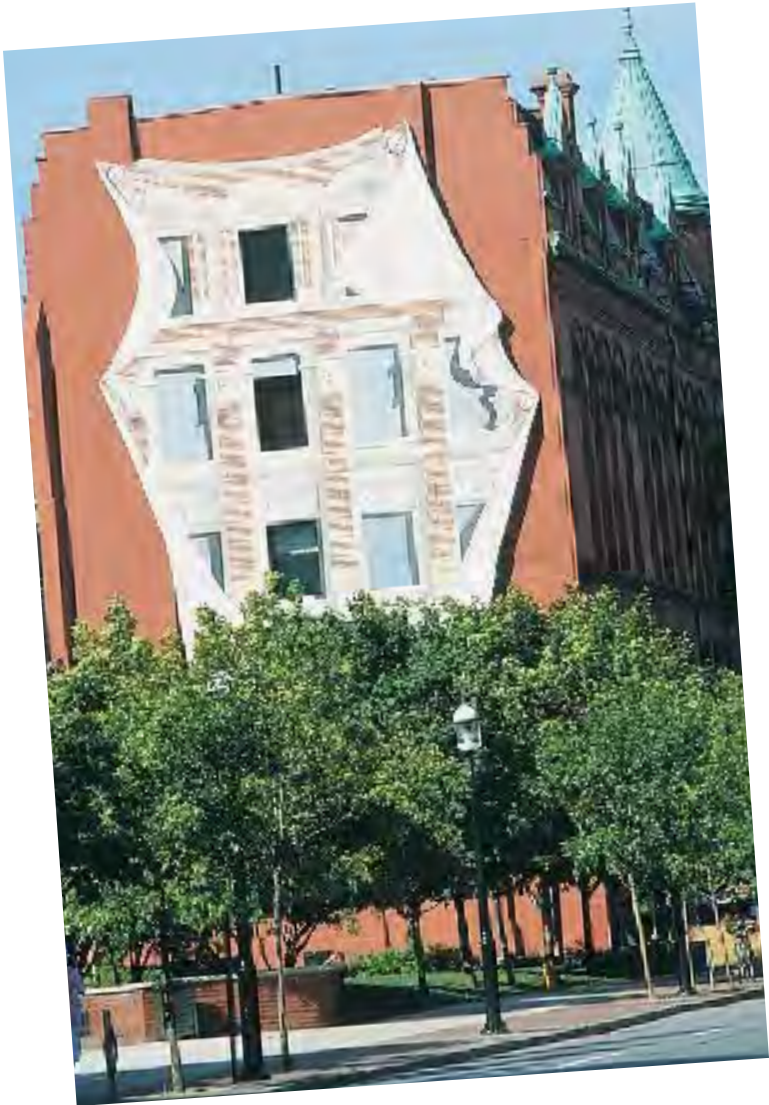


- 
- Why do you think motivated someone to write this graffiti? How else might he or she have conveyed this message?

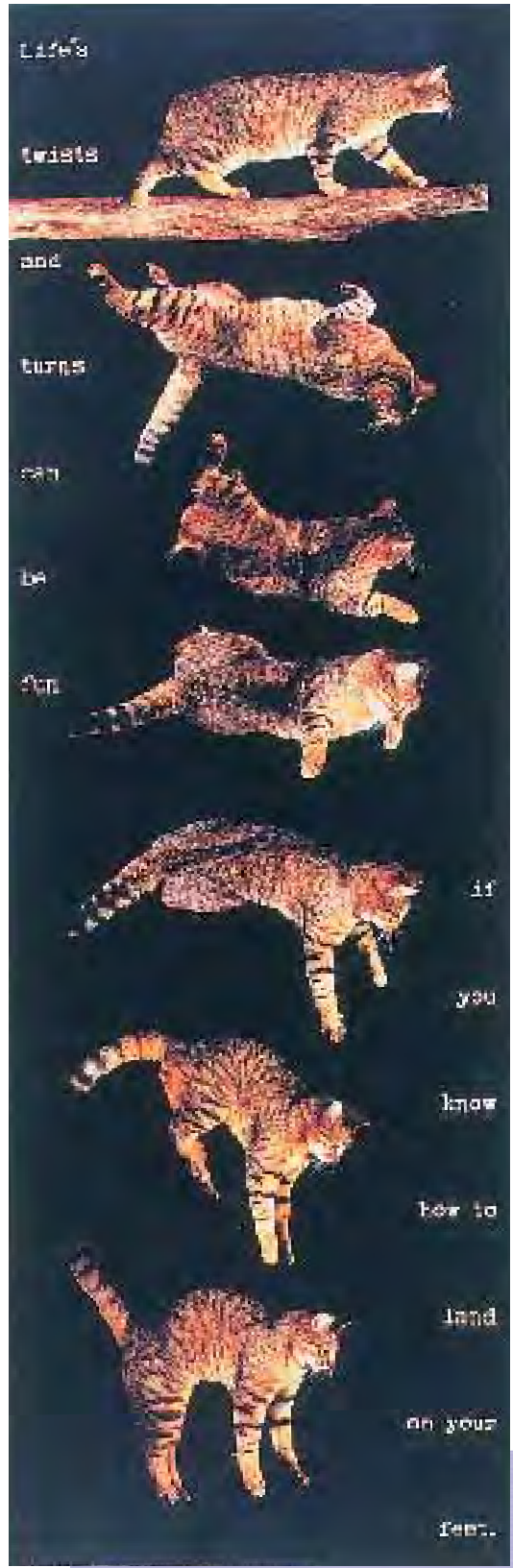


- 
- T-shirts are like travelling billboards: they go everywhere, advertising everything. What is this T-shirt advertising?

- Restate the message of this poster in your own words. Why is the cat an appropriate symbol to convey this message?



- What does a mural such as this add to the community environment?





# Coup de Grâce

A . D . HOPE

Just at the moment the Wolf,  
Shag jaws and slavering grin,  
Steps from the property wood,  
Oh, what a gorge, what a gulf  
Opens to gobble her in,  
Little Red Riding Hood!

O, what a face full of fangs!  
Eyes like saucers at least  
Roll to seduce and beguile.  
Miss, with her dimples and bangs,  
Thinks him a handsome beast;  
Flashes the Riding Hood Smile;

Stands her ground like a queen,  
Velvet red of the rose  
Framing each little milk tooth  
Pink tongue peeping between.  
Then, wider than anyone knows,  
Opens her minikin mouth

Swallows up Wolf in a trice;  
Tail going down gives a flick,  
Caught as she closes her jaws.  
Bows, all sugar and spice.  
O, what a ladylike trick!  
O, what a round of applause!

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- reflect on the enduring qualities of fairy tales
- evaluate the significance of the title
- analyse diction
- write a “fractured fairytale.”

## Activities

1. In a journal, consider why fairy tales remain so popular through the ages, even though the settings and plots are often outdated. What enduring qualities do they contain?
2. Explain the meaning of the title, and evaluate its significance in relation to the poem.
3. Read the poem aloud. List at least four or five words that you feel are particularly effective, and consider what other word choices the poet could have made. Then describe why you think he made the best choice. Share your ideas with two other students, and discuss your findings.
4. Rewrite another favourite fairy tale with a twist, and from the point of view of one of the other characters. Collect all your revised tales together in a book of “Fractured Fairy Tales.”

# The Interlopers

“SAKI” (H. H. MUNRO)



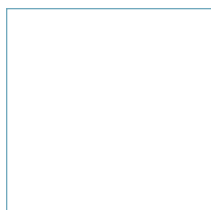
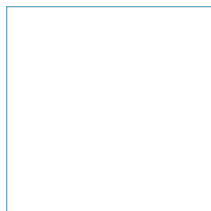
In a forest of mixed growth somewhere on the eastern spurs of the Carpathians, a man stood one winter night watching and listening, as though he waited for some beast of the woods to come within the range of his vision, and, later, of his rifle. But the game for whose presence he kept so keen an outlook was none that figured in the sportsman's calendar as lawful and proper for the chase; Ulrich von Gradwitz patrolled the dark forest in quest of a human enemy.

The forest lands of Gradwitz were of wide extent and well stocked with game; the narrow strip of precipitous woodland that lay on its outskirts was not remarkable for the game it harboured or the shooting it afforded, but it was the most jealously guarded of all its owner's territorial possessions. A famous lawsuit, in the days of his grandfather, had wrested it from the illegal possession of a neighbouring family of petty landowners; the dispos-

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you to:

- consider the effectiveness of the ending
- identify how structure, character, and point of view contribute to the theme of the story
- find examples of foreshadowing
- write an epilogue



essed party had never acquiesced in the judgment of the courts, and a long series of poaching affrays and similar scandals had embittered the relationships between the families for three generations. The neighbour feud had grown into a personal one since Ulrich had come to be head of his family; if there was a man in the world whom he detested and wished ill to it was Georg Znaeym, the inheritor of the quarrel and the tireless game-snatcher and raider of the disputed border-forest. The feud might, perhaps, have died down or been compromised if the personal ill will of the two men had not stood in the way; as boys they had thirsted for one another's blood, as men each prayed that misfortune might fall on the other, and this wind-scourged winter night Ulrich had banded together his foresters to watch the dark forest, not in quest of four-footed quarry, but to keep a lookout for the prowling thieves whom he suspected of being afoot from across the land boundary. The roebuck, which usually kept in the sheltered hollows during a windstorm, were running like driven things tonight, and there was movement and unrest among the creatures that were wont to sleep through the dark hours. Assuredly there was a disturbing element in the forest, and Ulrich could guess the quarter from whence it came.

He strayed away by himself from the watchers whom he had placed in ambush on the crest of the hill, and wandered far down the steep slopes amid the wild tangle of undergrowth, peering through the tree trunks and listening through the whistling and skirling of the wind and the restless beating of the branches for sight or sound of the marauders. If only on this wild night, in this dark, lone spot, he might come across Georg Znaeym, man to man, with none to witness—that was the wish that was uppermost in his thoughts. And as he stepped around the trunk of a huge beech he came face to face with the man he sought.

The two enemies stood glaring at each other for a long silent moment. Each had a rifle in his hand, each had hate in his heart and murder uppermost in his mind. The chance had come to give full play to the passions of a lifetime. But a man who has been brought up under the code of a restraining civilization cannot easily nerve himself to shoot down his neighbour in cold blood and without word spoken, except for an offence against his hearth and honour. And before the moment of hesitation had given way to action a deed of Nature's own violence overwhelmed them both. A fierce shriek of the storm had been answered by a splitting crash over their heads, and ere they could leap aside a mass of falling beech tree had thundered down on them. Ulrich von Gradwitz found himself stretched on the ground, one arm numb beneath him and the other held almost as helplessly in a tight tangle of forked branches, while both legs were pinned beneath the fallen mass. His heavy shooting-boots had saved his feet from being crushed to pieces, but if his fractures were not as serious as they might



have been, at least it was evident that he could not move from his present position till someone came to release him. The descending twigs had slashed the skin of his face, and he had to wink away some drops of blood from his eyelashes before he could take in a general view of the disaster. At his side, so near that under ordinary circumstances he could almost have touched him, lay Georg Znaeym, alive and struggling, but obviously as helplessly pinioned down as himself. All round them lay a thick-strewn wreckage of splintered branches and broken twigs.

Relief at being alive and exasperation at his captive plight brought a strange medley of pious thank-offerings and sharp curses to Ulrich's lips. Georg, who was nearly blinded with the blood which trickled across his eyes, stopped his struggling for a moment to listen, and then gave a short, snarling laugh.

"So you're not killed, as you ought to be, but you're caught, anyway," he cried; "caught fast. Ho, what a jest, Ulrich von Gradwitz snarled in his stolen forest. There's real justice for you!"

And he laughed again, mockingly and savagely.

"I'm caught in my own forest-land," retorted Ulrich. "When my men come to release us you will wish, perhaps, that you were in a better plight than caught poaching on a neighbour's land, shame on you."

Georg was silent for a moment; then he answered quietly:

"Are you sure that your men will find much to release? I have men, too, in the forest tonight, close behind me, and they will be here first and do the releasing. When they drag me out from under these branches, it won't need much clumsiness on their part to roll this mass of trunk right over on top of you. Your men will find you dead under a fallen beech tree. For form's sake I shall send my condolences to your family."

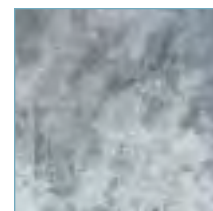
"It is a useful hint," said Ulrich fiercely. "My men had orders to follow in ten minutes' time, seven of which must have gone by already, and when they get me out I will remember the hint. Only, as you will have met your death poaching on my lands, I don't think I can decently send any message of condolence to your family."

"Good," snarled Georg, "good. We fight this quarrel out to death, you and I and our foresters, with no cursed interlopers to come between us. Death and damnation to you, Ulrich von Gradwitz."

"The same to you, Georg Znaeym, forest-thief, game-snatcher."

Both men spoke with the bitterness of possible defeat before them, for each knew that it might be long before his men would seek him out or find him; it was a bare matter of chance which party would arrive first on the scene.

Both had now given up the useless struggle to free themselves from the mass of wood that held them down; Ulrich limited his endeavours to an



effort to bring his one partially free arm near enough to his outer coat-pocket to draw out his wine-flask. Even when he had accomplished that operation it was long before he could manage the unscrewing of the stopper or get any of the liquid down his throat. But what a Heaven-sent draught it seemed! It was an open winter, and little snow had fallen as yet; hence the captives suffered less from the cold than might have been the case at the season of the year; nevertheless, the wine was warming and reviving to the wounded man, and he looked across with something like a throb of pity to where his enemy lay, just keeping the groans of pain and weariness from crossing his lips.

"Could you reach this flask if I threw it over to you?" asked Ulrich suddenly; "there is good wine in it, and one may as well be as comfortable as one can. Let us drink, even if tonight one of us dies."

"No, I can scarcely see anything, there is so much blood caked round my eyes," said Georg, "and in any case I don't drink wine with an enemy."

Ulrich was silent for a few minutes, and lay listening to the weary screeching of the wind. An idea was slowly forming and growing in his brain, an idea that gained strength every time that he looked across at the man who was fighting so grimly against pain and exhaustion. In the pain and languor that Ulrich himself was feeling the old fierce hatred seemed to be dying down.

"Neighbour," he said presently, "do as you please if your men come first. It was a fair compact. But as for me, I've changed my mind. If my men are the first to come you shall be the first to be helped, as though you were my guest. We have quarrelled like devils all our lives over this stupid strip of forest, where the trees can't even stand upright in a breath of wind. Lying here tonight, thinking, I've come to think we've been rather fools; there are better things in life than getting the better of a boundary dispute. Neighbour, if you will help me to bury the old quarrel I—I will ask you to be my friend."

Georg Znaeym was silent for so long that Ulrich thought, perhaps, he had fainted with the pain of his injuries. Then he spoke slowly and in jerks.

"How the whole region would stare and gabble if we rode into the market-square together. No one living can remember seeing a Znaeym and von Gradwitz talking to one another in friendship. And what peace there would be among the forester folk if we ended our feud tonight. And if we choose to make peace among our people there is none other to interfere, no interlopers from outside.... You would come and keep the Sylvester night beneath my roof, and I would come and feast on some high day at your castle.... I would never fire a shot on your land, save when you invited me as a guest; and you would come and shoot with me down in the marshes

where the wildfowl are. In all the countryside there are none that could hinder it if we willed to make peace. I never thought to have wanted to do other than hate you all my life, but I think I have changed my mind about things too, this last half-hour. And you offered me your wine-flask.... Ulrich von Gradwitz, I will be your friend."

For a space both men were silent, turning over in their minds the wonderful changes that this dramatic reconciliation would bring about. In the cold, gloomy forest, with the wind tearing in fitful gusts through the naked branches and whistling round the tree trunks, they lay and waited for the help that would bring release and succour to both parties. And each prayed a private prayer that his men might be the first to arrive, so that he might be the first to show honourable attention to the enemy that had become a friend.

Presently, as the wind dropped for a moment, Ulrich broke silence.

"Let's shout for help," he said; "in this lull our voices may carry a little way."

"They won't carry far through the trees and undergrowth," said Georg, "but we can try. Together, then."

The two raised their voices in a prolonged hunting call.

"Together again," said Ulrich a few minutes later, after listening in vain for an answering halloo.

"I heard something that time, I think," said Ulrich.

"I heard nothing but the pestilential wind," said Georg hoarsely.

There was silence again for some minutes, and then Ulrich gave a joyful cry.

"I can see figures coming through the wood. They are following in the way I came down the hillside."

Both men raised their voices in as loud a shout as they could muster.

"They hear us! They've stopped. Now they see us. They're running down the hill towards us," cried Ulrich.

"How many of them are there?" asked Georg.

"I can't see distinctly," said Ulrich; "nine or ten."

"Then they are yours," said Georg; "I had only seven out with me."

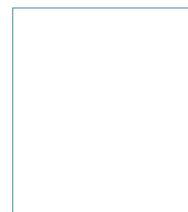
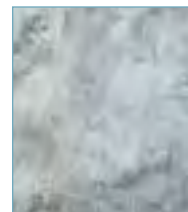
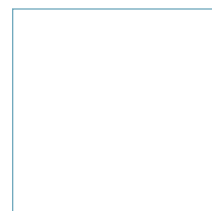
"They are making all the speed they can, brave lads," said Ulrich gladly.

"Are they your men?" asked Georg. "Are they your men?" he repeated impatiently as Ulrich did not answer.

"No," said Ulrich with a laugh, the idiotic chattering laugh of a man unstrung with a hideous fear.

"Who are they?" asked Georg quickly, straining his eyes to see what the other would gladly not have seen.

"Wolves."





## Activities

1. In groups of three, discuss whether you think the ending is satisfying or not. Use evidence from the text and your own ideas to justify your response.
2. Identify the theme of the story. As a class, discuss how the author uses story structure, character, and point of view to develop the theme.
3. Reread the story a second time, looking for words and passages that foreshadow the ending. Make a list, and compare it with that of a partner. Discuss how your knowledge of the ending changed the way you read the text the second time.
4. Write an epilogue to the story, indicating what you think happened next. Compare your writing with that of a partner, and discuss why each is plausible.

# Once Upon a Time

NADINE GORDIMER



In a house, in a suburb, in a city, there were a man and his wife who loved each other very much and were living happily ever after. They had a little boy, and they loved him very much. They had a cat and a dog that the little boy loved very much. They had a car and a caravan trailer for holidays, and a swimming-pool which was fenced so that the little boy and his playmates would not fall in and drown. They had a housemaid who was absolutely trustworthy and an itinerant gardener who was highly recommended by the neighbours. For when they began to live happily ever after they were warned, by that wise old witch, the husband's mother, not to take on anyone off the street. They were inscribed in a medical benefit society, their pet dog was licensed, they were insured against fire, flood damage, and theft, and subscribed to the local Neighbourhood Watch, which supplied them with a plaque for their gates lettered YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED over the silhouette of a would-be intruder. He was masked; it could not be said if

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this short story will help you:

- relate historical information to the text
- discuss issues in relation to the text
- analyse genre
- develop an ad campaign



he was black or white, and therefore proved the property owner was no racist.

It was not possible to insure the house, the swimming pool, or the car against riot damage. There were riots, but these were outside the city, where people of another colour were quartered. These people were not allowed into the suburb except as reliable housemaids and gardeners, so there was nothing to fear, the husband told the wife. Yet she was afraid that some day such people might come up the street and tear off the plaque YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED and open the gates and stream in ....Nonsense, my dear, said the husband, there are police and soldiers and tear-gas and guns to keep them away. But to please her—for he loved her very much and buses were being burned, cars stoned, and schoolchildren shot by the police in those quarters out of sight and hearing of the suburb—he had electronically-controlled gates fitted. Anyone who pulled off the sign YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED and tried to open the gates would have to announce his intentions by pressing a button and speaking into a receiver relayed to the house. The little boy was fascinated by the device and used it as a walkie-talkie in cops-and-robbers play with his small friends.

The riots were suppressed, but there were many burglaries in the suburb and somebody's trusted housemaid was tied up and shut in a cupboard by thieves while she was in charge of her employers' house. The trusted housemaid of the man and wife and little boy was so upset by this misfortune befalling a friend left, as she herself often was, with responsibility for the possessions of the man and his wife and the little boy that she implored her employers to have burglar bars attached to the doors and windows of the house, and an alarm system installed. The wife said, She is right, let us take heed of her advice. So from every window and door in the house where they were living happily ever after they now saw the trees and sky through bars, and when the little boy's pet cat tried to climb in by the fanlight to keep him company in his little bed at night, as it customarily had done, it set the alarm keening through the house.

The alarm was often answered—it seemed—by other burglar alarms, in other houses, that had been triggered by pet cats or nibbling mice. The alarms called to one another across the gardens in shrills and bleats and wails that everyone soon became accustomed to, so that the din roused the inhabitants of the suburb no more than the croak of frogs and musical grating of cicadas' legs. Under cover of the electronic harpies' discourse intruders sawed the iron bars and broke into homes, taking away high-fi equipment, television sets, cassette players, cameras and radios, jewellery and clothing, and sometimes were hungry enough to devour everything in the refrigerator or paused audaciously to drink the whisky in the cabinets or

patio bars. Insurance companies paid no compensation for single malt, a loss made keener by the property owner's knowledge that the thieves wouldn't even have been able to appreciate what it was they were drinking.

Then the time came when many of the people who were not trusted housemaids and gardeners hung about the suburb because they were unemployed. Some importuned for a job: weeding or painting a roof; anything, *baas*, madam. But the man and his wife remembered the warning about taking on anyone off the street. Some drank liquor and fouled the street with discarded bottles. Some begged, waiting for the man or his wife to drive the car out of the electronically-operated gates. They sat about with their feet in the gutters, under the jacaranda trees that made a green tunnel of the street—for it was a beautiful suburb, spoiled only by their presence—and sometimes they fell asleep lying right before the gates in the midday sun. The wife could never see anyone go hungry. She sent the trusted housemaid out with bread and tea, but the trusted housemaid said these were loafers and *tsotsis*, who would come and tie her up and shut her in the cupboard. The husband said, She's right. Take heed of her advice. You only encourage them with your bread and tea. They are looking for their chance.... And he brought the little boy's tricycle from the garden into the house every night, because if the house was surely secure, once locked and with the alarm set, someone might still be able to climb over the wall or the electronically-closed gates into the garden.

You are right, said the wife, then the wall should be higher. And the wise old witch, the husband's mother, paid for the extra bricks as her Christmas present to her son and his wife—the little boy got a Space Man outfit and a book of fairy tales.

But every week there were more reports of intrusion: in broad daylight and the dead of night, in the early hours of the morning, and even in the lovely summer twilight—a certain family was at dinner while the bedrooms were being ransacked upstairs. The man and his wife, talking of the latest armed robbery in the suburb, were distracted by the sight of the little boy's pet cat effortlessly arriving over the seven-foot wall, descending first with a rapid bracing of extended forepaws down on the sheer vertical surface, and then a graceful launch, landing with swishing tail within the property. The whitewashed wall was marked with the cat's comings and goings; and on the street side of the wall there were larger red-earth smudges that could have been made by the kind of broken running shoes, seen on the feet of unemployed loiterers, that had no innocent destination.

When the man and wife and little boy took the pet dog for its walk round the neighbourhood streets they no longer paused to admire this show of roses or that perfect lawn; these were hidden behind an array of





different varieties of security fences, walls and devices. The man, wife, little boy, and dog passed a remarkable choice: there was the low-cost option of pieces of broken glass embedded in cement along the top of walls, there were iron grilles ending in lance-points, there were attempts at reconciling the aesthetics of prison architecture with the Spanish Villa style (spikes painted pink) and with the plaster urns of neoclassical façades (twelve-inch pikes finned like zigzags of lightning and painted pure white). Some walls had a small board affixed, giving the name and telephone number of the firm responsible for the installation of the devices. While the little boy and the pet dog raced ahead, the husband and wife found themselves comparing the possible effectiveness of each style against its appearance; and after several weeks when they paused before this barricade or that without needing to speak, both came out with the conclusion that only one was worth considering. It was the ugliest but the most honest in its suggestion of pure concentration-camp style, no frills, all evident efficacy. Placed the length of walls, it consisted of a continuous coil of stiff and shining metal serrated into jagged blades, so that there would be no way of climbing over it and no way through its tunnel without getting entangled in its fangs. There would be no way out, only a struggle getting bloodier and bloodier, a deeper and sharper hooking and tearing of flesh. The wife shuddered to look at it. You're right, said the husband, anyone would think twice.... And they took heed of the advice on a small board fixed to the wall: Consult DRAGON'S TEETH The People For Total Security.

Next day a gang of workmen came and stretched the razor-bladed coils all around the walls of the house where the husband and wife and little boy and pet dog and cat were living happily ever after. The sunlight flashed and slashed off the serrations, the cornice of razor thorns encircled the home, shining. The husband said, Never mind. It will weather. The wife said, You're wrong. They guarantee it's rust-proof. And she waited until the little boy had run off to play before she said, I hope the cat will take heed ...The husband said, Don't worry, my dear, cats always look before they leap. And it was true that from that day on the cat slept in the little boy's bed and kept to the garden, never risking a try at breaching security.

One evening, the mother read the little boy to sleep with a fairy story from the book the wise old witch had given him at Christmas. Next day he pretended to be the Prince who braves the terrible thicket of thorns to enter the palace and kiss the Sleeping Beauty back to life: he dragged the ladder to the wall, the shining coiled tunnel was just wide enough for his little body to creep in, and with the first fixing of its razor-teeth in his knees and hands and head he screamed and struggled deeper into its tangle. The trusted housemaid and the itinerant gardener, whose 'day' it was, came running,

the first to see and to scream with him, and the itinerant gardener tore his hands trying to get at the little boy. Then the man and his wife burst wildly into the garden and for some reason (the cat, probably) the alarm set up wailing against the screams while the bleeding mass of the little boy was hacked out of the security coil with saws, wire-cutters, choppers, and they carried it—the man, the wife, the hysterical trusted housemaid, and the weeping gardener—into the house. ■

## Activities

1. In our desire to protect ourselves and those we love, we can instead create potentially harmful situations. As a class, discuss other examples of this trap that you have witnessed, heard of, or read about.
2. The author wrote this story in South Africa before the end of Apartheid. As a class, brainstorm to gather what you know about Apartheid. Write the information in a list on the chalkboard. Then break into small groups and discuss how this story can be seen as a metaphor for the Apartheid system.
3. What message does the story have for North Americans today? Discuss with a partner. Share your ideas with another pair of students.
4. Brainstorm a list of characteristics of fairy tales. Find examples in the text that show how the writer has modernized the fairytale style. Using these examples, explain why you think Nadine Gordimer chose to use this style for her story.
5. We all want to protect what we have. Imagine you are the owner of a firm that specializes in home security. Develop an ad campaign and slogan that will appeal to our desire for protection.



# Save the Moon for Kerdy Dickus

TIM WYNNE-JONES



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- consider word choice
- write a tabloid news article
- analyse the use of humour
- write a humorous monologue

This is Ky's story. It happened to her. It happened at her place in the country. I wasn't there when it happened, but I know what her place in the country looks like, and that's important. In this story, the way things look is really important.

There's more than one version of this story. If Ky's younger brothers, Brad or Tony, told you the story, it would come out different. But not as different as the way the Stranger tells it. We know his name now, but we still call him the Stranger. Perhaps you know his version of the story. It was in the newspapers. Well, the *National Enquirer*, anyway.

Ky's father, Tan Mori, built their house in the country. It's a dome. It looks like a glass igloo, but it's actually made of a web of light metal tubing and a special clear plastic. From the outside you can see right into the house, which Ky didn't like one bit at first, because it wasn't very private. But the house is at the end of a long driveway surrounded by woods, so the only things that can look at you are bluejays, raccoons, the occasional deer and, from way up high on a hot day, turkey vultures circling the sky.

It wasn't a hot day when this story happened. It was two days before Christmas and there was a bad freezing rain. But let me tell you more about the house, because you have to be able to see the house in order to understand what happened. You have to imagine it the way the Stranger saw it.

For one thing there's all this high-tech office stuff. Ky's parents are both computer software designers, which means that just about everything they do can be done on a computer. Word processors, video monitors, a modem, a fax machine—they're always popping on and off. Their lights blink in the dark.

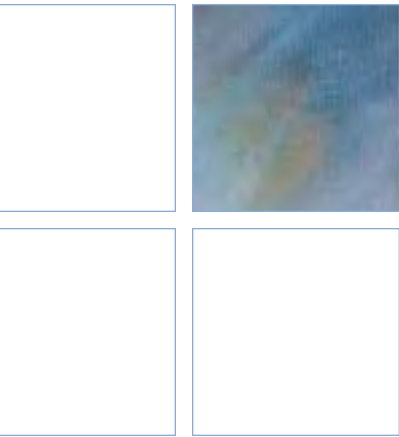
You also have to know something about Ky's family if you want to see what the Stranger saw when he arrived at their door. You especially have to know that they have family traditions. They make them up all the time. For instance, for the past three years it's been a tradition that I go up from the city for Ky's birthday in the summer, and we go horseback riding. I'm not sure if that's what tradition really means, but it's nice.

It's also a tradition with Ky's family to watch the movie *It's a Wonderful Life* every Christmas. And so, two nights before Christmas, that's what they were doing. They were wearing their traditional Christmastime nightclothes. They were all in red: red flannel pyjamas, even red slippers. Ky had her hair tied back in a red scrunchie. That's what the Stranger saw: this family in red.

They had just stopped the movie for a break. They were going to have *okonomiyaki*, which is kind of like a Japanese pizza and pancake all mixed up together with shredded cabbage and crabmeat and this chewy wheat gluten stuff called *seitan*. This is a tradition, too. Ky's father, Tan, likes to cook. So they watch *It's a Wonderful Life* and they have this mid-movie snack served with *kinpara gobo*, which is spicy, and other pickly things that only Tan and Barbara, Ky's mother, bother to eat. But the kids like *okonomiyaki*.

Tan Mori is Japanese. Here's how he looks. He wears clear rimmed glasses. He's short and trim and has long black hair that he wears pulled tightly back in a ponytail.

Ky doesn't think the Stranger had ever seen a Japanese person up close before. He probably hadn't ever seen someone who looked like Barbara Mori, either. She isn't Japanese. She has silvery blonde hair but it's cut very, very short so that you can see the shape of her head. She's very slim, bony, and she has one of the nicest smiles you could imagine. She has two dark



spots beside her mouth. Ky calls them beauty marks; Barbara laughs and calls them moles.

It was Barbara who first noticed the Stranger while Tan was cooking the okonomiyaki and the boys were getting bowls of shrimp chips and Coke and Ky was boiling water for green tea.

The freezing rain was pouring down on the dome, but inside it was warm, and there were little islands of light. A single light on a post lit up the driveway a bit.

"There's someone out there," said Barbara. "The poor man." She went to the door and called to him. The kids left what they were doing to go and look.

He was big and shadowy where he was standing. He was also stoop-shouldered, trying to hide his head from the icy downpour.

Barbara waved at him. "Come!" she called as loudly as she could. "Come." Her teeth were chattering because she was standing at the open door in her pyjamas and cold wind was pouring in.

The Stranger paused. He seemed uncertain. Then a gust of wind made him lose his balance and he slipped on the ice and fell. When he got up he made his way toward the house slowly, sliding and slipping the whole long way. He was soaked clear through all over. He only had a jean jacket on. No gloves or hat. As he approached the house, Ky could see that, although he was big, he was young, a teenager. Then Barbara sent her to the bathroom for a big towel.

By the time she got back with the towel, the boy was in the house, standing there dripping in the hall. Barbara wrapped the towel around his shoulders. She had to stand on her toes; he was big. He had black hair and he reminded Ky of a bear she had seen at the zoo after it had been swimming. He smelled terrible. His wet clothes smelled of alcohol and cigarette smoke. The kids all stepped away from him. Tony crinkled up his nose, but Barbara didn't seem to care.

"Come in and get warm," she said, leading him towards the kitchen.

I haven't told you about the kitchen yet. Well, there is a kind of island shaped like a kidney with a built-in stove and sink. Since the walls of the dome are curved, all the cupboards and drawers and stuff are built into the island. Lights recessed into the ceiling above bathe the island in a warm glow so that the maple countertop looks like a beach.

Tan was already pouring the Stranger some tea when Barbara brought him over and tried to sit him down near the stove where it was warmest. But he wouldn't sit. Tan handed him a tiny cup of steaming tea. The cup had no handle. The Stranger didn't seem to know what to do, but the warmth alone was enough to make him take it. His hands were huge and strong and rough. The tiny cup looked like it would break if he closed his fist.

He took a sip of the tea. His eyes cleared a bit.

"Dad's in the truck," he said.

"Oh, my God," said Barbara. "Where? We should get him. Tan?"

The Stranger nodded his big bear head in the direction that the truck was but, of course, you couldn't see it from the house. Ky looked down the driveway, but there is a bend in it so she couldn't see the road.

Tan had turned off the gas under the frying pans and was heading towards the closet for his coat.

"I'll bring him back." he said.

"No!" said the Stranger. His voice cracked a little. "He's okay. He's sleepin'. Truck's warm."

Nobody in the Mori family knew what to do. Tony looked about ready to laugh. Ky glared at him. Tan shrugged and looked at Barbara. "It's not too cold as long as he's sheltered." She nodded and Tan turned the stove back on. The okonomiyaki were ready to flip. He flipped them. The Stranger stared at them. Maybe he thought they were the weirdest pancakes he'd ever seen. It's hard to know what he was thinking. Then he looked around.

"Where am I?" he asked.

"The fifth line," said Barbara, filling his cup. The Mori house is on the fifth concession line of Leopold County.

"The fifth?" he asked. He stared around again. He looked as if he didn't believe it. "The fifth?" He stared at Barbara, who nodded. He stared at Tan. Tan nodded, too. The Stranger kept staring at Tan, at his red pyjamas, his long ponytail, his bright dark eyes behind clear rimmed glasses. "Where am I?"

That's when the fax machine started beeping and the Stranger spilled his tea. Brad got him a tea towel but he didn't seem hurt. He stared into the dark where the computer stuff is. There are hardly any walls in the dome.

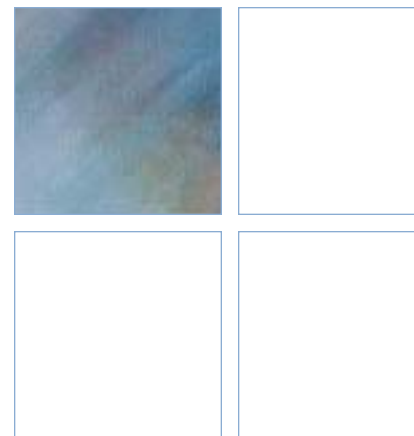
The fax machine beeps when a transmission is coming through. Then it makes a whirring sound and paper starts rolling out with a message on it.

The boy watched the fax machine blinking in the shadows, because the lights were not on in the office part of the dome.

"It's just what my parents do," said little Tony. The machinery was still a mystery to him, too.

The Stranger looked at Tan again—all around at the dome. There's a second floor loft but it's not big, so the Stranger could see clear up to the curving roof and out at the rain pelting down. If there had been stars out he could have seen them. He seemed to get a little dizzy from looking up.

"Sit," said Barbara, and this time she made him sit on a stool next to the kitchen island. He steadied himself. To Ky he looked like someone who had just woken up and had no idea what was going on.



By now the fax machine was spewing out a great long roll of paper which curled to the floor. The Stranger watched it for a minute.

"I think we should get your father," said Barbara in a very gentle voice.

"No," said the boy firmly. "He's asleep, eh. We was at Bernie's. You know Bernie?"

But none of the Moris knew Bernie. "Cards," he said. "Having a few drinks ... Christmas ..." He looked back at the fax. "What is this place?"

Tan laughed. He flipped two okonomiyaki onto a warm plate and handed them to the boy. "Here. You look like you could do with something warm to eat."

"More to read?" asked the boy. He thought Tan had said more to read.

Tan handed him the pancakes. "Try it," he said.

Ky went and got the spicy sauce. She poured a bit on the pancake and sprinkled some nori, toasted seaweed, on top. The Stranger looked at Ky and at the food steaming under his nose. It must have smelled funny to him. He looked around again. He was having trouble putting all this together. These strange sweet salty smells, these people all in red.

"You never heard of Bernie?" he asked.

"No," said Ky.

"Bernie Nystrom?"

"Never heard of him."

"Over on the ..." he was going to say where it was that Bernie Nystrom lived, but he seemed to forget. "Dad's out in the car," he said. "We got lost."

"Not a great night for driving," said Tan, filling the Stranger's cup with more steaming tea.

"Saw your light there," he said, squinting hard as if the light had just shone in his eyes. "Slid right out." He made a sliding gesture with his hand.

"It's pretty, icy," said Tan.

"Never seen such a bright light," said the Stranger.

Ky remembers him saying this. It rankled her. He made it sound as if their light had been responsible for his accident. Her mother winked at her.

Tony looked like he was going to say something. Brad put his hand over his brother's mouth. Tony struggled but the Stranger didn't notice. The fax stopped.

"You sure you ain't never heard of Bernie?" he asked one more time. It seemed to matter a great deal, as if he couldn't imagine someone not knowing good ol' Bernie Nystrom.

"Is there someone we could phone for you?" Barbara asked. "Do you need a tow or something?"

The Stranger was staring at the okonomiyaki. "Anita who?" he asked. At that, both Brad and Tony started giggling until Ky shushed them up.

"A tow truck," said Barbara, very carefully. "To get you out of the ditch."





The boy put the plate down without touching the food. He rubbed his hands on his wet pants. He was shivering. Barbara sent Brad to get a blanket.

"Could I use your phone?" the boy asked. Ky ran to get the cordless phone from the office area. There was a phone closer, but Ky always uses the cordless.

You have to see this phone to imagine the Stranger's surprise. It's clear plastic. You can see the electronic stuff inside it, the speakers and amplifiers and switches and everything.

The Stranger stared at it, held it up closer to his eyes. That was when Ky thought of all the time travel books she'd read and wondered if this guy was from some other century. Then she remembered that he had come by truck. That's what he'd said, anyway. She wondered if he had been telling the truth. He sure didn't want anyone going to look for his father. Maybe he had been planning on robbing them? But looking at him again, she realized that he was in no condition to rob anyone. She showed him how the phone worked.

"What's your number?" she asked.

"Don't got no number," he said. But he took the phone and slowly punched some numbers anyway. He belched, and a sour smell came from his mouth. Ky stepped back quickly, afraid that he was going to throw up.

The phone rang and rang and no one answered it. Ky watched the Stranger's face. He seemed to fall asleep between each ring and wake up again, not knowing where he was.

"Neighbours," he said, hanging up after about thirty rings. He looked suspiciously at the phone, as if to say, How could I reach anyone I know on a phone like that?

Then he looked at Ky and her family. "Where am I *really*?" he asked.

Brad came back with a comforter and Barbara suggested to the Stranger that he could wear it while she put his wet things in the dryer. He didn't like that idea. But as nice as Barbara is, as small as she is, she can be pretty pushy, and she was afraid he was going to catch pneumonia. So the Stranger found himself without his clothes in a very strange house.

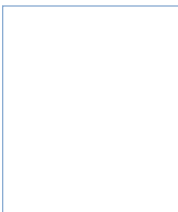
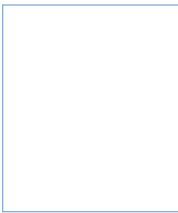
Maybe it was then, to take his mind off wearing only a comforter, that he tried the okonomiyaki. He was very hungry. He wolfed down two helpings, then a third. It was the first time he smiled.

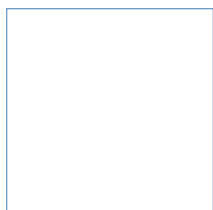
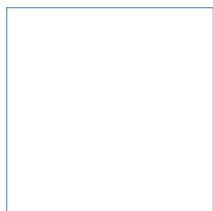
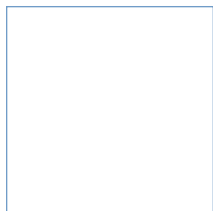
"Hey," said Ky. "It's almost Christmas. You'd better save some room for turkey dinner."

"What?" said the Stranger.

"You'd better save some room for turkey dinner."

The Stranger stopped eating. He stared at the food on his plate. Ky wanted to tell him she was just kidding. She couldn't believe he had taken it so seriously: She was going to say something, but then he asked if he





could phone his neighbour again. He still didn't have any luck. But now he seemed real edgy.

Then the telephone answering machine in the office took a long message. It was a computer expert phoning Tan, and he talked all in computerese, even though it was nighttime and two days before Christmas.

The Stranger must have heard that voice coming from the dark side of the dome where the lights flashed. Maybe that was what threw him. Or maybe it was when the VCR, which had been on Pause, came back on by itself. Suddenly there were voices from up in the loft. Ky can't remember what part of the movie it was when it came back on. Maybe it was when the angel jumped off the top of the bridge to save the life of the hero. Maybe it was a part like that with dramatic music and lots of shouting and splashing. Maybe the Stranger didn't know it was just a movie on TV. Who knows what he thought was going on there? Maybe in his house there was no TV.

He got edgier and edgier. He started pacing. Then, suddenly, he remembered his neighbour, Lloyd Rintoul.

"You know Lloyd," he said.

Nobody did.

"Sure," he said. "Lloyd Rintoul." He pointed first north and then east and then north again as he tried to get his bearings in this round house with its invisible walls.

"You don't know Lloyd?"

The Stranger, despite his size, suddenly looked like a little lost boy. But then he shook his head and jumped to his feet.

"Lloyd, he's got a tractor," he said. "He'll pull the truck out." He started to leave. "I'll just get him, eh." He forgot he didn't have any clothes on. Tan led him back to his stool. Barbara told him she'd check on the wash. Tan said they should maybe phone Lloyd first. But Lloyd didn't have a phone, either. The people Ky knows in the country all have phones and televisions. But there are people around Leopold County who have lived there longer than anyone and lived poor, scraping out a living on the rocky soil just like their forefathers and foremothers did.

Maybe the kids were looking at the Stranger strangely then, because suddenly he got impatient. Ky said that he looked like a wild bear in a downy comforter cornered by a pack of little people in red pyjamas.

"I'm gonna get Lloyd," he said loudly. It sounded like a threat. It scared the Moris a bit. Barbara decided to get him his clothes even though they were still damp.

And so the Stranger prepared to go. They didn't try to stop him but they insisted that he borrow a big yellow poncho because it was still raining hard.

Now that he had his clothes back on and his escape was imminent, the Stranger calmed down a bit.

"I'll bring it back," he said.

"I'm sure you will," said Tan, as he helped him into the poncho.

Ky went and got him a flashlight, too. It was a silver pencil flashlight she had gotten for her birthday. She had to show him how it worked.

"I'll bring this back," he said to her.

"Okay," she said. "Thanks."

And then he was gone. He slid on the driveway and ended up with a thud on his backside.

"He'll have awful bruises in the morning," said Barbara.

She called to him to come back. She told him she would call for help. He turned halfway down the driveway and seemed to listen but his hearing wasn't very good even up close, so who knows what he thought she said. She did mention getting the police. Maybe he heard that. Whatever, he turned and ran away, slipping and sliding all the way. Tan considered driving him, but the ice was too treacherous.

"What are the bets," said Brad, "that we never see the stuff again?"

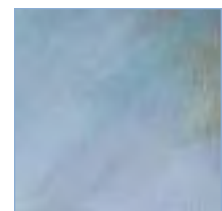
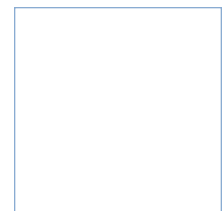
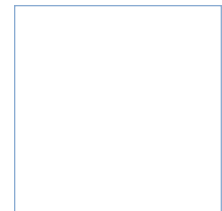
They never did. The Stranger never did return the poncho or the flashlight. In the morning the family all went out to the road. There was no truck there. Somehow, in his drunken haze, the Stranger must have found Lloyd Rintoul or somebody found him or his dad woke up and got the truck out. It was a mystery.

Ky tried to find Bernie Nystrom's name in the phone book. There was no listing. The boy had never said the name of his neighbour and they already knew that Lloyd Rintoul had no phone, so there was no way of tracking him down. The Moris didn't really care much about getting their stuff back, though. It was Christmas, after all.

I saw the story in the *National Enquirer* in January. I was in line at the grocery store with my mother, reading the headlines of the tabloids. I enjoy doing that. There are great stories about tribes in Brazil who look like Elvis Presley, or some seventy-five-year-old woman who gives birth to twin dolphins, or families of eight who live in an abandoned filing cabinet. But this headline jumped off the page at me.

### TEEN ABDUCTED BY MARTIANS!

*Country boy undergoes torturous experiments  
while constrained in an alien flying saucer!  
Experts wonder: Who or what is Kerdy Dickus  
and what does he want with our moon!*



I don't know why I flipped open to page 26 to read the story. I don't know why I paid good money to actually buy the rag. Somehow I knew. And when I showed the picture on page 26 to Ky, she gasped.

It was him. There was the Stranger showing the huge bruises inflicted by the aliens on his arms and ribs and thighs. He told of how he had seen a blinding light and the truck had been pulled right off the road by the saucer's powerful tractor beam. He told of how the aliens had hypnotized him and brought him to their saucer. He told of the drugs they had made him drink; how they had tried to get his father, too, but he had stopped them. He told of the weird food they had made him eat and how it had made him throw up all the next day. His mother could attest to his ill health. "I've never seen him so green," she said. "And he's normally such a healthy lad."

It was his mother who had contacted the *National Enquirer*. She read it all the time and she knew it was a story that would interest them.

His father, too, although he had managed somehow to stay out of the clutches of the aliens' hypnotic powers, could attest to the attack on the car. And then—blackness. There were two hours missing out of his recollection of the night. The aliens had obviously zapped him.

"Something ought to be done about this kind of menace!" said the father.

According to the newspaper, the boy underwent several sessions with a psychiatric investigator after the incident. The investigator specialized in AATT: Alien Abduction Trauma Therapy. He put the boy in a deep trance and interviewed him at length. "Truth drugs" were administered, and all the results concurred: the boy had obviously undergone a close encounter with alien beings. Under the trance the boy revealed some overheard conversation that might, the investigator believed, partially explain the purpose of the aliens' trip to earth.

"This might be a recognizance mission." Other experts in the field agreed. "But their long-term goal has to do with our moon and the saving of it. From what? For what? It is hard to tell."

One line had become imprinted on the boy's mind. The only spoken part he recalled vividly from his close encounter.

"Save the moon for Kerdy Dickus."

"Perhaps," said the psychiatric investigator, "there is some alien purpose for the boy remembering this one line."

The article went on to give a pretty good account of the aliens, what they looked like, what their flying saucer looked like. But you already know all that.

I had heard about the Stranger from Ky. That's how I somehow recognized the story in the *Enquirer*. The next time I saw the Moris, I showed them the



paper. But after they had all laughed themselves silly, we talked about it a lot.

Should they try to find the Stranger, now that they knew his name? Even without a phone, they could easily track him down. Should the paper be contacted, so that the truth could be known? What about the psychiatrist who specialized in AATT? The experts?

"I wouldn't mind getting my flashlight back," Ky admitted, but she wasn't really serious.

And so they have never followed up on the story. Ky always imagines she'll run into the Stranger one day in the nearby town. I hope I'm with her. Maybe I'll be up there for her birthday. Maybe it will be raining. Maybe we'll be coming out of a store and he'll be coming in wearing the big yellow poncho. He'll walk right by us, and Ky and I will turn just as he passes and whisper the magic words.

"Save the moon for Kerdy Dickus."

Then we'll hop in our saucer and slip off back to our own world. ■

## Activities

1. Define the phrase "reconnaissance mission." Why do you think this word is misspelled as "recognizance mission" in this story? Discuss your thoughts with a partner.
2. Write the *National Enquirer* article about the Stranger's experience in your best tabloid journalism style. (You may want to read a couple of articles from this type of paper first, to get an idea of how they are written.)
3. In small groups, discuss how the author brings out the humour of the situation. Consider such elements as tone, structure, and word choice.
4. What aspects of our life today would seem foreign to a visitor from the nineteenth century? Present a monologue in which you are a nineteenth-century time traveller who has just returned from a visit to a modern computer-equipped classroom, home, or another location of your choice. Make your monologue as humorous as possible.





# The Sacred Rac

PATRICIA HUGHES

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this report will help you:

- reflect on culture
- analyse writing style
- organize a class presentation

An Indian anthropologist, Chandra Thapar, made a study of foreign cultures which had customs similar to those of his native land. One culture in particular fascinated him because it reveres one animal as sacred, much as the people in India revere the cow.

The tribe Dr. Thapar studied is called the Asu and is found on the American continent north of the Tarahumara of Mexico. Though it seems to be a highly developed society of its type, it has an overwhelming preoccupation with the care and feeding of the rac—an animal much like a bull in size, strength, and temperament. In the Asu tribe, it is almost a social obligation to own at least one if not more racs. Anyone not possessing at least one is held in low esteem by the community because he is

too poor to maintain one of these beasts properly. Some members of the tribe, to display their wealth and social prestige, even own herds of racs.

Unfortunately the rac breed is not very healthy and usually does not live more than five to seven years, for it has a tendency to throw its shoes often. There are rac specialists in each community, perhaps more than one if the community is particularly wealthy. These specialists, however, due to the long period of ritual training they must undergo and to the difficulty of obtaining the right selection of charms to treat the rac, demand costly offerings whenever a tribesman must treat his ailing rac.

At the age of sixteen in many Asu communities, many youths undergo a puberty rite in

which the rac figures prominently. The youth must petition a high priest in a grand temple. He is then initiated into the ceremonies that surround the care of the rac and is permitted to keep a rac.

Although the rac may be used as a beast of burden, it has many habits which would be considered by other cultures as harmful to the life of the society. In the first place the rac breed is increasing at a very rapid rate and the Asu tribesmen have given no thought to limiting the rac population. As a consequence the Asu must build more and more paths for the rac to travel on since its delicate health and its love of racing other racs at high speeds necessitate that special areas be set aside for its use. The cost of smoothing the earth is too costly for any one individual to undertake; so it has become a community project and each

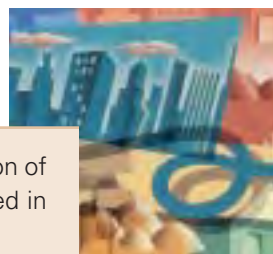
tribesman must pay an annual tax to build new paths and maintain the old. There are so many paths needed that some people move their homes because the rac paths must be as straight as possible to keep the animal from injuring itself. Dr. Thapar also noted that unlike the cow, which many people in his country hold sacred, the excrement of the rac cannot be used as either fuel or fertilizer. On the contrary, its excrement is exceptionally foul and totally useless.

Worst of all, the rac is prone to stampedes in which it runs down anything in its path, much like stampeding cattle. Estimates are that the rac kills thousands of the Asu in a year.

Despite the high cost of its upkeep, the damage it does to the land, and its habit of destructive stampedes, the Asu still regard it as being essential to the survival of their culture. ■

## Activities

1. With a partner, discuss the effect of this "report" on your perception of your own culture. Why does it seem so strange to see it described in these terms? Write down your thoughts in a brief reflective paper.
2. This selection is written in the style of an anthropologist's report.
  - a) Make a chart with the following headings, and enter a description of the writing style under each heading: Word Use, Sentence Length, Tone, Structure.
  - b) What overall effect does this writing style have on the reader?
3. Prepare a serious presentation for another class based on "The Sacred Rac." Illustrate your presentation as you see fit, without giving away the surprise. How long does it take them to figure it out?



# The Blue Bead

NORAH BURKE



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this short story will help you:

- compare cultural values
- critique story structure
- plan a television news story

From deep water came the crocodile.

Out of black water, curved with whirlpools, and into the frill of gold shallows by the stepping-stones.

He was twice the length of a tall man; and inside him, among the stones which he had swallowed to aid digestion, rolled a silver bracelet.

Timber was being floated down this great Indian river from forests further up, and there were sleepers lying stuck around the stones until someone came to dislodge them and send them on their way, or until floods lifted them and jostled them along. The crocodile had no need to hide himself. He came to rest in the glassy shallows, among logs, and balanced there on tiptoe on the rippled sand, with only his raised eyes out of the water, and raised nostrils breathing the clean sunny air.

Around him broad sparkling water travelled between cliffs and grass and forested hills. A jungle track came out of scrub each side and down to the

sun-whitened stepping-stones on which a little flycatcher was flirting and trilling along. The mugger crocodile, blackish brown above and yellowy white under, lay motionless, able to wait for ever till food came. This antediluvian saurian—this prehistoric juggernaut, ferocious and formidable, a vast force in the water, propelled by the unimaginable and irresistible power of the huge tail, lay lapped by ripples, a throb in his throat. His mouth, running almost the whole length of his head, was closed and fixed in that evil bony smile, and where the yellow underside came up to it, it was tinged with green.

From the day, perhaps a hundred years ago, when the sun had hatched him in a sandbank, and he had broken his shell, and got his head out and looked around, ready to snap at anything before he was even fully hatched—from that day, when he had at once made for the water, ready to fend for himself immediately, he had lived by his brainless craft and ferocity. Escaping the birds of prey and the great carnivorous fishes that eat baby crocodiles, he has prospered, catching all the food he needed, and storing it till putrid in holes in the bank. Tepid water to live in and plenty of rotted food grew him to his great length.

Now nothing could pierce the inch-thick armoured hide. Not even rifle bullets, which would bounce off. Only the eyes and the soft underarms offered a place. He lived well in the river, sunning himself sometimes with other crocodiles—muggers, as well as the long-snouted fish-eating gharials—on warm rocks and sandbanks where the sun dried the clay on them quite white, and where they could plop off into the water in a moment if alarmed.

The big crocodile fed mostly on fish, but also on deer and monkeys come to drink, perhaps a duck or two. But sometimes here at the ford he fed on a pi-dog full of parasites or a skeleton cow. And sometimes he went down to the burning ghats and found the half-burned bodies of Indians cast into the stream.

Beside him in the shoals as he lay waiting glimmered a blue gem.

It was not a gem, though: it was sand-worn glass that had been rolling about in the river for a long time. By chance, it was perforated right through—the neck of a bottle perhaps?—a blue bead.

In the shrill noisy village above the ford, out of a mud house the same colour as the ground came a little girl, a thin starveling child dressed in an earth-coloured rag. She had torn the rag in two to make skirt and sari.

Sibia was eating the last of her meal, chupatti wrapped round a smear of green chili and rancid butter; and she divided this also, to make it seem more, and bit it, showing straight white teeth.

With her ebony hair and great eyes, and her skin of oiled brown cream, she was a happy immature child-woman about twelve years old. Bare foot, of course, and often goosey-cold on a winter morning, and born to toil.



In all her life, she had never owned anything but a rag. She had never owned even one anna—not a pice, not a pi, even, to buy, say, a handful of blown glass beads from that stall in the bazaar where they were piled like stars, or one of the thin glass bangles that the man kept on a stick, and you could choose which colour you'd have.

She knew what finery was, though. She had been with her parents and brothers all through the jungle to the little town at the railhead where there was this bazaar. And she had walked through all the milling people, and the dogs and monkeys full of fleas, the idling gossiping bargaining humanity spitting betel juice, heard the bell of a sacred bull clonking as he lumped along through the dust and hubbub.

She had paused, amazed, before the sweetmeat stall, to gaze at the brilliant honey confections, abuzz with dust and flies. They smelled wonderful, above the smells of drains and humanity and cheap cigarettes. At home she sometimes tasted wild honey, or crunched the syrup out of a stalk of sugar cane. But these sweets were green and magenta.

Then there was the cloth stall, stacked with great rolls of new cotton cloth, stamped at the edge with the maker's sign of a tiger's head; and smelling so wonderful of its dressing, straight from the mills, that Sibia could have stood by it all day.

But there were other wonders to see: satin sewn with real silver thread, tin trays from Birmingham, and a sari which had got chips of looking-glass embroidered into the border. She joined the crowd round a Kashmiri travelling merchant on his way to the bungalows. He was showing dawn-coloured silks that poured like cream, and he'd got a little locked chest with turquoises and opals in it. Best of all, a box which, when you pressed it, a bell tinkled and a yellow woollen chicken jumped out.

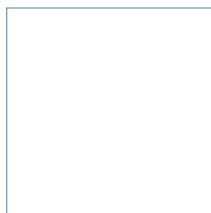
There was no end to the wonders of the world.

But Sibia, in all her life from birth to death, was marked for work. Since she could toddle, she had husked corn, and gathered sticks, and put dung to dry, and cooked and weeded, and carried, and fetched water, and cut grass for fodder.

She was going with her mother and some other women now to get paper grass from the cliffs above the river. When you had enough of it, you could take it down by bullock cart to the railhead and sell it to the agent who would arrange for its dispatch to the paper mills. The women often toiled all day at this work, and the agent sat on silk cushions, smoking a hookah.

Such thoughts did not trouble Sibia, however, as she skipped along with her sickle and homemade hayfork beside her mother. You could skip on the way out, but not on the way back when you ached with tiredness, and there was a great load to carry.

Some of the women were wearing necklaces made out of lal-lal-beeges, the





shiny scarlet seeds, black one end, that grew everywhere in the jungle—it was best to have new necklaces each year, instead of last year’s faded ones—and Sibia was making one too. How nice it was going to be to hear that rattling swish round her neck, as she froushed along with lots of necklaces. But each seed, hard as stone, had to be drilled with a red-hot needle, and the family needle was snapped, so she must wait till they could buy another.

Oh for strings and strings of glass and beads—anklets, earrings, nose-rings, bangles—all the gorgeous dazzle of the bazaar—all her little golden body decorated!

Chattering as they went, the women followed the dusty track toward the river. On their way, they passed a Gujar encampment of grass huts where these nomadic graziers would live for a time until their animals had perhaps finished all the easy grazing within reach, or they were not able to sell enough of their white butter and white milk in the district, or there was no one to buy the young male buffaloes for tiger-bait.

Or perhaps a cattle-killing tiger was making a nuisance of himself. Then they’d move on.

Sibia glanced at the Gujar women as she went past. They wore trousers, tight and wrinkled at the ankles, and in their ears large silver rings made out of melted rupees; and one of them was clinking a stick against the big brass gurrachs in which they fetched water from the river for the camp, to see which ones were empty. The men and boys were out of camp just now with the herd or gone to the bazaar to sell produce, but one or two buffaloes were standing about, creatures of great wet noses and moving jaws and gaunt black bones.

The Gujars were junglis, as Sibia was too, born and bred in the forest. For countless centuries, their forebears had lived like this, getting their living from animals, from grass and trees, as they scratched their food together, and stored their substance in large herds and silver jewelry. They were Man in the wandering Pastoral Age, not Stone Age Hunters, and not yet Cultivators.

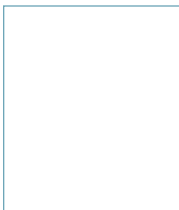
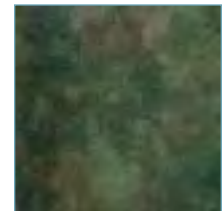
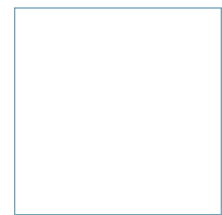
Ah, now there was the river, twinkling between the trees, sunlit beyond dark trunks. They could hear it rushing along.

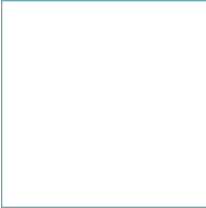
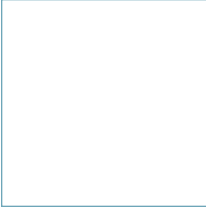
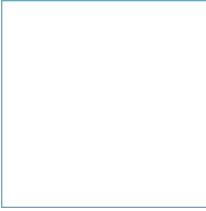
The women came out on the shore, and made for the stepping-stones.

They had plenty to laugh and bicker about, as they approached the river in a noisy crowd. They girded up their skirts, so as to jump from stone to stone, and they clanked their sickles and forks together over their shoulders to have ease of movement. They shouted their quarrels above the gush of the river.

Noise frightens crocodiles. The big mugger did not move, and all the women crossed in safety to the other bank.

Here they had to climb a still hillside to get at the grass, but all fell to





with a will, and sliced away at it wherever there was foothold to be had.

Down below them ran the broad river, pouring powerfully out from its deep narrow pools among the cold cliffs and shadows, spreading into warm shallows, lit by kingfishers. Great turtles lived there, and mahseer weighing more than a hundred pounds. Crocodiles too. Sometimes you could see them lying out on those slabs of clay over there, but there were none to be seen at the moment.

Where Sibia was working, wind coming across hundreds of miles of trees cooled her sweating body, and she could look down over the river as if she were a bird. Although she did not dare stop for a moment under her mother's eye, her imagination took her in swooping flight over the bright water and golden air to the banks where she had played as a child.

In those cavelets above the high-water mark of the highest flood, she had stored some little bowls moulded of clay while they hardened. If there were anything that could be used for colouring, they would look fine, painted with marigolds and elephants.

"Child!"

The sharp word—the glare of her mother's angry sweating face, pulled Sibia back to work, and they toiled on.

But at last it was time to go back to see to their animals and the evening meal. The loaded women set out to cross the river again.

Sibia hung back. She would just dawdle a bit and run and see if the little clay cups were still there in the cave, waiting to be painted and used.

Although the women were now tired and loaded, they still talked. Those in front yelled to those behind. They crossed the river safely and disappeared up the track into the trees on the other side. Even their voices died away.

Silence fell.

Sibia came down alone to the stepping-stones.

The light of evening was striking up the gorge, pink into the ultraviolet shadows. Now that the sun was off it, the water poured almost invisible among the stones, with no reflection to show where it began.

Sibia stepped onto the first stone.

She was heavily weighted, her muscles stretched and aching. The hayfork squeaked in the packed dry grass and dug into her collarbone so close under the skin, in spite of the sari bunched up to make a pad.

When she was halfway over, she put her load down on a big boulder to rest; and leaned, breathing, on the fork.

At the same moment a Gujar woman came down with two gurrachs to the water on the other side. In order to get the good clear water, which would quickly fill both gurrachs to the top without sand, she walked onto the stepping-stones.

She was within a yard of the crocodile when he lunged at her.

Up out of the darkling water heaved the great reptile, water slushing off him, his livid jaws yawning and all his teeth flashing as he slashed at her leg.

The woman screamed, dropped both brass pots with a clatter on the boulder, from whence they bounced to the water, and Sibia saw them bob away in the current. *Oh, the two good vessels gone.*

The Gujar woman recoiled from the crocodile, but his jaws closed on her leg at the same moment as she slipped and fell on the bone-breaking stone, and clutched one of the timber logs to save herself.

The log jammed between two boulders, with the woman clinging to it and screaming, while the crocodile pulled on her leg, threshing his might tail—bang!—bang!—to and fro in great smacking flails as he tried to drag her free and carry her off down into the deeps of the pool. Blood spread everywhere.

Sibia sprang.

From boulder to boulder she came leaping like a rock goat. Sometimes it had seemed difficult to cross these stones, especially the big gap in the middle where the river coursed through like a bulge of glass. But now she came on wings, choosing her footing in midair without even thinking about it, and in one moment she was beside the shrieking woman.

In the boiling bloody water, the face of the crocodile, fastened round her leg, was tugging to and fro, and smiling.

His eyes rolled on to Sibia. One slap of the tail could kill her.

He struck. Up shot the water, twenty feet, and fell like a silver chain.

Again!

The rock jumped under the blow.

But in the daily heroism of the jungle, as common as a thorn tree, Sibia did not hesitate.

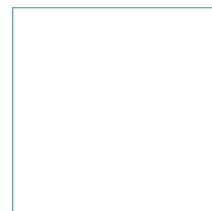
She aimed at the reptile's eyes.

With all the force of her little body, she drove the hayfork at the eyes, and one prong went in—right in—while its pair scratched past on the horny cheek.

The crocodile reared up in convulsion, till half his lizard body was out of the river, the tail and nose nearly meeting over his stony back. Then he crashed back, exploding the water, and in an uproar of bloody foam he disappeared.

He would die. Not yet, but presently, though his death would not be known for days; not till his stomach, blown with gas, floated him. Then perhaps he would be found upside down among the logs at the timber boom, with pus in his eye.

Sibia got her arms round the fainting woman, and somehow dragged her from the water. She stopped her wounds with sand, and bound them with



rag, and helped her home to the Gujar encampment where the men made a litter to carry her to someone for treatment.

Then Sibia went back for her grass and sickle and fork.

The fork was lying in the river, not carried away, luckily, and as she bent to pick it up out of the water, she saw the blue bead. Not blue now, with the sun nearly gone, but a no-colour white-blue, and its shape wobbling in the movement of the stream. She reached her arm down into a yard of the cold silk water to get it. Missing it first of all, because of refraction.

Then there it lay in her wet palm, perfect, even pierced ready for use, with the sunset shuffled about inside it like gold-dust. All her heart went up in flames of joy.

After a bit she twisted it into the top of her skirt against her tummy so she would know if it burst through the poor cloth and fell.

Then she picked up her fork and sickle and the heavy grass and set off home. Ai! Ai! What a day!

Her bare feet smudged out the wriggle-mark of snakes in the dust; there was the thin singing of malaria mosquitoes among the trees now; and this track was much used at night by a morose old makna elephant—the Tuskless One; but Sibia was not thinking of any of them. The stars came out: she did not notice.

On the way back she met her mother, out of breath, come to look for her, and scolding.

“I did not see till I was home, that you were not there. I thought something must have happened to you.”

And Sibia, bursting with her story, cried “Something *did!* I found a blue bead for my necklace, look!” ■

## Activities

1. Think about your own values in relation to Sibia’s. Develop a chart to compare the two, using the following categories: Lifestyle, Threats to Safety, Life Goals, Role of Children, Education, Treasure or Wealth, Nature of Work, Sources of Self-Worth.
2. The story begins with a detailed description of the crocodile, before shifting to Sibia’s perspective. In small groups, discuss why the author chose to begin her story this way. In your discussion, consider other ways that the story could be structured. Share your ideas with the rest of the class.
3. Working in pairs, present Sibia’s story as a news item for a North American television news station. What details will you emphasize? Who will you interview? How will you grab your viewers’ attention?

# The Toad

JUAN JOSÉ ARREOLA  
TRANSLATED BY W. S. MERWIN



Every so often he jumps, just to make it clear that he is essentially immobile. The jump is in some way like a heartbeat: careful observation makes it plain that the whole of the toad is a heart.

Clamped in a hunk of cold mud, the toad sinks into the winter like a mournful chrysalis. He wakes in the spring knowing that he has not changed into anything else. Dried to his depths, he is more a toad than ever. He waits in silence for the first rains.

And one fine day he heaves himself out of the pliant earth, heavy with moisture, swollen with spiteful sap, like a heart tossed onto the ground. In his sphinxlike posture there is a secret proposition of exchange, and the toad's ugliness appals us like a mirror. ■

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this description will help you:

- Compare elements of similar texts
- Read closely to form an interpretation

## Activities

- a)** Toads and frogs appear in many folk tales and fairy tales. Make a list of stories you can think of that contain toads or frogs. Summarize the role the animal plays in each story.
  - b)** Look over the list. What similarities can you see in the treatment of toads? What can you conclude about what the toads in these stories symbolize, or represent?
- 2.** In groups of three, discuss the meaning of the last line: "the toad's ugliness appals us like a mirror." Compare your understanding of these words with that of another group.



# Think Like a Weightlifter, Think Like a Woman

KATE BRAID

First day on the job and the foreman orders  
in a voice like a chainsaw,  
*Hoist those timbers  
by hand to the second floor.  
Crane's broken down.*

I keep my mouth shut  
with difficulty, knowing  
how much a six-by-six timber  
twelve feet long and fresh  
from the Fraser River, knowing  
how much it weighs.

Lorne, my partner, says nothing,  
addresses the modest mountain of timbers  
towering over our heads, smelling  
sweetly nostalgic for forest.

Weighing in with the wood he faces,  
with a belly like a great swelling bole,  
he shakes off my motion to help and  
bends as if to pick up a penny,  
scoops up the timber and packs it, 50 feet,  
to lean against the damp grey sides  
of the concrete core.



When he doesn't look back,  
it's my turn.

And now, because I need this job, and  
because it's the first day and because  
every eye is watching the Girl,  
I bend my knees as the book says,  
think like a weightlifter, take the beam  
by its middle and order my body  
to lift.

Reluctantly, the great tree, sweating pitch,  
parts with its peers with a sucking sound,  
and the beam and I sway to the designated spot,  
I drop it. Repeat.

Alone, I carry beams to Lorne  
who alone heaves them with the slightest grunt  
to the labourer who bends from the second floor  
with a hurry-up call,  
*Faster! Faster!*

*No. I will never be carpenter, I think, never  
able to work like these men.* Then  
Lorne falters.

Without thinking I reach up my two arms beside him  
and push with all my might.  
The beam flies to the second floor and mindless,  
I turn to fetch him another.

Without a word  
Lorne follows me back to the pile,  
lifts one end and helps me  
carry the next timber to the wall.  
Without a word we both push it up,  
continue this path together  
find a rhythm, a pace  
that feels more like dancing.

Lorne says, *You walk different.* Yes.  
For on this day I am suddenly  
much, much stronger, a woman with the strength  
of two.

### Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- make connections between your own ideas and those in the poem
- read for clues to meaning
- experiment with titles
- hold a class debate

## Activities

1. What qualities besides physical strength might a carpenter need? Write down a list. As you read, look for evidence in the poem to back up your opinion.
2. **a)** Explain Lorne's decision to help her carry the wood. What brings about the change in his attitude?  
**b)** How does the poet indicate that Lorne and the narrator work well together?
3. **a)** Explain the significance of the title.  
**b)** Working with a partner, brainstorm other possible titles. Choose one and explain why you think it is appropriate.
4. More and more women are entering fields that were formerly reserved for men. Present a class debate on whether there are still some jobs that are better suited to one sex or the other. Choose teams of debaters for either side. The rest of the class will evaluate the arguments presented, and give their verdict on which side is most convincing.

# What Happened During the Ice Storm

JIM HEYNE



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this description will help you:

- discuss characters' motivations
- write a vivid description

One winter there was a freezing rain. How beautiful! people said when things outside started to shine with ice. But the freezing rain kept coming. Tree branches glistened like glass. Then broke like glass. Ice thickened on the windows until everything outside blurred. Farmers moved their live-stock into the barns, and most animals were safe. But not the pheasants. Their eyes froze shut.

Some farmers went ice-skating down the gravel roads with clubs to harvest pheasants that sat helplessly in the roadside ditches. The boys went out into the freezing rain to find pheasants too. They saw dark spots along a fence. Pheasants, all right. Five or six of them. The boys slid their feet along slowly, trying not to break the ice that covered the snow. They slid up close to the pheasants. The pheasants pulled their heads down between their wings. They couldn't tell how easy it was to see them huddled there.

The boys stood still in the icy rain. Their breath came out in slow puffs of steam. The pheasants' breath came out in quick little white puffs. Some of them lifted their heads and turned them from side to side, but they were blindfolded with ice and didn't flush. The boys had not brought clubs, or sacks, or anything but themselves. They stood over the pheasants, turning their own heads, looking at each other, each expecting the other to do something. To pounce on a pheasant, or to yell Bang! Things around them were shining and dripping with icy rain. The barbed wire fence. The fence posts. The broken stems of grass. Even the grass seeds. The grass seeds looked like little yolks inside gelatin whites. And the pheasants looked like unborn birds glazed in egg white. Ice was hardening on the boys' caps and coats. Soon they would be covered with ice too.

Then one of the boys said, Shh. He was taking off his coat, the thin layer of ice splintering in flakes as he pulled his arms from the sleeves. But the inside of the coat was dry and warm. He covered two of the crouching pheasants with his coat, rounding the back of it over them like a shell. The other boys did the same. They covered all the helpless pheasants. The small grey hens and the larger brown cocks. Now the boys felt the rain soaking through their shirts and freezing. They ran across the slippery fields, unsure of their footing, the ice clinging to their skin as they made their way toward the warm blurry lights of the house. ■

## Activities

1. Large-scale disasters such as floods or ice storms—even small-scale disruptions such as snowstorms—tend to draw people together and bring out the best in human nature. Write a brief description or a poem about a time when you experienced this phenomenon. Make your writing as vivid as possible through the use of descriptive details.
2. With a partner, discuss what you expected the boys to do to the pheasants. What do you think changed their minds?

## End-of-unit Activities

1. Choose three selections from this unit, and work in small groups to explain and compare the use of irony in each one. Develop your own definition of irony to share with the class.
2. Compare the narrators' points of view in "Gore," "Lamb to the Slaughter," and "Save the Moon for Kerdy Dickus." Explain the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective and identify how each affects the plot of the story.
3. What theme do "The Sacred Rac," "The Blue Bead," and "Save the Moon for Kerdy Dickus" have in common? In groups of three, discuss how each of these selections makes us see ourselves and our culture differently.
4. The Haida mask and the photograph titled "The Conservationist" both express the theme of change or transformation. Choose one piece in this unit that deals with some form of change or metamorphosis, and think of a way to express the theme visually – as a mask, a tableau, a collage, or in some other form.
5. Both "Coup de Grace" and "The Interlopers" present wolves as fierce predators, to be feared by humans. Brainstorm a list of other stories or poems that depict wolves in this way. Then do some research on wolves, and find out how accurate this view of their behaviour is. Use quotations from literature, as well as information from your research, to prepare a visual display entitled *Wolves: Fact and Fiction*.
6. "The Execution" is a very grim poem. Borrowing ideas from the tone, diction, and point of view of "Coup de Grace," rewrite "The Execution" as a humorous poem. Recite your poem to the class.
7. Identify what common theme is expressed in the poem "Think Like a Weightlifter, Think Like a Woman" and the short description, "What Happened During the Ice Storm." Then write your own poem or description on a similar theme.
8. Choose three visuals from this section, and develop a story in narrative, dramatic, or poetic form by linking them together in an interesting order. Present your story orally to the class.
9. Choose one of the stories that you read in this section, and design a poster for a film version of it. Create an attractive visual to catch people's attention. Include the names of the actors and actresses who would play the major roles, a catchy one- or two-line description of the story, and some comments from critics who have previewed the film.



# 2 Look closely



Who are you?  
What makes a friendship tick?  
How can you tell the difference between love and like? And how do media images influence the way you view the world, yourself, and others? Look within for some thought-provoking reading... The selections in this unit will help you look closely at yourself, your relationships, and the way the media defines your world.



# Two Prisoners

RAYMOND SOUSTER

Looking tough, looking dishevelled,  
looking bewildered,  
looking at nothing at all.

two young boys  
handcuffed to detectives,  
walking stiffly from a courtroom  
on the second floor of City Hall.

“Those punks are going back  
to the Don where they belong ...”  
a court attendant.

Some of us should be made  
to go along with them.

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- discuss stereotypes
- speculate about character
- consider the connotations of words
- write your own poem

## Activities

1. With a partner, discuss how you think teenagers are perceived by adults. Is the adults' perception right? Write your thoughts in a brief paragraph.
2. Imagine that you are one of these boys. Write a journal describing what you have done, and your thoughts after you have been sentenced.
3. The words “prisoner” and “punk” both have largely negative connotations, or emotional associations. “People” is more neutral. Working in groups of two or three, make a chart with three columns, headed *Positive*, *Neutral*, and *Negative*. Then think of three synonyms that have different connotations but the same basic meaning, and write each word or phrase under the correct column. See which group can come up with the longest list.
4. Write another version of this poem, in which the two protagonists are elderly people being viewed as stereotypes. Think of an appropriate setting for your poem.

# Our Appearance ...

K A H L I L   G I B R A N

Our appearance,  
our words,  
our actions  
are never greater  
than ourselves.  
For the soul  
is our house;  
our eyes its windows;  
and our words  
its messengers.

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this quotation will help you:

- interpret a message for a particular audience
- research quotations
- apply your understanding of a quotation

## Activities

1. Paraphrase this meditation, using language that will appeal to a teenage audience.
2. Use various resources to research quotations from different cultures that have to do with the soul. Combine your quotations with those of others in the class, to make a “soul” dictionary.
3. Find and watch the video “The Elephant Man.” Compare his tale to Gibran’s meditation. In a paragraph, describe how this meditation might be applied to the elephant man’s story.

SUPERSTOCK



# Eggs in Egg Crate

MARY PRATT



Used by permission of Mary Pratt

## Focus Your Learning

Viewing this painting will help you:

- analyse visual techniques
- look for art around you
- research other works of art

## Activities

1. Look at the painting. How has the artist made it look realistic? Consider the use of light and shading, and how the painting resembles a photograph.
2. Artists find art everywhere—in dew on a leaf, in the way shadows play across a face. Look around you and make a list of everyday items that might make effective pieces of art. Choose one. Present your idea. Give reasons why you think it would make a piece of art.
3. Find other works by Canadian artists, either locally or by doing research in books or on the Internet. Present your examples to the class. Explain what you think is interesting about the artwork you found.

# Living Life to the Max

PENNY WILLIAMS



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this profile will help you to:

- relate the text to your personal experiences
- analyse the intended audience
- perform a monologue

Summer sun blazes down on Arctic Bay, drenching the bay and its circling hills in radiance, throwing the whole scene into some kind of postcard-perfect visual overdrive. Backpackers lag their steps, gape at the view and count their travel dollars well spent. Dennis Shappa, who lives there—but never takes the view for granted, not for one minute—throws back his head and laughs. It's the laugh of an exuberant young man who loves life, has big goals and every year gets closer to them.

Six years ago, to the month, there was no laughter. "It happened in summer, 1992," he

says. "Suddenly I had to rewrite a whole chapter in my life."

They found Dennis unconscious on the floor of the Northern Store, felled by a brain aneurism that didn't quite kill him, but certainly seemed to have done the next best thing. It robbed him of short-term memory. "Even three years ago, I still had to write everything down. Everything! 'Have your shower, brush your teeth,' things like that."

After initial treatment in the south, Dennis came home and attempted to return to high school. "I couldn't do it. I had headaches like a sledgehammer to the head every 10 seconds,



and I was very depressed. I couldn't even breathe, I felt so sorry for myself." I look at this relaxed, genial young man who has climbed mountains I can't even imagine, and I ask how he did it, how he got past the anger.

"Well, the nurse at the clinic gave me Prozac for a while. That got me through the dark season. And I ran! I ran and I ran and I ran. And I wrote lots of letters and poems. That gave me an outlet." But, I push, you could have given up.

"After the accident, I had a whole new perspective. Also, my mother is a very spiritual person. I think she's the source of my strength."

The new perspective, and the inner strength, made Dennis someone who said Yes to life's possibilities. Further rehab in the south taught him to be well-organized. Yes. Books and writing, which he'd always avoided, suddenly beckoned. Yes. High school was out, but adult education was available, with instructor Barry Tibbett, right there in Arctic Bay. Yes. He could still plan and work toward a career. Yes!!

"They tested me and I entered at the 120 level, which is the equivalent of Grade 12. Now I've finished the 130 level and I'll start on 140 this fall. I need a 150 level to get into the Nunavut Teachers Education Program—that's my goal. I want to be a teacher." Not surprisingly, Dennis wins the best attendance award each year. "One hundred per cent last year!" And he flashes a huge grin.

This year, finally, Barry Tibbett is retiring from his work with Arctic College. Dennis' face clouds for a moment, measuring the loss of the man who has been friend and instructor, who encouraged and believed in him from the start.

(And helped him become proud owner of seat F5-408 from the old Montreal Forum, but that's another story.) Then he brightens again. "But now Kathy's coming back to town as instructor and I'll be working with her. I'm looking forward to that."

They already know each other. Kathy Okpik Oqallak (daughter of the acclaimed and much-missed Abe and Rose Okpik) lived in Arctic Bay before moving with husband and family to Nanisivik for five years. "Dennis has come such a long way," she says. "And he's so much fun. We always tease each other."

Laughter is certainly part of Dennis' recipe for building a new life. So is hard work. "I carry my daytimer everywhere. I don't have to write down the basics anymore, but I still need it to keep myself organized. See? There's your name for this afternoon. And I have to read things over and over, more than most people."

In fact, keeping busy is at the heart of Dennis' message to others with disabilities, especially those now at the depressed and overwhelmed stage that he went through years ago. "Don't give up hope, keep being strong, pray to God. Work hard at your therapy, and keep busy. Don't just sit and feel sorry for yourself! Do something. Volunteer somewhere. When I was on the waiting list for adult ed, I volunteered at the school. And I tell the elders, if ever you need help, call me. I'm glad to do it. If it weren't for the elders, where would we be?"

He also has a message for anyone who sometimes feels shy or awkward around someone with a disability. "Don't be afraid of us. Treat us like your brother or sister. And—be sure to include this, It's very important—don't take advantage of us." He explains how so-called friends did take advantage of him at first. It's a reminder that we owe justice to people with disabilities, as well as ordinary friendship.

Dennis lives the busy life he urges on others.

School, volunteer work, some seasonal work this spring at the Nanisivik Mine (earning high praise), lots of reading through the N.W.T. library service (books arrive with return postage paid), and his own output of letters and poems.

One of those poems, written after the road-accident death of a little boy in town, seems to sum it all up. *Life Is So Precious* is the title, and it says, in part:

*Observe everything around you  
Take care of things that you've been putting  
aside saying you'll do them later.  
Maybe there won't be a later.  
Just try and be nice to people and hope for the  
best for you and people around you.*  
It concludes: "And live life to the MAX."  
Just like Dennis Shappa. ■

## Activities

1. Write a letter to Dennis Shappa in which you compare his experience with setting goals and overcoming obstacles with your own experiences in these areas. Offer him encouragement as he continues to strive toward his goals.
2. Find evidence in the article to show who its intended audience is. Rewrite the article to make it suitable for publication in a national newspaper. Make changes to the content, style, and tone as you see fit. Compare your new version with that of a partner and discuss your choices.
3. Perform a monologue in which Dennis retells the events of his life before and after the accident. Find ways to make the retelling as dramatic and interesting as possible.



# I Live in a Language That's Not Mine

CARMEN RODRIGUEZ



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this essay will help you:

- relate the author's experience to your own life
- experiment with tone
- create a poster campaign

The mirror is a good place for looking. I hated myself when I was a kid. All I could see were the big teeth and the glasses. After all these years, I am more gentle with myself, and sometimes I even like what I see. Again, brief instances of centredness, contentment. But the interesting thing is that since living in Canada I have been forced to see something that I had never seen before: colour. In Chile I didn't have a colour. I was like everybody else. Colour was not an issue. Here, I have been forced to see myself as a dark woman, "a woman of colour."

Do I like this term? Can I live with it? Sometimes I can, sometimes I can't. I can live with it when it brings me close to other women who may have gone through experiences similar to mine, women who live in the margins of this society because of the colour of their skin. Then I like it. I cannot live with it when I realize that it is a term largely determined by the fact that there is a dominant colour and culture that not only I am not a part of, but that looks down on me and others like me.

But if society wants to define me, "put me in my place," by pointing to the colour of my skin and my accent, there is little I can do about it. Call me what you wish. What I do know is that I am a lot more complex than what you see or hear. I have several cards up my sleeve, and I may choose not to show them to you. I am a traveller, a wanderer. I live in a language that's not mine, in a country that's not mine. But who doesn't? Perhaps "home" is only a search interrupted by brief moments of contentedness. Perhaps home is nothing but my own dark skin, reflected in the Canadian mirror of my here and now. Perhaps. ■

## Activities

1. Write a response in which you consider how the culture you grew up in has shaped who you are: your looks, tastes, and beliefs.
2. Analyse the tone of this piece of writing. What words, phrases, or expressions help to convey the tone? Choose a paragraph from the piece and rewrite it with a different tone. Share your new version with a partner, and have him or her describe the differences in tone.
3. Choose a quotation from the essay, and create a poster campaign to promote awareness of the immigrant experience. Illustrate the quotation with a collage or other visual that reinforces the message.

# Golden Girl

GILLIAN CHAN



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- express your opinion
- explore the use of first person narration
- analyse character

I worked hard to be Anna Murphy's best friend. Don't get me wrong—it was worth it. Without Anna I'd have been nobody. But Anna never has to work hard. She's probably the best-looking girl in town and, what's worse, it's all natural. Even as a little kid she had everyone drooling about how cute she was, with her long blond curls and big brown eyes. Now everyone's telling her she should be a model. They make me want to throw up. She has this fake, modest smile and a "What, me? I'm not pretty enough" routine, and then just eats it up when they all rush to contradict her.

Her dad's loaded, and nothing's too good for "Princess." Boys fight over her—like, actually fight. I used to hope that some of whatever she has



would rub off on me. I mean, I deserved some pay-off for all the crap she dished out.

The latest load started the day we went into English class and Miss Grainger had this guy with her. He was drop-dead gorgeous, like one of the hunks we drool over in those magazines we don't admit reading because they're not cool. He was about six foot two with these amazing shoulders. At first I couldn't see his face because he was bent over, reading some list on Miss Grainger's desk. Then, wow! Green eyes with long, thick lashes. Tanned skin without a zit in sight. He even had a slightly crooked nose that saved him from being a total pretty boy.

Anna gasped. "Donna, who is he?"

Like I'm supposed to know?

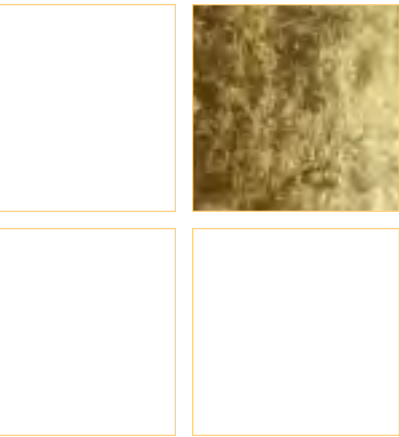
"Aha! Even Grainger's making eyes at him, the dirty old lady." Anna's had it in for Miss Grainger since last year. Grainger just hadn't heard the news that Anna was Miss Perfect and had told her it was a shame that she did just enough work to get a decent grade when if she worked hard she could be brilliant at English. That's a real no-no, criticizing Anna. After all, her entire life the rest of the world's been telling her how wonderful she is.

"Come on, settle down. We've got a lot to do today." Grainger gave some latecomers the death stare as they stumbled in, banging against chairs. "This is Mr. McCallum from the university. He's going to be with us for the next two months. At first he'll be sitting in on some classes, and later he'll be teaching."

Anna, always the drama queen, buried her face in her arms. "Oh no, he's a student teacher. Let's hope he's a keeper, I'd *really* like to get to know him." This last bit came out in the breathy voice Anna uses when she's trying to sound sexy but sounds like she's having an asthma attack. "I hope that creep Lowther doesn't screw things up again."

Anna has this seriously selective memory. OK, Bob Lowther did start the trouble with the last student teacher. She was so stupid. She told us to express ourselves any way we liked. So he did. For Bob, jumping from desk to desk hooting like a chimp expressed exactly how he felt about her dorky ideas, and the rest of us weren't far behind. Anna and I sat on our desks screeching as loudly as we could. A bunch of kids at the back lit up cigarettes. Even Dennis Mason was winging paper planes around. You should have seen his face when one of them hit the student teacher smack between the eyes, and she started to cry. He rushed up to her, apologizing like crazy. Anna was laughing hysterically. And she even gave Elly Kovacs a hard time for about a week afterward for helping Dennis get the stupid cow out of the room. Here Anna was blaming Bob for the whole thing, right? Like she was a total angel.

Miss Grainger showed Mr. McCallum to a chair and turned her attention back to us. "Get out your copies of *Julius Caesar* and let's make a start."



Anna was trying to check out the student teacher without being too obvious, so she had made no move to get out her book. I nudged her in the ribs.

“All right, all right!” she whispered, hardly taking her eyes off him as she fumbled in her backpack.

I thought she’d have to concentrate then because Grainger asked her to read Portia. I have to admit it—Anna’s pretty good. She’s been in just about every school play since kindergarten. When she was a little kid she used to go on about how she was going to be a movie star, but she dropped the idea when Mrs. Snow, our drama teacher, told her how hard it was to break into acting. Now she says she wants to be a news anchor. I can see her doing it, too. Daddy will pay for her to go to some fancy media-studies college. And then she’ll waltz up to a television station and expect them to fall all over themselves to give her a job. The sickening thing is that they probably will, because she’s good-looking and, no matter how she tries to hide it, pretty smart, too. Me, I’ll be lucky to manage a year at the local community college, if I can scrape together the tuition, doing whatever subject is most likely to get me a job, any dead-end job.

“Anna, just what is so fascinating at the back of the room?” Grainger couldn’t resist a small smirk when that got a giggle from the class. I pressed my lips together to keep from laughing and put on my best sympathetic face.

Anna just blushed and muttered.

She didn’t turn around again after that, but she didn’t follow the play either. She had a piece of paper half hidden under her book, and she was doing a pretty passable sketch of McCallum.

“Well, Anna? We’re waiting.”

Everyone silently turned to look. Anna stared down Miss Grainger with this sneer on her face as if she’d been interrupted at something seriously important.

“It’s your line, Anna.” Miss Grainger was sounding real snippy. “When you follow the text, it makes it run so much more smoothly for those who *are* listening.”

I thought Anna got off easy, but she flounced around in her seat and flicked the pages. She glared at me, and I wasn’t much help. I knew the general area, but I’d been too busy watching her to know exactly what speech was next.

“Someone show them where we are, for heaven’s sake.” Grainger was doing this eyes-rolling-upwards thing she does to show how stupid she thinks you are. It ticked me off that I was being included—I’d been paying more attention than Anna. But that’s just typical. Dennis turned around, showing us the page and pointing to Portia’s speech.

Anna started reading then. Her face was bright red, and for the first few words her voice was shaky, but she got it together. It was this scene where Portia confronts her husband, Brutus, and Anna had us all believing how angry and hurt old Portia was, even with the geek reading Brutus sounding like a talking log. At the end of the scene, she glared at Miss Grainger.

"There, Anna. See what you can do when you concentrate?"

I thought that was pretty neat, but Anna gave her the hate stare for the rest of the period.

When it was over and Miss Grainger shepherded the student teacher out, Anna packed up her books and turned on me. "What's the matter with you, Donna? You made me look like an idiot back there."

I couldn't believe it. What had I done?

"He'll think I'm a real bimbo, being told off for turning around and then not following the text."

This was my fault?

"You could have just kept track of where we were meant to be." Anna was really getting into it now. "He'll think we're just a couple of airheads."

The self-important, spoiled little creep, pouting because some guy she didn't even know might think she's a ditz. Oh well, all she wanted was someone to lash out at, and guess who was there—good old Donna. I bit back what I really wanted to say, thought it'd be better to suck up to her. That's why she keeps me around, after all. "Come on, Anna, he's got to think you're quite something after the way you read."

That stopped her. "What do you mean?"

"Well, you read Portia like you really felt all those things, so you can't be stupid, right? You must understand the play." I went in for the killer punch. "And I saw him looking at you while you were reading, like he was impressed." I hadn't, of course, but I knew she'd buy it, she's so vain.

"Really?"

"Yeah, really, Anna."

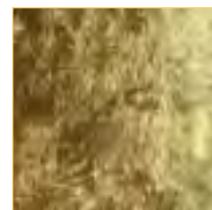
"Come on, let's get some lunch." Anna sauntered out of the room with a huge smile on her face.

This McCallum guy was all Anna talked about for the rest of the day. You'd think he could walk on water, the way she went on. On the way home with some of the others, she was even worse.

"Wow! Is he good-looking—but mature, too."

"Anna, he's probably only five years older than we are," said Michael. "The same age as your brother Liam—and you're always saying what a jerk he is."

Michael was Anna's boyfriend, Mr. Wonderful to her Miss Perfect. They were The Couple, if you get what I'm saying. I suppose it's kind of predictable—captain of the football team and the head cheerleader. I'd kill to



get a guy like Michael. But Anna just acted like he was her due or something, and treated him like dirt. All the time, too, not just now going on about how gorgeous the student teacher was, like Michael had no feelings.

I go out with one of Michael's friends on the team, Doug Washburn. He's all right, but that's all. He's OK looking but nothing compared to Michael—Doug looks like those movie actors who play the hero's buddy and never get the girl. I know he has the hots for Anna—what boy doesn't—but he hasn't the nerve to ask her out, so he makes do with me. If I hadn't been Anna's friend I doubt he'd even have bothered. I don't really like him that much but, hey, at least he's on the team.

Anna just stared at Michael like he was stupid. "He's nothing like Liam. You can tell this guy's been around—he's sophisticated."

"Oh, come off it, Anna. You've never even spoken to him, you've seen him once and suddenly you know everything about him." Michael wasn't picking up the danger signals—the way Anna's face was flushing, how her lips were tightening.

"His suit was one of those fancy designer ones—Boss or maybe even Armani," I tossed in to back Anna up, maybe earn back some brownie points.

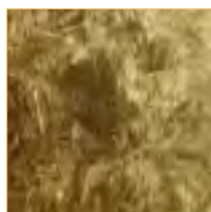
"So what!" Michael was getting steamed himself now. "Anna, that guy doesn't even know you exist. And even if he does, he's not going to be interested in a schoolgirl."

Anna stopped dead and turned to face Michael. "That's what you think." Giving everyone her biggest, brightest smile, she said, "You just wait and see." Her chin was up, daring Michael to challenge her. What had I started here?

Michael hitched up his backpack. "I'll see you tomorrow. Maybe you'll be in a better mood. Bye, guys." Off he went, not looking back even once.

I'd have been devastated, run after him even, but all Anna did was smile. "I'll show *him*." Looking around, she said, "You'll all see." She linked her arm through mine. "Let's go, Donna. Come over to my house and we'll do our homework." That was a laugh. Anna just wanted me there so she could go on about McCallum. I'd end up doing my homework really late, after I'd watched my kid sisters till my mother got back from work.

By the time Mr. McCallum started full-time at the school, instead of just coming on observation visits, he had a real following, with the girls drooling over him and the boys thinking he was an OK guy because he was a jock and helped out with the sports programs. Anna kept dropping hints that she was going to make a play for him, and she had most people believing she could pull it off. Michael never said anything, just got this closed look on his face. Maybe, if he got really ticked off with her, I could make a move on him.



McCallum's first lesson was OK. At least he tried to make things interesting. Even Bob didn't mess him around. You could tell McCallum was nervous because he was already at the front of the room when we piled in, pacing up and down by the board where he'd written "Living Language." When we actually sat down and showed signs that we'd listen, he relaxed a bit. Anna had bagged some seats right at the front and stared at him like a kid looking at an ice-cream cake.

This "Living Language" crap was all about how language changes. He started off by getting us to work in pairs, writing down as many slang words as we could think of. Bob could really have taken advantage but he didn't, and he had all this great street slang from when he used to live in Toronto. McCallum got all excited, making some crack about how we had a real expert in our midst. Bob almost forgot that he was the school bad boy, and grinned. I could tell that Anna was getting mad, but she had nothing to out-class Bob, so she had to make do with tossing her hair and leaning back. The guys in the front row had a fine time, but McCallum didn't seem to notice. Anyway, by the end of the period she was getting pretty desperate.

It was the homework he set us that gave her a chance to get noticed. He wanted us to talk to someone older, like our parents, and collect a list of the slang they used when they were our age. The idea was that we could see how words had changed, and maybe how some words had different meanings now.

We packed up and I waited like normal for Anna, but she made this sign with her hand that I was to go. I mean, who did she think she was, dismissing me like I'm her slave or something. Michael was starting up the aisle toward her, but I met him on my way out.

"Anna doesn't want us to wait." Well, how else could I say it? He looked as if he might protest, so I grabbed his arm and steered him out of the room.

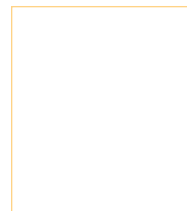
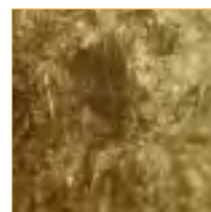
"What's with her?" Even with the noise in the corridor I could hear how mad he was.

Looking really sympathetic, I said, "Don't worry, Michael. She's talked so much about McCallum that she's got to make him notice her or everyone will laugh at her. Once she's done that, she'll let it drop—you'll see." I was lying through my teeth, of course. I knew how serious Anna was—she'd told me often enough over the past few weeks—but Michael swallowed it.

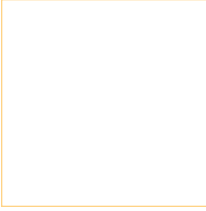
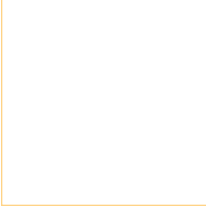
"Tell Anna I'll be out on the field kicking a football around, OK?"

I was straining to hear what was going on in the room, so I kind of brushed him off. "Yeah, yeah, I'll do that." Once he'd gone, I stood as close to the open door as I could without being seen. Anna was standing by the teacher's desk while McCallum packed up his stuff.

"Mr. McCallum, does it have to be a parent we ask?" Anna was giving







him the Smile full blast. It was almost funny to see her run through her tricks.

Without looking up, he replied, "Well, no, anyone older will do."

"See, I thought I'd ask my great-grandmother." Anna's voice carried real well, all eagerness and please-notice-me. "She's really old, but she's still all there. I visit her every week in the retirement home, and she tells really interesting stories about when she was a girl. She was a suffragette in England." This was a crock. Anna was always complaining about having to visit her, about how she had whiskers and slopped her food.

"That may be too far back, you know. The other kids might find it difficult to relate it to their own experience."

Anna didn't miss a beat. "Exactly. That's why I thought if I interviewed her daughter—my gran—and my own mother, then maybe I could sort of map their experiences, showing how circumstances affected the way they talked and all that." Got him! What teacher wouldn't be flattered by a kid wanting to do extra work for them after their very first lesson? "It would take a long time, but it could be really interesting."

Closing his briefcase, he looked at Anna for the first time. "You're ...?"

"Anna. Anna Murphy." She positively glowed.

"Well, Anna, if everyone's as enthusiastic as you are, the next month is going to be fun." He smiled in her general direction and swept out of the room.

I moved well away from the door so Anna wouldn't have any idea I'd seen and heard it all.

"Donna, you were right! He likes me. He was really keen on my idea about the homework and he made a point of asking my name." It all came out in a rush as Anna ran up to where I was lounging against some lockers. Notice the way she just expected me to be waiting, like I had nothing better to do. "This is going to be easier than I thought. You should have seen the way he looked at me." As we passed the glass trophy case, she stopped and checked out her reflection.

I *had* seen the way he looked at her. I didn't say anything—just stored it all away for future use.

Anna made sure she was always the last out of McCallum's class and usually found something to talk to him about. As her best friend, I waited outside in the corridor. It was pathetic, like being back in grade three when you think it's so neat to have a teacher notice you. She gushed away, and he always took time to talk about some assignment or her slang-in-the-family project. She'd actually done the whole thing, just like she said she would—it must have taken her hours. Anyway, pretty soon she'd get him talking about himself. Once she even spun him this line about how English was her favourite subject and how she wanted to be an English teacher. He

launched into this long rambling story about how he'd decided on English because he wanted to share his love of literature with kids. If you asked me, it was all a load of crap, but they both seemed to believe it.

I never let on that I listened, just made the right noises when Anna told me her latest triumph—how he looked at her, how he really wanted to ask her out but couldn't because he was a student teacher. It was kind of sad. He obviously liked her, but she was reading far too much into it.

The way Michael acted probably convinced most kids there was something going on. He was so jealous and possessive that if you wanted him to lose his temper all you had to do was say the word "McCallum." There was this dance coming up and Michael practically begged Anna, in front of a whole lot of people, to go with him, like there was a chance she might turn up with someone else. She agreed in this real condescending tone, and when Michael went off, she kind of hinted that he would just be the front to hide what was really going on.

See, the big news about the dance was that McCallum was going to be there. He'd told some guys on the football team that student teachers were encouraged to get involved in the school's extracurricular activities. So, he and the nerdy science type were going to help the regular teachers run the dance. Anna was in heaven.

"This is my big chance, Donna. I know he really likes me but I've got to show him I'm not a kid." She looked like my little sister Stacey does when she watches commercials for real fancy toys on television—she really wants them but is pretty sure she won't get any.

As Faithful Friend, I could dig around a bit, maybe get something I could use on her later. "He knows that already, doesn't he? I mean, the way you say he talks to you when you're alone. You said he just couldn't act on how he felt, that's all."

"Yeah, well, that's true, but I really want to show how different I am from those girls who have crushes on him." She was staring past me, focussed on the parking lot. McCallum was walking toward a red sports car. "You know why he was assigned to this school, Donna?"

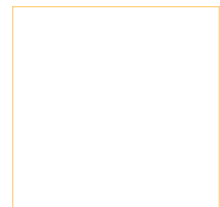
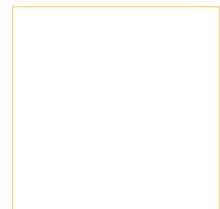
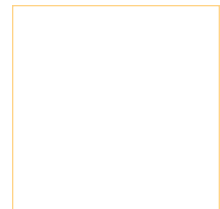
I didn't, but I knew she was going to tell me.

"He's Warren's nephew."

Typical, Anna calling old man Pelletier by his first name. Apart from Anna's dad, who owns the biggest construction company in Elmwood, Pelletier is about the richest man in town. He has this big poultry-packing factory and a whole load of farms outside town. All I knew about him was that I'd do just about anything not to end up working for him once I was out of school.

"Big deal!"

"My dad says he's staying with his uncle and during the summer he's



going to be working up at the processing plant." Anna's voice was quiet and dreamy. It didn't take much to work out what she was thinking. I tried digging a bit more but Anna just smiled real secretively and said, "I'm going to Lexington this Saturday to look for a dress. You want to come?"

Shopping with Anna is not easy, trying to keep smiling while she throws money around like there's no tomorrow and I search for whatever's cheapest but doesn't look too cheesy. "Nah, I've got one already." I changed the subject quick. "What are you looking for?" I didn't want to talk about my dress, a tacky hand-me-down from my cousin, the queen of bad taste.

"Just you wait and see." Anna smiled knowingly and headed off.

Anna wouldn't show me what she had bought until the actual night. Doug and I were going to the dance with her and Michael, so he came by to pick us both up. He didn't ring the doorbell, just honked from the driveway. That was weird, but I didn't say anything when I got into the back seat with Doug.

Anna turned around. "Hi, guys. All set?" She sounded as if she was trying to keep from laughing.

"Put your seat belt on, Anna." Michael's voice was tight. He was sitting up real straight, glaring out the windshield.

"All right, give me a break." Anna stayed twisted, facing us. "He's such a grouch tonight." A giggle escaped, choked off as Michael slammed the car into reverse and backed onto the street so Anna was thrown off balance before she turned and sat facing the front, her seat belt still hanging loose.

"Is your brother the DJ tonight, Anna?" Doug usually has the sensitivity of a bull moose, but I couldn't believe that even he hadn't noticed the tension.

"That's right—Liam's my man." I could have sworn she was still trying not to laugh. Liam was crazy and he'd do just about anything for Anna.

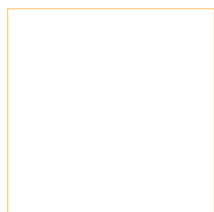
The school gym was already crowded by the time we got there. They'd tried to decorate it with clusters of balloons and paper streamers, but it still looked like a hole. Anna and I went to the cloakroom to take off our coats.

Get this—a deep crimson jersey number that clung to every line and curve of Anna's body. It had one of those necklines that was kind of off the shoulder, and I swear willpower alone was keeping it up.

"Anna!"

Anna spun around to give me the full effect. It was so tight that she couldn't have been wearing any underwear. "Michael doesn't like it." She sounded so smug that I felt real sorry for him.

"It's different." One of my all-time great understatements. She made the rest of us look like little girls in party dresses, all bows and velvet. "What did your parents say?"



"Dad hasn't seen it. He's out with the Rotarians. Mom was OK—just made some crack about borrowing it for the Lions Club dance."

My mother wouldn't have let me out of the house in something like that.

"Do you think *he'll* like it?"

I shrugged. "Hey, what guy wouldn't?"

Walking back through the gym was quite something. Anna kind of glided through the crowd, acknowledging them with smiles and waves, like she was royalty or something. I don't think anyone even noticed me. So, what's new?

Michael and Doug had bagged one of the tables arranged around the walls of the gym. When he saw Anna, Doug went bright red and didn't seem able to speak, which made it real awkward since Michael was sitting there stone-faced and silent. Anna and I kept badmouthing everyone around us, why they shouldn't have worn what they did, how badly they'd done their hair—you know, the usual. We didn't really mean anything by it. Besides, Anna's mind was elsewhere. She kept looking around, trying to spot McCallum in the crowd.

"How about dancing?" Anna stood up and looked down at Michael.

He didn't move his eyes in her direction, just shook his head.

Doug found his tongue. "I'll dance with you, Anna."

He didn't even look at me, let alone ask if I minded, and he stepped on my foot stumbling out toward the floor with her. That really showed how I rated.

Michael was white faced. "You said she'd drop it." He almost spat each word. "She's making a fool of me."

How come I always get it in the neck from everyone? Like it was my fault the way Anna was behaving? "Look, Michael, I was wrong, OK? I think Anna's being a jerk, but I can't do anything about it." I leaned forward and put my hand on his. "I think she's treating you real bad." I waited till he looked at me. "But it's herself she's making look like a fool, not you. People will see through her." I wanted to add it was about time they did but, hey, maybe this wasn't the perfect moment.

He almost smiled. "Thanks, Donna. I really appre—"

"Hey, guys, you should see McCallum. Does he ever look cool." Good old Doug with his usual wonderful timing.

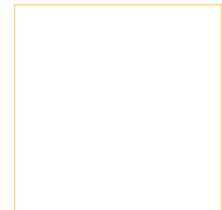
Michael gripped Doug's arm. "Where's Anna?"

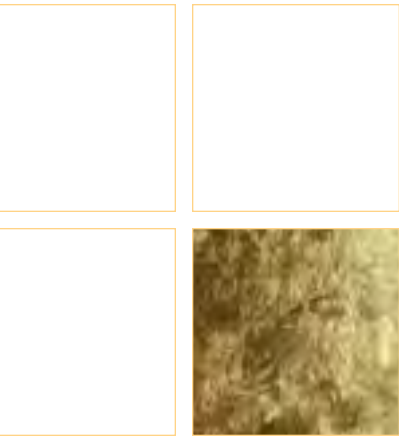
"Calm down, she's gone over to talk to McCallum, that's all."

Michael turned. "Do you want to dance, Donna?"

"Sure." I ignored Doug's whining about being left by himself and followed Michael out onto the dance floor.

He headed for the centre of the floor and started dancing, but he was really





looking around for Anna. I don't think he'd have even noticed I was there, except that I pointed toward the stage. Anna was with a whole group of girls, clustered around McCallum. She grabbed his hand and started pulling him onto the floor. He glanced back at Miss Grainger, who just shrugged.

Liam was playing a fast number. Anna looked up at him and suddenly the CD stuck. With hardly a pause, Liam had his second player going. His voice came over the loudspeaker. "Sorry about that. But never fear, Liam's here. Let's slow the tempo down a bit, get into a romantic mood." He reached for a switch and dimmed the lights.

In the gloom, Anna threw her arms around McCallum's neck and pressed up against him. His back was rigid and his hands on Anna's waist seemed less holding her than trying to push her away. Even in the dark, they were the centre of attention.

"That's it. I'm out of here." Michael stalked off the dance floor. I headed back to our table so I wouldn't look like a total dork standing there by myself.

"Where's Michael?" Doug asked, a face on him like a spoiled kid.

"Look, I only danced with him because he was upset about Anna." Doug was just dumb enough to believe me. "He saw her dancing with McCallum and took off."

"I'll go look for him," Doug said.

The lights came back up. Anna still had hold of McCallum's hand and he looked real uncomfortable. The dance floor was clearing, and I heard a couple of sniggers as McCallum finally pulled his hand free, muttered something and headed back to Miss Grainger.

For a few seconds, Anna just stood there, looking like a baby whose rattle's been snatched away. Then she lit up a smile and kept it burning all the way back to our table.

"He's the smoothest dancer. Did you see us?" Anna didn't seem to notice Michael and Doug weren't there, just watched closely for my reaction to her next statement. "It's real hard for Iain. He has to play things so carefully till his teaching practice is over. That's why he couldn't dance with me again."

Iain! Right. Like I didn't know she'd made a point of finding out McCallum's first name from her father. "Yeah, you looked great together." I was more interested in McCallum with Miss Grainger, talking real seriously and looking in our direction.

Finally, it dawned on Anna that I was alone at the table. "He left," I said. "Doug's gone to look for him."

Anna sighed. "He's so immature at times! I mean how are we going to get home?" She sat down, turning toward the dance floor.

Miss Grainger was standing there alone.

Doug never caught up with Michael. He came rushing back, panting.



"His car's gone from the parking lot!" He shifted from one foot to the other, like he was waiting for a reward or something.

"He can be such an idiot." Anna was smiling as she said that. It gave her a real buzz to know that she had them lining up for her favours. "Never mind, we'll get a ride with someone else, I'm sure." She was looking around the room, scanning the faces. With a sigh she sat down at the table, picked up her drink, and then turned to Doug. "Since everyone seems to have deserted me, how about another dance?"

And that's how I got to spend the rest of the evening, watching Anna make out that she was having a great time. McCallum was nowhere to be seen.

I had to baby-sit the next day. My mom had actually been offered some overtime, which was too rare to refuse. Anna called at nine o'clock.

"Hey, Donna. Do you want to come over?"

"You know I can't leave the brats by themselves."

"But I really need to talk to you." There was a pause. "Can't Stacey watch the little guys? Your mom doesn't have to find out."

"Are you kidding? Stacey would rat on me in a minute. And Mom would murder me if she found out I left Stacey in charge." It would never occur to Anna that she could come over, maybe help me. I have to jump at her command. I think she's been to my place maybe twice, acting like she's doing me some huge favour.

"I wanted to talk about Iain."

I sat down cross-legged on the hall floor, figuring I was going to be listening for a long time. It was weird. I didn't have to say anything, not even make those encouraging "uh-huh" or "mm" noises.

"Oh, Donna, he's got such a great body, all hard and muscular. He smelled good, too, not sweaty. I just know he wanted to say something to me, but everyone was looking at us. He has to be so careful."

What a load of crap.

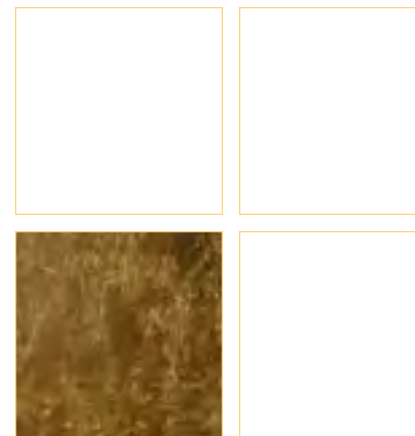
"Did you see? He didn't dance with anyone else—just me."

I had to face it—she wasn't just doing a number on Michael and the others, she was doing one on herself. Maybe that's what happens when you always get everything you want.

"Monday, I just know he's going to say something." Oh, really? "It's his last week at the school, so he'll be able to take more chances."

Right. I was going to enjoy watching Miss Snot find out how it feels to be disappointed, just like the rest of us. Meanwhile, I'd put up with Anna's hourly calls, saying the same things over and over. And you know what—she never mentioned Michael once.

On Monday, Anna came to school wearing black jeans and boots and a white shirt with a black suede vest over it that cost a fortune. She must have



been up real early that morning, because her hair tumbled around her face in that casual way you know takes hours to get right. She was so wired that it was lucky English is always in the morning. I don't think I could have stood much more of did she look OK and what did I think he'd say.

When we got to class Miss Grainger was there, sitting at the back with a notepad. With Anna beside me, it was hard to concentrate. She wasn't really sitting, she was posing. If McCallum asked a question, she just about killed herself to be the one to answer, but he never called on her—not once.

When the period was over, Anna went into her usual routine of packing her things slowly. She was so intent on McCallum that she didn't notice Miss Grainger coming up behind her.

"Was there something you wanted, Anna?" Miss Grainger had to move back to avoid getting stepped on when Anna jumped in surprise.

"Er, I wasn't quite clear about the assignment, that's all." Anna was stuttering. "I, uh, just wanted Mr. McCallum to go over it with me."

Putting her hand in the small of Anna's back, Miss Grainger guided her toward the door. "Ask one of the others, I'm sure they'll have written it down. Look, Donna's over there. Ask her."

Anna's face was brick red.

Miss Grainger came out a few seconds later with McCallum.

As they passed us, Anna turned away, pretending to be looking for something in her backpack. "What's she doing here?" she asked once they'd disappeared down the corridor.

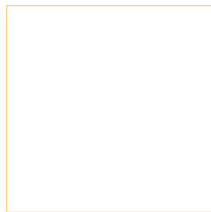
It was pretty obvious to me, but I wanted to see how Anna would explain it away.

"I suppose she has to assess how he's doing, maybe write a report or something." The colour was going from her face now. "Yeah, that's it." She smiled and walked off, the bounce back in her step. "I'll just have to wait, that's all."

The wait was longer than Anna expected. Miss Grainger turned up at every one of McCallum's lessons that week. She even gave up pretending to make notes. I bet most everyone had worked out why she was there. Funny, though. No one said anything to Anna. If it had been me, jokes would have been all over school by now.

Michael hadn't spoken to Anna since the dance, but he and I had talked a few times. He kept saying he hated to see her make a fool of herself. He'd even called me at home once to talk about her. I could get him talking about something else for a bit, make him laugh, but he kept coming back to Anna.

By Thursday, Anna was getting desperate. She couldn't get past Miss Grainger in class, and in the halls McCallum either had people around him or he hurried away from her. She kept telling me he was just being ultra-



cautious. Come on! But I could see that she was getting edgy. Maybe this was the time to give Miss Teen Queen a little push, show everybody what an idiot she could be. So I suggested she write him a note.

I was with her when she wrote it, but she wouldn't listen to any of my suggestions. She kept going on about how it had to have the right tone, mature but not pushy, and it took her about a hundred tries to get it right.

Dear Iain,

I know that it has been difficult to balance your role as a student teacher with the friendship that has developed between us. I also realize that you had to treat me like just another pupil. Now that your practice teaching is ending, we can meet as equals. I shall be waiting at The Coffee House on Main Street at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday. No reply is necessary, as I know it might be difficult in the school situation.

Love,  
Anna

She got me to leave it on his desk. He plunked his books right down on top of it, so he didn't see it until after all the goodbyes, when he started putting things in his briefcase. For once, Anna didn't hang around, so she didn't see him read the note, make a face, and then crumple it up and throw it in the garbage.

Miss Grainger looked at him. "Anything wrong?"

He shook his head and started out of the room. "Nothing important."

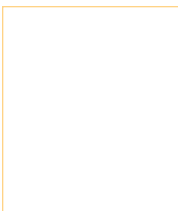
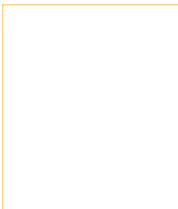
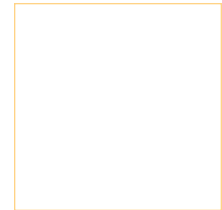
After they left, I got the note from the garbage, smoothed it out and put it carefully in my bag. At least Anna hadn't dotted all the *i*'s with little hearts, but "the friendship that has developed between us"—who was she kidding?

Michael was sitting out on the grass beneath this big oak tree behind the gym. Normally, he's part of a crowd, but he was by himself, his back against the tree, long legs stretched out in front. He was twisting a piece of grass between his fingers.

"Hey, Donna. How's things?" He hardly even glanced up.

I sat down next to him, where he couldn't avoid looking at me. "You're not going to believe what she's done now." I tried to get just the right tone—concern for him, but slightly ticked off at her. I held out the note and, after a while, he took it. I allowed myself a smile then, just a little one. "I mean, just who does she think she is?"

Michael didn't say anything, just folded the note up carefully and put it in the back pocket of his jeans.



“We could pass it around, and then a whole bunch of us can turn up at The Coffee House. It would be so funny.” I could just see it—Michael and me together—and the amazed look on Anna’s face. Me giving his hand a reassuring squeeze every now and then.

When Michael finally spoke his voice was low. “Donna, you’re supposed to be Anna’s friend. And here you want to set her up, humiliate her. She’s been a jerk the last month, for sure. But why do this? You really are vicious!”

I couldn’t believe it. He was going to take all this crap from her, pretend this never happened, and go on playing Ken to her Barbie! He just didn’t get it. “Michael! The point is, you all accept whatever she does. She snaps her fingers and everyone jumps. She’s making you look a jerk!”

I thought that would get him, but he just shook his head. “I know that. But she couldn’t help herself. Everyone’s entitled to make mistakes. At least Anna never means to harm anyone.”

I got up and walked away. This wasn’t how it was meant to turn out.

I went down to The Coffee House. I watched her for an hour, sipping the coffee I know she hates and trying not to cry. I never told anyone, though. There was no point. After all, gold just keeps on shining. It’s only us cheap imitations that tarnish and get junked. ■

## Activities

1. At the end of the story, the narrator refers to “us cheap imitations.” Read the story again. List all of the evidence, either in her actions or her words, that shows the narrator regards herself as a “cheap imitation” of Anna.
2. **a)** The story is written in the first person. What effect does this perspective have on the story? Is the narrator likely to give reliable information? Justify your answer in a short paragraph.  
**b)** Retell the story from the point of view of Michael, Mr. McCallum, or Anna herself. Present your tale as a monologue to the class. Afterwards, take questions from the audience.
3. The narrator says she “worked hard” to be Anna’s best friend. Imagine that you are the narrator, applying for the job of “Best Friend.” Research some different ways to organize résumés, and create a convincing application for the position.
4. Present the information in the story as a talk show. Interview the various characters in the novel. Invite members of the audience to ask the characters questions about their feelings and motives. The host should ask questions of each guest in turn, and the guests can also interact.

# *Children to School*

MAUD LEWIS



"Children to School" by Maud Lewis, 1903–1970.  
Collection of Bruce Oland, reproduced with permission of the  
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.



# The Brute

ANTON CHEKHOV



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this play will help you:

- read closely to form an interpretation
- present a dramatic scene
- create a poster
- respond to ideas

## CHARACTERS

*MRS. POPOV, widow and landowner, small with dimpled cheeks*

*LUKA, Mrs. Popov's footman, an old man*

*MR. GRIGORY S. SMIRNOV, gentleman farmer, middle-aged*

*GARDENER, COACHMAN, HIRED MEN*

*The drawing room of a country house. MRS. POPOV, in deep mourning, is staring hard at a photograph. LUKA is with her.*

**LUKA:** It's not right, ma'am, you're killing yourself. The cook has gone off with the maid to pick berries. The cat's having a high old

time in the yard catching birds. Every living thing is happy. But you stay moping here in the house like it was a convent, taking no pleasure in nothing. I mean it, ma'am! It must be a full year since you set foot out of doors.

**Mrs. POPOV:** I must never set foot out of doors again, Luka. Never! I have nothing to set foot out of doors *for*. My life is done. *He* is in his grave. I have buried myself alive in this house. We are *both* in our graves.

**LUKA:** You're off again, ma'am. I just won't listen to you no more. Mr. Popov is dead, but what can we do about that? It's God's doing. God's will be done. You've cried over him, you've done your share of mourning, haven't you? There's a limit to everything. You can't go on weeping and wailing forever. My old lady died, for that matter, and I wept and wailed over her a whole month long. Well, that was it. I couldn't weep and wail all my life, she just wasn't worth it. (*He sighs.*) As for the neighbours, you've forgotten all about them, ma'am. You don't visit them and you don't let them visit you. You and I are like a pair of spiders—excuse the expression, ma'am—here we are in this house like a pair of spiders, we never see the light of day. And it isn't like there was no nice people around either. The whole country's swarming with 'em. There's a regiment quartered at Riblov, and the officers are so good-looking! The girls can't take their eyes off them—There's a ball at the camp every Friday—The military band plays most every day of the week—What do you say, ma'am? You're young, you're pretty, you could enjoy yourself! Ten years from now you may want to strut and show your feathers to the officers, and it'll be too late.

**Mrs. POPOV:** (*Firmly*) You must never bring this subject up again, Luka. Since Popov died, life has been an empty dream to me, you know that. *You* may think I am alive. Poor ignorant Luka. You are wrong. I am dead. I'm in my grave. Never more shall I see the light of day, never strip from my body this ... raiment of death! Are you listening, Luka? Let his ghost learn how I love him! Yes, I know, and *you* know, he was often unfair to me, he was cruel to me, and he was unfaithful to me. What of it? I shall be faithful to *him*, that's all. I will show him how I can love. Hereafter, in a better world than this, he will welcome me back, the same loyal girl I always was—

**LUKA:** Instead of carrying on this way, ma'am, you should go out in

the garden and take a bit of a walk, ma'am. Or why not harness Toby and take a drive? Call on a couple of the neighbours, ma'am?

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Breaking down*) Oh, Luka!

**LUKA:** Yes, ma'am? What have I said, ma'am? Oh dear!

**MRS. POPOV:** Toby! You said Toby! He adored that horse. When he drove me out to the Korchagins and the Vlasovs, it was always with Toby! He was a wonderful driver, do you remember, Luka? So graceful! So strong! I can see him now, pulling at those reins with all his might and main! Toby! Luka, tell them to give Toby an extra portion of oats today.

**LUKA:** Yes, ma'am.

(*A bell rings.*)

**MRS. POPOV:** Who is that? Tell them I'm not at home.

**LUKA:** Very good, ma'am. (*Exit.*)

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Gazing again at the photograph.*) You shall see, my Popov, how a wife can love and forgive. Till death do us part. Longer than that. Till death re-unite us forever! (*Suddenly a titter breaks through her tears*) Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Popov? Here's your little wife, being good, being faithful, so faithful she's locked up here waiting for her own funeral, while you—doesn't it make you ashamed, you naughty boy? You were terrible, you know. You were unfaithful, and you made those awful scenes about it, you stormed out and left me alone for weeks—

(*Enter LUKA*)

**LUKA:** (*Upset*) There's someone asking for you, ma'am. Says he must—

**MRS. POPOV:** I suppose you told him that since my husband's death I see no one?

**LUKA:** Yes, ma'am. I did, ma'am. But he wouldn't listen, ma'am. He says it's urgent.

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Shrilly*) I see no one!!

**LUKA:** He won't take no for an answer, ma'am. He just curses and swears and comes in anyway. He's a perfect monster, ma'am. He's in the dining room right now.

**MRS. POPOV:** In the dining room, is he? I'll give him his comeuppance. Bring

him in here this minute. (*Exit* LUKA. *Suddenly sad again*) Why do they do this to me? Why? Insulting my grief, intruding on my solitude? (*She sighs*) I'm afraid I'll have to enter a convent. I will, I *must* enter a convent!

(*Enter* MR. SMIRNOV and LUKA)

**SMIRNOV:** (*To* LUKA) Dolt! Idiot! You talk too much! (*Seeing* MRS. POPOV. *With dignity.*) May I have the honour of introducing myself, madam? Grigory S. Smirnov, landowner and lieutenant of artillery, retired. Forgive me, madam, if I disturb your peace and quiet, but my business is both urgent and weighty.

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Declining to offer him her hand*) What is it you wish, sir?

**SMIRNOV:** At the time of his death, your late husband—with whom I had the honour to be acquainted, ma'am—was in my debt to the tune of twelve hundred rubles. I have two notes to prove it. Tomorrow, ma'am, I must pay the interest on a bank loan. I have therefore no alternative, ma'am, but to ask you to pay me the money today.

**MRS. POPOV:** Twelve hundred rubles? But what did my husband owe it to you for?

**SMIRNOV:** He used to buy his oats from me, madam.

**MRS. POPOV:** (*To* LUKA, *with a sigh*) Remember what I said, Luka: tell them to give Toby an extra portion of oats today! (*Exit* LUKA) My dear Mr.—what was the name again?

**SMIRNOV:** Smirnov, ma'am.

**MRS. POPOV:** My dear Mr. Smirnov, if Mr. Popov owed you money, you shall be paid—to the last ruble, to the last kopeck. But today—you must excuse me, Mr.—what was it?

**SMIRNOV:** Smirnov, ma'am.

**MRS. POPOV:** Today, Mr. Smirnov, I have no ready cash in the house. (*SMIRNOV starts to speak.*) Tomorrow, Mr. Smirnov, no, the day after tomorrow, all will be well. My steward will be back from town. I shall see that he pays what is owing. Today, no. In any case, today is exactly seven months from Mr. Popov's death. On such a day you will understand that I am in no mood to think of money.

**SMIRNOV:** Madam, if you don't pay up now, you can carry me out feet foremost. They'll seize my estate.



**MRS. POPOV:** You can have your money. (*He starts to thank her.*) Tomorrow (*He again starts to speak.*) That is: the day after tomorrow.

**SMIRNOV:** I don't need the money the day after tomorrow. I need it today.

**MRS. POPOV:** I'm sorry, Mr.—

**SMIRNOV:** (*Shouting*) Smirnov!

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Sweetly*) Yes, of course. But you can't have it today.

**SMIRNOV:** But I can't wait for it any longer!

**MRS. POPOV:** Be sensible, Mr. Smirnov. How can I pay you if I don't have it?

**SMIRNOV:** You don't have it?

**MRS. POPOV:** I don't have it.

**SMIRNOV:** Sure?

**MRS. POPOV:** Positive.

**SMIRNOV:** Very well. I'll make a note to that effect. (*Shrugging*) And then they want me to keep cool. I meet the tax commissioner on the street, and he says, "Why are you always in such a bad humour, Smirnov?" Bad humour! How can I help it, in God's name? I need money, I need it desperately. Take yesterday: I leave home at the crack of dawn, I call on all my debtors. Not a one of them pays up. Footsore and weary, I creep at midnight into some little dive, and try to snatch a few winks of sleep on the floor by the vodka barrel. Then today, I come here, fifty miles from home, saying to myself, "At last, at last, I can be sure of something," and you're not in the mood! You give me a mood! How can I help getting all worked up?

**MRS. POPOV:** I thought I'd made it clear, Mr. Smirnov, that you'll get your money the minute my steward is back from town?

**SMIRNOV:** What the hell do I care about your steward? Pardon the expression, ma'am. But it was you I came to see.

**MRS. POPOV:** What language! What a tone to take to a lady! I refuse to hear another word. (*Quickly, exit*)

**SMIRNOV:** Not in the mood, huh? "Exactly seven months since Popov's death," huh? How about me? (*Shouting after her*) Is there this interest to pay, or isn't there? I'm asking you a question: is there this interest to pay, or isn't there? So your husband died, and you're not in the mood, and your steward's gone off some place, and so forth and so on, but what can I do about all that,



huh? What do *you* think I should do? Take a running jump and shove my head through the wall? Take off in a balloon? You don't know my *other* debtors. I call on Gruzdeff. Not at home. I look for Yaroshevitch. He's hiding out. I find Kooritsin. He kicks up a row, and I have to throw him through the window. I work my way right down the list. Not a kopeck. Then I come to you, and you're not in the mood! (*Quietly, as he realizes he's talking to air*) I've spoiled them all, that's what, I've let them play me for a sucker. Well, I'll show them. I'll show this one. I'll stay right here till she pays up. Ugh! (*He shudders with rage.*) I'm in a rage! I'm in a positively towering rage! Every nerve in my body is trembling at forty to the dozen! I can't breathe, I feel ill, I think I'm going to faint, hey, you there!

(*Enter LUKA*)

**LUKA:** Yes, sir? Is there anything you wish, sir?

**SMIRNOV:** Water! Water!! No, make it vodka. (*Exit LUKA*) Consider the logic of it. A fellow creature is desperately in need of cash, so desperately in need that he has to seriously contemplate hanging himself, and this woman, this mere chit of a girl, won't pay up, and why not? Because, forsooth, she isn't in the mood! Oh, the logic of women! Come to that, I never have liked them, I could do without the whole sex. Talk to a woman? I'd rather sit on a barrel of dynamite, the very thought gives me goose flesh. Women! Creatures of poetry and romance! Just to see one in the distance gets me mad. My legs start twitching with rage. I feel like yelling for help.

(*Enter LUKA, handing SMIRNOV a glass of water.*)

**LUKA:** Mrs. Popov is indisposed, sir. She is seeing no one.

**SMIRNOV:** Get out. (*Exit LUKA*) Indisposed, is she? Seeing no one, huh? Well, she can see me or not, but I'll be here, I'll be right here till she pays up. If you're sick for a week, I'll be here for a week. If you're sick for a year, I'll be here for a year. You won't get around *me* with your widow's weeds and your schoolgirl dimples. I know all about dimples. (*Shouting through the window*) Semyon, let the horses out of those shafts, we're not leaving, we're staying, and tell them to give the horses some oats, yes, oats, you fool, what do you think? (*Walking away from the window*) What a mess, what an unholy mess! I didn't sleep last night, the heat is terrific today, not a damn one of 'em has paid

up, and here's this—this skirt in mourning that's not in the mood! My head aches, where's that—(*He drinks from the glass.*) Water, ugh! You there!

(*Enter LUKA*)

**LUKA:** Yes, sir. You wish for something, sir?

**SMIRNOV:** Where's that confounded vodka I asked for? (*Exit LUKA*) (*SMIRNOV sits and looks himself over.*) Oof! A fine figure of a man I am! Unwashed, uncombed, unshaven, straw on my vest, dust all over me. The little woman must've taken me for a highwayman. (*Yawns*) I suppose it wouldn't be considered polite to barge into a drawing room in this state, but who cares? I'm not a visitor, I'm a creditor—most unwelcome of guests, second only to Death.

(*Enter LUKA*)

**LUKA:** (*Handing him the vodka*) If I may say so, sir, you take too many liberties, sir.

**SMIRNOV:** What?!

**LUKA:** Oh, nothing, sir, nothing.

**SMIRNOV:** Who do you think you're talking to? Shut your mouth!

**LUKA:** (*Aside*) There's an evil spirit abroad. The Devil must have sent him. Oh!

(*Exit LUKA*)

**SMIRNOV:** What a rage I'm in! I'll grind the whole world to powder. Oh, I feel ill again. You there!

(*Enter MRS. POPOV*)

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Looking at the floor*) In the solitude of my rural retreat, Mr. Smirnov, I've long since grown unaccustomed to the sound of the human voice. Above all, I cannot bear shouting. I must beg you not to break the silence.

**SMIRNOV:** Very well. Pay me my money and I'll go.

**MRS. POPOV:** I told you before, and I tell you again, Mr. Smirnov: I have no cash, you'll have to wait till the day after tomorrow. Can I express myself more plainly?

**SMIRNOV:** And I told you before, and I tell you again, that I need the

money today, that the day after tomorrow is too late, and that if you don't pay, and pay now, I'll have to hang myself in the morning!

**MRS. POPOV:** But I have no cash. This is quite a puzzle.

**SMIRNOV:** You won't pay, huh?

**MRS. POPOV:** I *can't* pay, Mr. Smirnov.

**SMIRNOV:** In that case, I'm going to sit here and wait. (*Sits down*) You'll pay up the day after tomorrow? Very good. Till the day after tomorrow, here I sit. (*Pause. He jumps up.*) Now look, do I have to pay that interest tomorrow, or don't I? Or do you think I'm joking?

**MRS. POPOV:** I must ask you not to raise your voice, Mr. Smirnov. This is not a stable.

**SMIRNOV:** Who said it was? Do I have to pay the interest tomorrow or not?

**MRS. POPOV:** Mr. Smirnov, do you know how to behave in the presence of a lady?


**SMIRNOV:** No, madam, I do not know how to behave in the presence of a lady.

**MRS. POPOV:** Just what I thought. I look at you, and I say: ugh! I hear you talk, and I say to myself: "That man doesn't know how to talk to a lady."

**SMIRNOV:** You'd like me to come simpering to you in French, I suppose. "*Enchanté, madame! Merci beaucoup* for not paying zee money, *madame! Pardonnez-moi* if I 'ave disturbed you, *madame!* How *charmante* you look in mourning, *madame!*"

**MRS. POPOV:** Now you're being silly, Mr. Smirnov.

**SMIRNOV:** (*Mimicking*) "Now you're being silly, Mr. Smirnov." "You don't know how to talk to a lady, Mr. Smirnov." Look here, Mrs. Popov, I've known more women than you've known pussycats. I've fought three duels on their account. I've jilted twelve, and been jilted by nine others. Oh, yes, Mrs. Popov, I've played the fool in my time, whispered sweet nothings, bowed and scraped and endeavoured to please. Don't tell me I don't know what it is to love, to pine away with longing, to have the blues, to melt like butter, to be weak as water. I was full of tender emotion. I was carried away with passion. I squandered half my fortune



on the sex. I chattered about women's emancipation. But there's an end to everything, dear madam. Burning eyes, dark eyelashes, ripe red lips, dimpled cheeks, heaving bosoms, soft whisperings, the moon above, the lake below—I don't give a rap for that sort of nonsense any more, Mrs. Popov. I've found out about women. Present company excepted, they're liars. Their behaviour is mere play-acting; their conversation is sheer gossip. Yes, dear lady, women, young or old, are false, petty, vain, cruel, malicious, unreasonable. As for intelligence, any sparrow could give them points. Appearances, I admit, can be deceptive. In appearance, a woman may be all poetry and romance, goddess and angel, muslin and fluff. To look at her exterior is to be transported to heaven. But I have looked at her interior, Mrs. Popov, and what did I find there—in her very soul? A crocodile. (*He has gripped the back of the chair so firmly that it snaps.*) And, what is more revolting, a crocodile with an illusion, a crocodile that imagines tender sentiments are its own special province, a crocodile that thinks itself queen of the realm of love! Whereas, in sober fact, dear madam, if a woman can love anything except a lapdog you can hang me by the feet on that nail. For a man, love is suffering, love is sacrifice. A woman just swishes her train around and tightens her grip on your nose. Now, you're a woman, aren't you, Mrs. Popov? You must be an expert on some of this. Tell me, quite frankly, did you ever know a woman to be—faithful, for instance? Or even sincere? Only old hags, huh? Though some women are old hags from birth. But as for the others? You're right: a faithful woman is a freak of nature—like a cat with horns.

**MRS. POPOV:** Who *is* faithful, then? Who *have* you cast for the faithful lover? Not man?

**SMIRNOV:** Right first time, Mrs. Popov: man.

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Going off into a peal of bitter laughter*) Man! Man is faithful! That's a new one! (*Fiercely*) What right do you have to say that, Mr. Smirnov? Men faithful? Let me tell you something. Of all the men I have ever known my late husband Popov was the best. I loved him, and there are women who know how to love, Mr. Smirnov. I gave him my youth, my happiness, my life, my fortune. I worshipped the ground he trod on—and what happened? The best of men was unfaithful to me, Mr. Smirnov. Not once in a while. All the time. After he died, I found his desk drawer full of love letters. While he was alive, he was always



going away for the weekend. He squandered my money. He flirted with other women before my very eyes. But, in spite of all, Mr. Smirnov, *I* was faithful. Unto death. And beyond. I am *still* faithful, Mr. Smirnov! Buried alive in this house, I shall wear mourning till the day I, too, am called to my eternal rest.

**SMIRNOV:** (*Laughing scornfully*) Expect me to believe that? As if I couldn't see through all this hocus-pocus. Buried alive! Till you're called to your eternal rest! Till when? Till some little poet—or some little subaltern with his first moustache—comes riding by and asks: "Can that be the house of the mysterious Tamara who for love of her late husband has buried herself alive, vowing to see no man?" Ha!

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Flaring up*) How dare you? How dare you insinuate—?

**SMIRNOV:** You may have buried yourself alive, Mrs. Popov, but you haven't forgotten to powder your nose.

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Incoherent*) How dare you? How—?

**SMIRNOV:** Who's raising his voice now? Just because I call a spade a spade. Because I shoot straight from the shoulder, Well, don't shout at me, I'm not your steward.

**MRS. POPOV:** I'm not shouting, you're shouting! Oh, leave me alone!

**SMIRNOV:** Pay me the money, and I will.

**MRS. POPOV:** You'll get no money out of me!

**SMIRNOV:** Oh, so that's it!

**MRS. POPOV:** Not a ruble, not a kopeck. Get out! Leave me alone!

**SMIRNOV:** Not being your husband, I must ask you not to make scenes with me. (*He sits.*) I don't like scenes.

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Choking with rage*) You're sitting down?

**SMIRNOV:** Correct, I'm sitting down.

**MRS. POPOV:** I asked you to leave!

**SMIRNOV:** Then give me the money. (*Aside*) Oh, what a rage I'm in, what a rage!

**MRS. POPOV:** The impudence of the man! I won't talk to you a moment longer. Get out. (*Pause*) Are you going?

**SMIRNOV:** No.

**MRS. POPOV:** No?!



**SMIRNOV:** No.

**MRS. POPOV:** On your head be it. Luka! (*Enter LUKA*) Show the gentleman out, Luka.

**LUKA:** (*Approaching*) I'm afraid, sir, I'll have to ask you, um, to leave, sir, now, um—

**SMIRNOV:** (*Jumping up*) Shut your mouth, you old idiot! Who do you think you're talking to? I'll make mincemeat of you.

**LUKA:** (*Clutching his heart*) Mercy on us! Holy saints above! (*He falls into an armchair.*) I'm taken sick! I can't breathe!!

**MRS. POPOV:** Then where's Dasha? Dasha! Dasha! Come here at once! (*She rings.*)

**LUKA:** They've gone picking berries, ma'am, I'm alone here—Water, water, I'm taken sick!

**MRS. POPOV:** (*To SMIRNOV*) Get out, you!

**SMIRNOV:** Can't you even be polite with me, Mrs. Popov?

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Clenching her fists and stamping her feet*) With you? You're a wild animal, you were never housebroken!

**SMIRNOV:** What? What did you say?

**MRS. POPOV:** I said you were a wild animal, you were never housebroken.

**SMIRNOV:** (*Advancing upon her*) And what right do you have to talk to me like that?

**MRS. POPOV:** Like what?

**SMIRNOV:** You have insulted me, madam.

**MRS. POPOV:** What of it? Do you think I'm scared of you?

**SMIRNOV:** So you think you can get away with it because you're a woman. A creature of poetry and romance, huh? Well, it doesn't go down with me. I hereby challenge you to a duel.

**LUKA:** Mercy on us! Holy saints alive! Water!

**SMIRNOV:** I propose we shoot it out.

**MRS. POPOV:** Trying to scare me again? Just because you have big fists and a voice like a bull? You're a brute.

**SMIRNOV:** No one insults Grigory S. Smirnov with impunity! And I don't care if you *are* a female.

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Trying to shout him*) Brute, brute, brute!

**SMIRNOV:** The sexes are equal, are they? Fine: then it's just prejudice to expect men alone to pay for insults. I hereby challenge—

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Screaming*) All right! You want to shoot it out? All right! Let's shoot it out!

**SMIRNOV:** And let it be here and now!

**MRS. POPOV:** Here and now! All right! I'll have Popov's pistols here in one minute! (*Walks away, then turns*) Putting one of Popov's bullets through your silly head will be a pleasure! *Au revoir.* (*Exit*)

**SMIRNOV:** I'll bring her down like a duck, a sitting duck. I'm not one of your little poets, I'm no little subaltern with his first moustache. No, sir, there's no weaker sex where I'm concerned!

**LUKA:** Sir! Master! (*He goes down on his knees.*) Take pity on a poor old man, and do me a favour: go away. It was bad enough before, you nearly scared me to death. But a duel—!

**SMIRNOV:** (*Ignoring him*) A duel! That's equality of the sexes for you! That's women's emancipation! Just as a matter of principle I'll bring her down like a duck. But what a woman! "Putting one of Popov's bullets through your silly head ..." Her cheeks were flushed, her eyes were gleaming! And, by God, she's accepted the challenge! I never knew a woman like this before!

**LUKA:** Sir! Master! Please go away! I'll always pray for you!

**SMIRNOV:** (*Again ignoring him*) What a woman! Phew!! *She's* no sourpuss, *she's* no crybaby. She's fire and brimstone. She's a human cannon ball. What a shame I have to kill her!

**LUKA:** (*Weeping*) Please, kind sir, please, go away!

**SMIRNOV:** (*As before*) I like her, isn't that funny? With those dimples and all? I like her. I'm even prepared to consider letting her off that debt. And where's my rage? It's gone. I never knew a woman like this before.

(*Enter MRS. POPOV with pistols*)

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Boldly*) Pistols, Mr. Smirnov! (*Matter of fact*) But before we start, you'd better show me how it's done, I'm not too familiar with these things. In fact I never gave a pistol a second look.

**LUKA:** Lord, have mercy on us, I must go hunt up the gardener and the coachman. Why has this catastrophe fallen upon us, O Lord! (*Exit*)

**SMIRNOV:** (*Examining the pistols*) Well, it's like this. There are several makes: one is the Mortimer, with capsules, especially constructed for duelling. What you have here are Smith and Wesson triple-action revolvers, with extractor, first-rate job, worth ninety rubles at the very least. You hold it this way. (*Aside*) My God, what eyes she has! They're setting me on fire.

**MRS. POPOV:** This way?

**SMIRNOV:** Yes, that's right. You cock the trigger, take aim like this, head up, arm out like this. Then you just press with this finger here, and it's all over. The main thing is, keep cool, take slow aim, and don't let your arm jump.

**MRS. POPOV:** I see. And if it's inconvenient to do the job here, we can go out in the garden.

**SMIRNOV:** Very good. Of course, I should warn you: I'll be firing in the air.

**MRS. POPOV:** What? This is the end. Why?

**SMIRNOV:** Oh, well—because—for private reasons.

**MRS. POPOV:** Scared, huh? (*She laughs heartily.*) Now don't you try to get out of it, Mr. Smirnov. My blood is up. I won't be happy till I've drilled a hole through that skull of yours. Follow me. What's the matter? Scared?

**SMIRNOV:** That's right. I'm scared.

**MRS. POPOV:** Oh, come on, what's the matter with you?

**SMIRNOV:** Well, um, Mrs. Popov, I, um, I like you.

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Laughing bitterly*) Good God! He likes me, does he! The gall of the man. (*Showing him the door*) You may leave, Mr. Smirnov.

**SMIRNOV:** (*Quietly puts the gun down, takes his hat, and walks to the door. Then he stops and the pair look at each other without a word. Then, approaching gingerly.*) Listen, Mrs. Popov. Are you still mad at me? I'm in the devil of a temper myself, of course. But then, you see—what I mean is—it's this way—the fact is—(*Roaring*) Well, is it my fault, damn it, if I like you? (*Clutches the back of a chair. It breaks.*) What fragile furniture you have here. I like you. Know what I mean? I could fall in love with you.

**MRS. POPOV:** I hate you. Get out!

**SMIRNOV:** What a woman! I never saw anything like it. Oh, I'm lost, I'm done for, I'm a mouse in a trap.

**MRS. POPOV:** Leave this house, or I shoot!

**SMIRNOV:** Shoot away! What bliss to die of a shot that was fired by that little velvet hand! To die gazing into those enchanting eyes. I'm out of my mind. I know: you must decide at once. Think for one second, then decide. Because if I leave now, I'll never be back. Decide! I'm a pretty decent chap. Landed gentleman, I should say. Ten thousand a year. Good stable. Throw a kopeck up in the air, and I'll put a bullet through it. Will you marry me?

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Indignant, brandishing the gun*) We'll shoot it out! Get going! Take your pistol!

**SMIRNOV:** I'm out of my mind. I don't understand any more. (*Shouting*) You there! That vodka!

**MRS. POPOV:** No excuses! No delays! We'll shoot it out!

**SMIRNOV:** I'm out of my mind. I'm falling in love. I *have* fallen in love. (*He takes her hand vigorously; she squeals.*) I love you. (*He goes down on his knees.*) I love you as I've never loved before. I jilted twelve, and was jilted by nine others. But I didn't love a one of them as I love you. I'm full of tender emotion. I'm melting like butter. I'm weak as water. I'm on my knees like a fool, and I offer you my hand. It's a shame, it's a disgrace. I haven't been in love in five years. I took a vow against it. And now, all of a sudden, to be swept off my feet, it's a scandal. I offer you my hand, dear lady. Will you or won't you? You won't? Then don't! (*He rises and walks toward the door.*)

**MRS. POPOV:** I didn't say anything.

**SMIRNOV:** (*Stopping*) What?

**MRS. POPOV:** Oh, nothing, you can go. Well, no, just a minute. No, you can go. Go! I detest you! But, just a moment. Oh, if you knew how furious I feel! (*Throws the gun on the table.*) My fingers have gone to sleep holding that horrid thing. (*She is tearing her handkerchief to shreds.*) And what are you standing around for? Get out of here!

**SMIRNOV:** Goodbye.

**MRS. POPOV:** Go, go, go! (*Shouting*) Where are you going? Wait a minute! No, no, it's all right, just go. I'm fighting mad. Don't come near me, don't come near me!

**SMIRNOV:** (*Who is coming near her*) I'm pretty disgusted with myself—falling in love like a kid, going down on my knees like some moon-gazing whipper-snapper, the very thought gives me goose flesh. (*Rudely*) I love you. But it doesn't make sense. Tomorrow, I have to pay that interest, and we've already started mowing. (*He puts his arm about her waist.*) I shall never forgive myself for this.

**MRS. POPOV:** Take your hands off me, I hate you! Let's shoot it out!

(*A long kiss. Enter LUKA with an axe, the GARDENER with a rake, the COACHMAN with a pitchfork, HIRED MEN with sticks.*)

**LUKA:** (*Seeing the kiss*) Mercy on us! Holy saints above!

**MRS. POPOV:** (*Dropping her eyes*) Luka, tell them in the stable that Toby is *not* to have any oats today.

CURTAIN ■

## Activities

1. What is the significance of the last line in the play? Discuss with a partner.
2. Much of the play is melodramatic: that is, it exaggerates the emotions of the characters. In groups, act the play out, using all of the descriptions and language within the play to create the exaggeration.
3. Create a poster for a presentation of the play. Consider what images would most closely suggest what the play is about. Also consider what colours would be most effective, and what words you might use to describe the play or entice an audience to see it.
4. In groups, list all of the traits of women and men described or demonstrated by each of the characters. Then write a paragraph of response either agreeing or disagreeing with the views on the opposite gender presented in the play. Give three reasons why you feel as you do. Exchange your paragraph with someone who disagrees with your view.



# Crosswords

GINA DOUTHWAITE

t  
t w h a m  
r i p r d  
i a t w i s t s s  
p o k e s h g u s l a n g  
i s h o u t g r i p a a  
b c l a w m c u s p i t  
w r e c k e p u l l n n c  
h a s h a k e o s c a c h o k e  
a t n r h u r l h r h  
c s e s t a b t i l u  
k w r e n c h i n j s c r a p  
a r o f s g r a b k  
t r a v e f l o g b a n g  
b a e c t  
a n k n o c k h i t  
s c r a t c h u l e t ' s  
h f b e  
f e  
s  
*m a t e s*

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- write a poem
- work co-operatively to complete a task
- use your experience to interpret a text

## Activities

1. Create your own crossword-style poem based on one of the following themes:  
**a)** friendship      **c)** love  
**b)** family          **d)** loneliness

Use a thesaurus to find words that describe the theme, and then organize the words.

2. In groups, organize a choral reading of the poem. Decide on how the words should be

said, in what order, and by whom. Present your reading to the class.

3. Consider the ending of the poem (which appears in italics). Write your interpretation of this ending, and how these words might apply to relationships between people. Exchange your analysis with a partner, and compare your views.

# To My Son

HELEN FOGWILL PORTER

When you were small  
you used to climb  
in our bed  
when lightning ripped the sky.  
We'd hold you tight  
between us  
while your father said:  
"That storm is miles away"  
a second before the room  
was lit  
with fearsome light.

Now when lightning strikes  
you stay in your own  
narrow bed  
trying to think of other  
safer things  
and we in our wide bed  
sigh separate sighs  
because we no longer know how  
to comfort you.



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you to:

- evaluate the meaning of the title
- express the theme in a different medium

## Activities

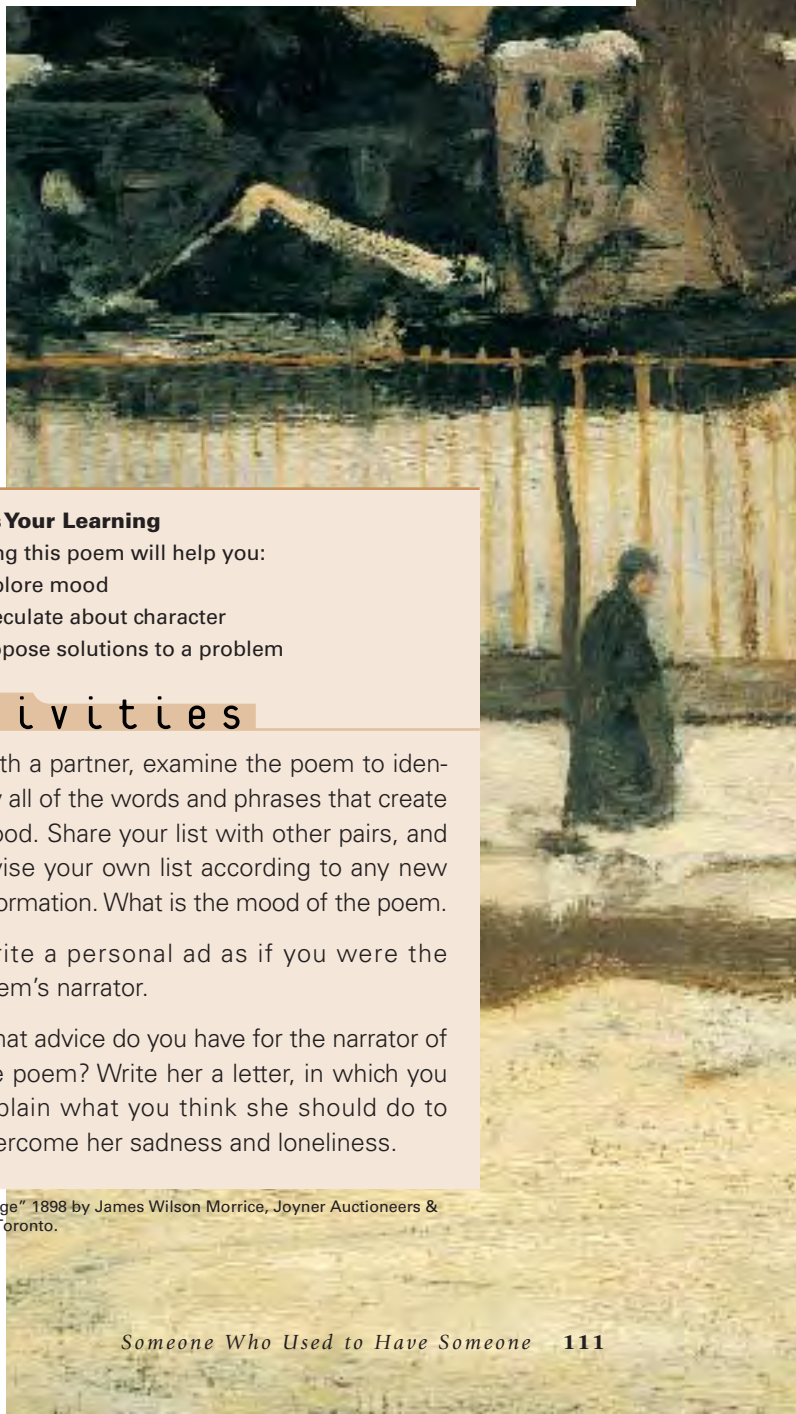
1. What other title might be appropriate for this poem? Share your suggestions with the rest of the class and listen to those of others.
2. Create a comic strip that expresses the theme of the poem. Make it as humorous as possible. Display your cartoons around the classroom.

# Someone Who Used to Have Someone

MIRIAM WADDINGTON

There used to be someone to whom I could say do you love me and be sure that the answer would always be yes; there used to be someone to whom I could telephone and be sure when the operator said do you accept the charges the answer would always be yes; but now there is no one to ask no one to telephone from the strangeness of cities in the lateness of nightness now there is no one always now no one no someone no never at all.

Can you imagine what it is like to live in a world where there is no one now always no one and never some someone to ask do you love me and be sure that the answer would always be yes? I live in a world where only the billboards are always, they're twenty feet tall and they circle the city they coax and caress me they heat me and cool me they promise and plead me with colour and comfort: you can get to sleep with me tonight (the me being ovaltine) but who wants to get to sleep with a cup of ovaltine what kind of sleep is that for someone who used to have someone to ask do you love me and be sure that the answer would always be yes?



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- explore mood
- speculate about character
- propose solutions to a problem

## Activities

1. With a partner, examine the poem to identify all of the words and phrases that create mood. Share your list with other pairs, and revise your own list according to any new information. What is the mood of the poem.
2. Write a personal ad as if you were the poem's narrator.
3. What advice do you have for the narrator of the poem? Write her a letter, in which you explain what you think she should do to overcome her sadness and loneliness.

"Effet de Neige" 1898 by James Wilson Morrice, Joyner Auctioneers & Appraisers, Toronto.



# Long, Long After School

ERNEST BUCKLER



## Focus Your Learning

- identify and explain point of view
- empathize with characters
- make predictions about a character
- write about your own experience

I ran into Wes Holman the very day I was collecting for Miss Tretheway's flowers. But it never came into my head to ask him for a contribution.

Miss Tretheway had taught grade three in our town for exactly fifty years. She had died the night before in her sleep. As chairman of the school board I had thought it would be fitting if all the grade three alumni who were still around made up enough money to get a really handsome "piece." She had no relatives. If I'd given it an instant's consideration I'd have known that Wes himself must have been in grade three some time or other; but I didn't.

Wes was just coming through the cemetery gate as I was going in. Wes "looks after" the cemetery, and I sometimes take a shortcut through it on

my way to work. I should say that Wes is our local "character." His tiny house up behind the ballpark is furnished with almost nothing but books, and he can quote anyone from Seneca to Henry James. But that's his job: caretaker-about-town.

When I spoke to him about Miss Tretheway, a curious change came into his face. You couldn't say that he turned pale, but his stillness was quite different from the conventional one on such occasions. I had expected him to come out with some quote or other, but he didn't say a word.

He didn't go to her funeral. But he sent her flowers of his own. Or brought them, rather. The following day, when I took the shortcut again, I surprised him on his knees placing them.

His little bunch of flowers was the most incongruous thing you could imagine. It was a corsage. A corsage of simple flowers, such as a young boy sends his girl for her first formal dance. And more incongruous than its presence in the circumstance of death was its connection with Miss Tretheway herself. I'm quite sure that Miss Tretheway never once had a beau send her flowers, that she'd never been to a dance in her whole life.

I suppose it would never have occurred to me to question anyone but Wes about his motive for doing a thing like that. But I asked Wes about it with no thought of rudeness whatever. Wes's privacy seemed to be everyone's property. There was probably a little self-conscious democracy in the gesture when we talked to him at all.

"She was so beautiful," he answered me, as if no other explanation was needed.

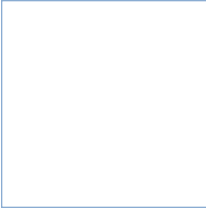
That was plainly ridiculous. That Miss Tretheway was a fine person for having spent a lifetime in small, unheralded services could not be disputed—but obviously she hadn't *ever* been beautiful. Her sturdy plainness was never transfigured, not even for an instant, by the echo of anything winsomer which had faded. Her eyes had never been very blue, her skin very pink, or her hair very brown. She wasn't very anything. Her heart might have been headlong (I think now that it was), but there was always that curious precision and economy in her face which lacks altogether the grain of helter-skelter necessary to any kind of charm. In short, even when she'd been a girl, she'd been the sort of girl whose slightest eagerness, more than if she were ugly or old, a young man automatically shies away from.

"But, Wes," I said, half-joking, "she wasn't beautiful. What made you say that?"

His story went something like this. He told it with a kind of dogged, confessional earnestness. I guess he'd come to figure that whenever we asked him a personal question he might as well satisfy our curiosity completely, first as last.

"Perhaps you remember how the kids used to tease me at school," he





said. (I didn't. I guess those things stick in your mind according to which end of the teasing you happen to be on.) "If the boys would be telling some joke with words in it to giggle over, they'd look at me and say, 'Shhh ... Wes is blushing.' Or if we were all climbing up the ladder to the big beam in Hogan's stable, they'd say 'Look at Wes. He's so scared he's turning pale.' Do you remember the night you steered your sled into mine, going down Parker hill?"

"No," I said. "Did I do it on purpose?"

"I don't know," Wes said. "Maybe you didn't. I thought you did."

Maybe I did. I don't remember.

"I was taking Mrs. Banks's wash home on my sled, and you were coasting down the hill. The basket upset and all the things fell out on the snow. Don't you remember ... Miss Tretheway came along and you all ran. She helped me pick up the stuff and shake the snow off it. She went with me right to Mrs. Banks's door and told her what had happened. I could never have made Mrs. Banks believe I didn't upset the stuff myself."

"I'm sorry," I said. I probably *had* done it on purpose.

"That's all right," he said. "I didn't mind the boys so much. It was the girls. You can't hit a girl. There just wasn't anything I could do about the girls. One day Miss Tretheway was showing us a new game in the schoolyard. I don't remember exactly how it went, but that one where we all made a big circle and someone stood in the centre. I put my hand out to close up the ring with the biggest Banks girl, but she wouldn't take it. She said, 'Your hands are dirty.' Miss Tretheway made us both hold out our hands. She said, 'Why, Marilyn, Wes's hands are much cleaner than yours. Maybe Wes doesn't like to get *his* hands dirty, did you ever think about that?' She took Marilyn's place herself. Her hand felt safe and warm, I remember ... and I guess that's the first day I thought she was beautiful."

"I see," I said.

I did, and yet I didn't. The Wes I remembered would hate anything with the suggestion of teacher's pet about it. The only Wes I could seem to remember was the Wes of adolescence: the tough guy with the chip on his shoulder.

He was coming to that. But he stuck in an odd parenthesis first. "Did you ever notice Miss Tretheway," he said, "when ... well, when the other teachers would be talking in the hall about the dances they'd been to over the weekend? Or when she'd be telling some kid a story after school and the kid would run off right in the middle of a sentence when she saw her mother coming to pick her up?"

"No," I said. "Why? What about it?"

"Oh, nothing, I guess." He drew a deep breath. "Anyway, I decided I'd be stronger and I'd study harder than anyone. And I was, wasn't I? I did. Do

you remember the year they voted me the best all-round student in High School?" (I didn't. It must have been after I'd graduated.) "I guess I just can't remember how happy I was about that. I guess I was so happy I could believe anything. That must have been why I let the boys coax me into going to the closing dance." He smiled. "I thought since they'd voted for me ... but you can't legislate against a girl's glance."

Those were his exact words. Maybe he'd read them somewhere. Maybe they were his own. I don't know. But it was the kind of remark which had built up his quaint reputation as the town philosopher.

"I didn't want to go out on the dance floor," he said. "I'd never danced a foxtrot or anything. The girls all had on their evening dresses, and somehow they looked different altogether. They looked as if they wouldn't recognize *themselves* in their day clothes. Anyway, the boys grabbed hold of me and made me get into a Paul Jones. I was next to Toby Wenford in the big ring. Jane Evans was right opposite me when the music stopped, but she danced with Toby instead—and the girl next to Jane just glanced at me and then went and sat down. I guess it was a pretty foolish thing to do, but I went down in the basement and drove my fist through a window."

"Is that the scar?" I said. I couldn't think of anything else to say.

"Oh, it was a lot worse than that," he said. He pulled up his sleeve and traced the faint sickle of the scar way up his arm. "You can hardly see it now. But I almost bled to death right there. I guess I might have, if it hadn't been for Miss Tretheway."

"Oh?" I said. "How's that?"

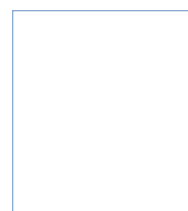
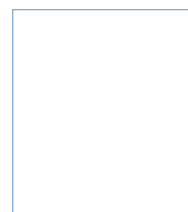
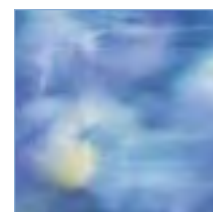
"You see, they didn't have any plasma around in bottles then," he said, "and in those days no one felt too comfortable about having his blood siphoned off. I guess no one felt like taking any chances for me, anyway. Mother said I could have hers, but hers wasn't right. Mine's that odd type—three, isn't it? Miss Tretheway was three, too ... and that's funny; because only seven percent of people have it. She gave me a whole quart, just as soon as she found out that hers would match."

"I see," I said. So that was it. And yet I had a feeling that that *wasn't* it—not quite.

"She used to come see me every day," he said. "She used to bring me books. Did you know that books ... well, that for anyone like me that's the only way you can ... ?" He hesitated, and I knew that that wasn't quite it either.

Not until he spoke again, when he spoke so differently, was I sure that only now was he coming to the real thing.

"Do you know what Miss Tretheway said when I thanked her for the transfusion?" he said. "She made a joke of it. She said: 'I didn't know whether an old maid's blood would be any good to a fine young specimen



like you, Wes, or not.' The thing I always remember, I knew that was the first time she'd ever called herself an old maid to anyone, and really felt like laughing. And I remember what *I* said. I said: 'Miss Tretheway, you're making me blush.' And do you know, that was the very first time I'd ever been able to say *that*, and laugh, myself."

There was quite a long silence.

"She was beautiful," he added softly. "She was a real lady." The cemetery is right next to the river. I looked down the river where the cold December water lapped at the jagged ice thrown up on the banks, and I thought about a boy the colour of whose skin was such that he could never blush, and I thought about a girl who had never been asked to a dance. I thought about the corsage. My curiosity was quite satisfied. But somehow I myself had never felt less beautiful, or less of a gentleman. ■

## Activities

1. In groups, role-play a situation in which someone is made to feel left out and different. Draw straws to determine who will play "the loner." Afterwards, listen as each student describes his or her feelings during the role-play: how does it feel to be "one of the gang"? How does it feel to be the outcast?
2. Imagine that you are a reporter for a local newspaper. Using evidence from the story, create an obituary for Miss Tretheway. You may wish to look at some obituaries from various newspapers as models.
3. Imagine that Miss Tretheway had lived to see her fiftieth anniversary in teaching. Write the speech she might have given at the awards ceremony. Use details from the story to recreate her character and to identify what was important to her.
4. Is there someone in your life who has helped you out or supported you at a time of need, the way Miss Tretheway did Wes? Write a portrait of that person, explaining what he or she meant to you, and the effect he or she had on your life.

# Imperfectly

ANI DIFRANCO

i'm o.k. if you get me a good angle  
you're o.k. in the right sort of light  
we don't look like pages  
from a magazine  
but that's allright

i crashed your pickup truck  
then i had to drive it back home  
i was crying i was so scared  
of what you would do  
of what you would say  
but you just started laughing  
so i just started laughing along  
saying it looks like a little rough  
but it runs o.k.

we get a little further from perfection  
each year on the road  
i think that's called character  
i think that's just the way it goes  
better to be dusty than polished  
like some store window mannequin  
touch me where i'm rusty  
let me stain your hands

when you're pretty as a picture  
they pound down your door  
but i've been offered love  
in two dimensions before  
and i know that it's not all  
that it's made out to be  
let's show them all how it's done  
let's do it all imperfectly.

## Focus Your Learning

Studying this poem will help you:

- analyse images in magazines
- experiment with figurative language
- write your own poem
- describe video effects

## Activities

1. Select an image of perfection from a fashion magazine. Cut it out and paste it on a piece of paper. Label its parts to identify what makes it perfect. Contrast this with an image of an "average" person. Label the same parts, to show the contrast with the "perfect" model.
2. The songwriter uses the metaphor of a crashed pickup truck to describe her own imperfection. With a partner, think up a list of other metaphors to describe imperfection. Share your list with the class, and then vote on which you like best.
3. Write a poem to an anonymous someone, acknowledging his or her imperfections. Use a tone of friendship and love, not criticism, to express the idea that imperfection is okay.
4. Work with a partner to down write your ideas for a music video to accompany this song. What images would you include? Consider lighting, setting, and camera angles in your description.

# All

LEONA GOM

all he would have to say is,  
remember the time I came home  
with a beard and Dad didn't know me,  
and we would all laugh,  
Mom would say, just by your voice,  
I knew your voice, and my sister  
would say, the dog kept barking, and  
I would say, that was the  
summer I got a camera.  
it pulls around us  
like a drawstring, that time,  
when we come together,  
awkward and older,  
our frayed conversations  
trying to thread some memory  
of each other,  
one of us will only have to say,  
remember the time you came home  
from the bush with your beard,  
and we were all easy again  
with each other,  
someone will say how  
Mom knew his voice, someone  
will remember how the dog barked, I  
will remember my new camera,  
and we are a family again,  
young and laughing  
on the front porch.



Photo courtesy of T. E. Moore, Toronto as appeared in HOME TRUTHS © 1997 Key Porter

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- read closely for clues to meaning
- create a family album
- recount a story
- discuss ideas about families

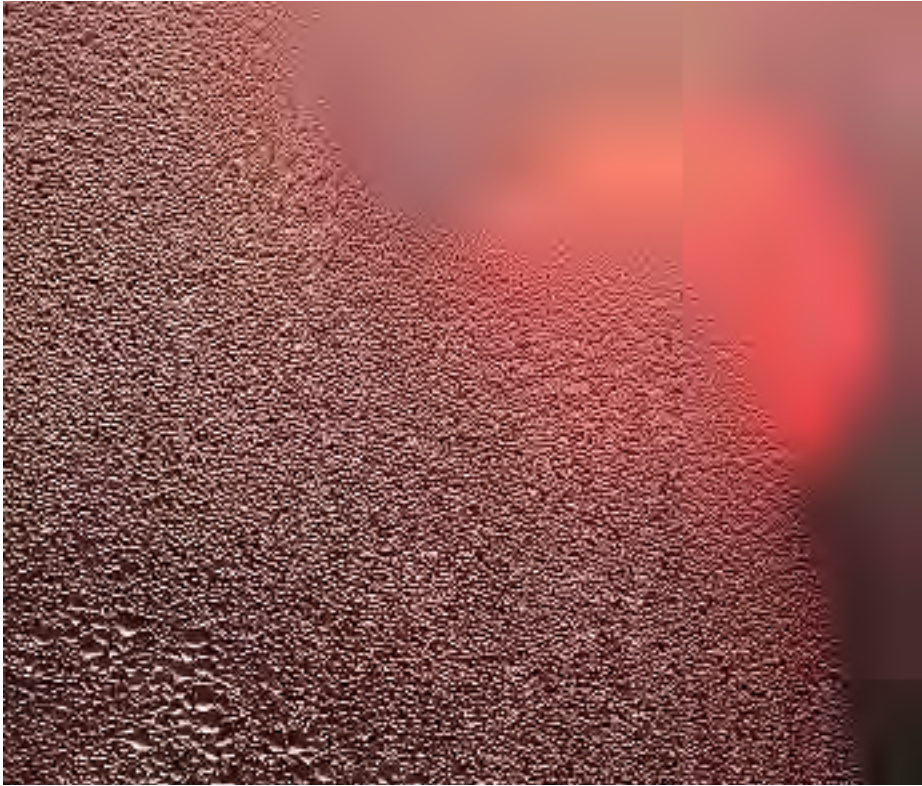
## Activities

1. Explain the significance of the title.
2. **a)** Compile an album of pictures that evoke shared family memories. Label the pictures, to create a narrative of your childhood.  
**b)** Recount one of your family stories to the class. Consider how you can create tension or humour in the way you tell the story.
3. Role-play the family reunion: how would the tension be evident before the ice-breaker? What would happen afterwards?
4. Why are memories like the one evoked in the poem important for families? What other things hold families together? Discuss in a small group, then share your ideas in a class discussion.



# How to Tell Renata

LINDA HOLEMAN



*fact* (fakt) n. something that has actually occurred or actually exists.

It's rained the entire summer, and the air is heavy with the smell of an old basement.

The rain and the smell and the worrying about how to tell Renata what's happening are driving me crazy, and I've hardly been able to put the dictionary down. I know there's some old joke about reading the phone book. I can't remember it, but it's not flattering. I tell myself that a dictionary is nothing like a phone book, except that it's in alphabetical order. This is the very thing I find calming—the predictability of the next word. I've been reading the dictionary my whole life, it seems, although sometimes I can forget about it for a while. But for the last few months I've really needed it.

Our summers are known for their unrelenting prairie heat, so this cool, wet one is a real change. Not knowing how to talk to Renata is nothing new.

Renata is my mother—though I've never called her anything but Renata

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- read for clues to meaning
- write character profiles
- research and present an information display



for as long as I can remember—and this is the way she’s always dealt with things. By ignoring them. Maybe it’s because she’s been on her own, except for me, pretty much all of her life, and there was never anyone else for her to talk to.

But even now that she’s had Jerry around for almost two years, things still haven’t changed much with the way we try to communicate.

Renata’s OK, as far as small things go, but keeps quiet on anything large and frightening. This is how I see it—she must think if the scary stuff is pushed to some far, webby corner of her cranium, shrouded and silent, then perhaps it doesn’t really exist, and can’t be turned into a fact.

Maybe it works sometimes; after all, what’s scaring me hasn’t become an actual fact.

But it’s only a matter of time.

*Chimera* (ka mir a) n. An absurd creation of the imagination; a foolish or horrible fancy.

School starts in eight days. I know I should be getting out my supply list, should go and try to find my gym clothes at the bottom of my closet, should get my hair trimmed, should do all those back-to-school things that some people say they enjoy. But I can’t seem to get motivated; like I said, all I’ve been doing is the dictionary thing.

The most interesting word I found last night was *chimera*. I had a rush of hope; maybe what seems to be happening is all a chimera, just the old imagination working overtime.

I held on to the word, whispering it over and over as I tried to fall asleep after Renata had left for her shift at the Muffins Day ’N Night over on Provencher. I kept my eyes fixed on the lamp beside my bed, the pink glow through the faded shade. I leave it on now, the nights Renata works.

As I chanted it, my word took on the pulse of a prayer, the syllables moving in rhythm with this summer’s night sounds—the rising and falling murmur of the television in the living room, the slow ticking of the rain off the eaves outside my window, and the stealthy rush, then triumphant clang as the trains coupled in the yards across the river.

And even though there wasn’t any air coming in through the screen, just that musty, underground smell, I kept the blankets wrapped around me, and I held on to my word for all the comfort I could wring out of it.

*Realization* (re el i za shen) n. The conversion into fact or action of plans, ambitions, fears, etc.

The problem is that Renata loves Jerry. When he moved in, she had seemed all sparkly, and almost pretty. I think it was the first time I'd seen her totally happy. For a whole year, Jerry remembered all the important times, like her birthday and Valentine's Day, and he took her out for dinner, twice a month, on payday.

I'm not exactly sure when things started to go bad, but I remember feeling weird one night, when Renata was at work and Jerry and I were watching some National Geographic show about whales. I was really into the show, when it slowly dawned on me that Jerry was looking at me, and not the television. But when I turned toward him his eyes flicked back to the screen. The next time I felt his eyes on me I got up and went to my room.

He did it a lot, after that first time. Watched me, but pretended he wasn't. It didn't seem like such a big deal. I didn't like it, but I could live with it.

Then one evening, some time around the beginning of the summer, I was cutting a tomato at the counter. He walked up behind me and put his hand on the back of my neck. I kept on cutting, hoping he'd go away, but he just stood there, his hand still and warm, getting heavier with each second. When the tomato was all sliced I put the knife down, and he gave my neck a squeeze, just a little one, and then slowly moved his hand down my back.

After he left I noticed I'd sliced into my finger with the paring knife, and it was bleeding everywhere, but the strange thing was it didn't hurt until a lot later.

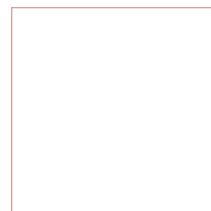
Since then I feel like my life has become this big bubble, and I'm walking around inside it, trying not to break through. It's hard to concentrate on anything. I feel like I can't hear properly; the bubble is causing pressure in my ears so I have to keep swallowing and swallowing to clear them.

Not being able to hear makes it hard for words to come too. No matter how I rehearse what I'll say to Renata, it sounds wrong in my own head.

I guess I figure that either way it's going to kill her, and we'll both lose. If she doesn't believe me, she'll hate me, thinking I'm lying about the guy she loves. Or maybe she will believe me, and hate me even more.

*Ripe* (rip) adj. Grown to maturity, fully developed. 2. In full readiness to do or try; prepared.

I knew, after waking up sometime in the middle of the night to see Jerry standing in my doorway again, that I couldn't count on chimera. I knew that time was running out—knew with that same awful certainty that you know the dull throbbing in your back molar is a cavity you'll have to get filled.



Lying in bed in the thin grey morning light, understanding that today was the day I had to do it, I was overwhelmed with a sensation of heavy lightness, or maybe it was light heaviness. Relief, mixed with terror. Sort of like deciding that today is the day you'll finally jump off the high diving board at the community swimming pool.

It was late in the afternoon before I had a chance. I came into the kitchen after I finished work, my summer job at the California Fruit Market. I'm not officially old enough for a job, not until I turn sixteen next year, but my friend Lindsay MacJannet's father owns the market. She got her dad to pay us cash to do odd jobs around the place. We'd unpack the boxes, pick over berries for mushy ones, check the apples for bruises, those kinds of things.

As I came into the kitchen I shifted my watermelon from arm to arm. It was a dense, tubular, dark green melon, a gift from Mr. MacJannet. He gave me whatever was too ripe to wait any longer. Between my soft strawberries and speckled bananas, and the two-day-old stuff Renata could bring home from Muffins Day 'N Night, we'd covered at least two of the food groups at no expense all summer.

Renata was sitting at the kitchen table. She was in her uniform, a pink, short-sleeved dress that buttoned up the front, the skirt of the dress covered by a white apron. She was pushing back her cuticles with a small pointed stick. I could hear the television, so I knew Jerry was in the living room.

"What's going on?" I don't know what made me ask; Renata working on her nails and Jerry watching TV is a totally normal scene in our house. But there was something else, something I couldn't quite catch, like I just missed the last few words in a whispered conversation, or someone quietly slipped out the back door.

Renata didn't answer, or even look up at me. I set the watermelon on the counter with a dull thud, then sat down on the scratched wooden chair beside Renata and watched her.

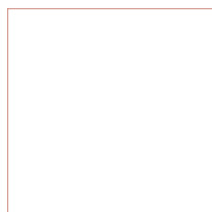
"School starts in less than a week," I said to Renata's bent, blond head, noticing that there was half an inch of darker hair, light brown mixed with coarse threads of silver, along her part. I didn't really expect a response, but after a minute she looked up, right into my eyes.

"So soon?" she asked, and put down her stick.

I nodded, and the way her eyes held on to mine brought a sudden, hopeful surge of blood into my throat.

"So, are you ready?" she asked. "Are you scared, about starting high school?"

"Not really," I said, not caring which question she thought I was answering, and then, "Mom?" It was weird, how it just came out. Like I said, I've always called her Renata. As soon as I said the word, *Mom*, I saw her pupils get big, then immediately shrink, like a match had been lit in front of them.



She lowered her eyes, picking up the stick again, but just studied the pointed end, holding it out in front of her like a tiny sword. I wanted to say it again, *Mom*; it had felt good on my tongue and lips, but I didn't want to push it. Instead, I reached out and pressed the pad of my index finger against the point of the stick.

"Renata? I need to talk to you. There's something I need your help with."

Renata kept looking at the stick, and I looked at it, too. It was creating a minuscule hole in the soft flesh of my finger as I pressed harder and harder. The stick joined our hands on the smooth, brown arborite of the table top, and as I stared at it, I felt the far-off flutter of a wing. Black, its weight shutting off my air supply. I took short, furtive sniffs through my nose, afraid that even those would break the spell, not let me say what I had to.

Suddenly Renata's head jerked up, from my hand to a spot over my head. I turned. Jerry was in the doorway. He was good at that, appearing in doorways.

Without taking her eyes off Jerry, Renata said, "Well, Jacinda, I need some help, too. With supper. If I don't get a start on it I'll be late for my shift." She sort of hoisted herself out of the chair, even though she's really thin, and then slowly walked to the sink.

Jerry followed her. He put his hand on the watermelon, then looked at me.

"Should we have this for dessert?" he asked.

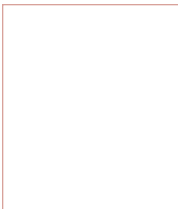
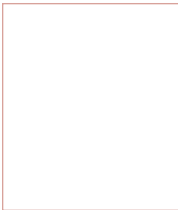
I shrugged, looking at Renata, standing still and straight, her hands flat on the counter on either side of the sink. I saw that her pink dress was creased across the seat, and the ends of her apron were tied at the small of her back in a loose, lopsided bow. Even without lifting my eyes from the bow, I could tell that Renata had turned her head and was staring at Jerry again. I kept my gaze on the bow, and took a slow, deep breath.

I had gone to the edge of the diving board and was looking over. There was no room to turn around.

*Illuminate* (i loo me nat) v. 1. To give light to; light up. 2. To shed light upon; clarify. 3. To enlighten, as the mind.

Supper had the flavour and consistency of cardboard; all the swallowing was affecting my taste buds, too.

"Pass the butter, please," I said to Renata. As she handed it to me, I asked, as casually as I could, "How much longer will you be on nights?" I set the butter dish down and pressed the tip of my knife into the soft yellow rectangle.





“For at least another three weeks,” Renata said. “But they’re changing my shift on Monday. Instead of eight to four I have to move to the later shift, midnight to eight.”

I made a sound that could have meant anything. What I was thinking was that I would tell her when she got home from work, even if it was 4:30 in the morning.

And that I wouldn’t stay in this house without her one more night.

After I was done the dishes I wrote a note, *Went to stay overnight with Lindsay*, and propped it against the toaster. I didn’t want Jerry to start looking for me and call Renata. Grabbing my jacket, I slipped out the back door. I wanted to avoid going past the living room, where the television was transmitting its sad blue light.

I took a bus downtown and went to the Salisbury House on Garry Street, the one that stays open until one o’clock. I sat there with a plate of fries until closing time, then started walking home. I knew it would take over two hours, giving me less than an hour and a half to wait for Renata. I planned to sit out in the backyard on a lawn chair, so I could see the car lights as she pulled into the driveway. Then I could catch her before she went into the house, sit down on the front step, and tell her, without any interruptions.

Every time I thought of the words rolling out of my mouth, and what her face would look like, I got this thick greasy feeling in my stomach, even though I hadn’t even eaten any of the fries. The greasiness kept threatening to push its way up my throat.

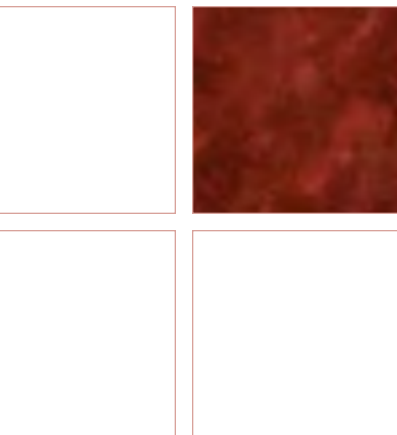
To take my mind off feeling sick, I concentrated on walking, thinking of nothing else except the pressure of the rubber soles of my sneakers on the pavement. But after a while I couldn’t help but notice that there was a mist rolling around me, and my left heel had a burning blister. I started to count off the streets before mine. One block away the mist turned to fine drops, and within five minutes it was a regular downpour, and I was soaked.

I looked at my watch. Only 2:45; I was ahead of schedule, and waiting in the rain wasn’t appealing. But as I walked up our street, I could see that Renata’s car was in the driveway. The fins of the old Chrysler Renata had driven since I was a baby stuck up over the low hedge around our yard like some ancient, displaced shark.

Renata never left work early.

As I reached out to put my key in the lock, I saw that the front door wasn’t even closed all the way. I gave it a tiny push, and it swung open.

I stepped through and closed it silently behind me. The house was in darkness except for one soft light, spilling into the hall from Renata and



Jerry's bedroom. I took off my dripping jacket and dropped it on the mat, then moved down the hall as noiselessly as I could.

Renata was at her window, looking out through the black square. In the light from the lamp on the dresser I could see her reflection, but the rain drops rolling down the glass changed her features. They were blended into one another, creating a softer, smoothed out Renata, except for her mouth. It was still in its stitched, straight line. Her arms were crossed against the pink material of her chest.

I could see my own reflection, too, the distance and light and wet glass distorting my image so I looked like a bigger version of myself, filling the doorway.

I listened to the silence of the house, closing my eyes. When I opened them and looked around the room I noticed that the closet door was open, and something was different, but I wasn't sure what it was.

My eyes moved from the empty hangers back to Renata's reflection, and when I took my first step into the room, I saw her shoulders flinch, and I knew that she could see my image, there in the window. As I watched, the stitches that held her mouth started to loosen, unravel the tiniest bit.

And as I walked toward her, my sneakers moving faster and faster, making tiny, damp, mewling sounds on the bare wood floor, I saw my mother's arms unfold from across her chest and rise, opening, as if caught in an unexpected, upward current of air. ■

## Activities

1. We are given some indication by the narrator that Renata knew what her daughter was going to tell her. Reread the story carefully and identify all of these clues.
2. Using evidence from the story, write a description of the narrator's relationship with her mother. Look for evidence to show how this relationship changes as the story progresses.
3. Imagine that you are a director who is going to film this story. Write a profile of each character to help you select a cast for the movie.
4. Consider their physical characteristics, as well as personality characteristics and behaviours.  
Research and prepare a school display on the topic of sexual abuse. Include the following information in your display:
  - a) the legal definition of sexual abuse
  - b) statistics to show when it occurs, where, and to whom
  - c) local agencies and services that can help victims of sexual abuse.

# Instructions to My Mother

MARILYN DUMONT

Never list the troubles of my eight brothers and sisters  
before hearing mine

Simply nod your head and say "uh huh,"

say "I hear you," a lot

and the rest of the time say nothing.

When I am sick,  
don't list your ailments  
before I tell you mine. Instead  
ask if I need a blanket and a book  
and let me eat ice cream bars dipped in dark chocolate.

Never call

the names of all my sisters

before calling mine.

When I doubt my creativity,  
avoid listing the talents of my siblings first.  
Instead dig out my 10th grade sketch book and  
homesick letters to you and  
tell me they are remarkable and  
that they make you cry.

And never tell me  
I'm "getting grey,"  
but that I am wise in skin,  
sturdy-minded in bone and  
beautywise in the ways of old women.



### Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- present your ideas to a group
- consider gender differences

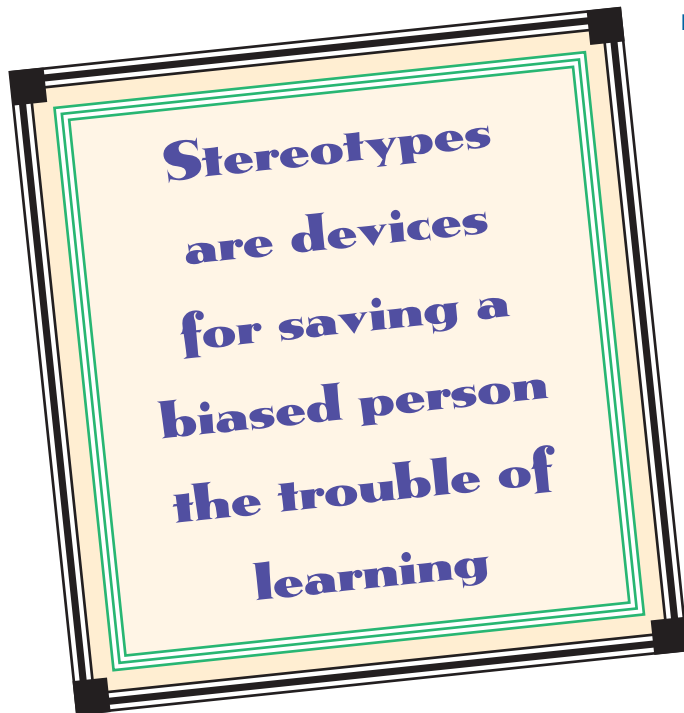
## Activities

1. Write an e-mail to a parent. Offer him or her tactful advice about how to interact better with you.
2. Write the poem from the perspective of a boy giving instructions to his father. In small groups, take turns reading your poems aloud, and discuss the ways that boys and fathers interact differently from girls and mothers.

# Messages Are Everywhere



- The Toronto Blue Jays have an old logo (left), a new one (centre), and a 20-year anniversary one (right). What elements of the logo make it recognizable, despite the changes? List other logos that are easily recognizable. What does each communicate about the company it represents?



- Examine the statement on the magnet. Discuss what criticism is made of people who rely on stereotypes. Is this method of expression effective?

- Discuss the meaning conveyed by the metaphor on this button. Why do you think this metaphor was chosen? What other metaphors can you think of to express the same idea?



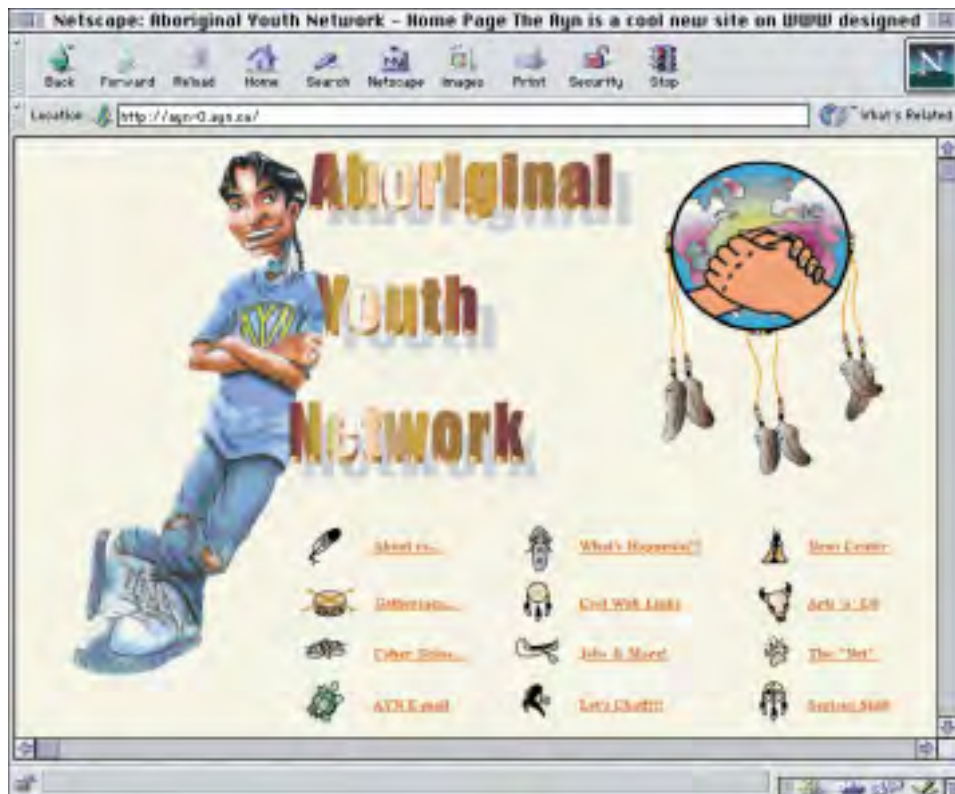




- Consider the design of the message, and discuss it with the class. Why are the phrases set in the pattern of a mirror image? How does the arrangement of the words reinforce the meaning of the statement?

Ralph Waldo Emerson.  
Design by quotable cards inc.®

- Explore the Aboriginal Youth Network at <http://ayn-0.ayn.ca/>. In what way is the Internet an appropriate and useful medium for creating community? Give examples from the website to show how this group has used the medium to its best advantage.



# The Taste of Melon

B O R D E N   D E A L



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- relate your own experience to the story theme
- analyse story structure
- identify changes in the narrator's perspective
- interpret characters' motives

When I think of the summer I was sixteen, a lot of things some crowding in to be thought about. We had moved just the year before, and sixteen is still young enough that the bunch makes a difference. I had a bunch, all right, but they weren't sure of me yet. I didn't know why. Maybe because I'd lived in town, and my father still worked there instead of farming, like the other fathers did. The boys I knew, even Freddy Gray and J.D., still kept a small distance between us.

Then there was Willadean Wills. I hadn't been much interested in girls before. But I had to admit to myself that I was interested in Willadean. She was my age, nearly as tall as I, and up till the year before, Freddy Gray told me, she had been good at playing Gully Keeper and Ante-Over. But she didn't play such games this year. She was tall and slender, and Freddy Gray and J.D. and I had several discussions about the way she walked. I maintained she was putting it on, but J.D. claimed she couldn't help it. Freddy Gray remarked that she hadn't walked that way last year. He said she'd walked like any other human being. So then I said, put on or not, I liked the way she walked, and then there was a large silence.

It wasn't a comfortable silence, because of Mr. Wills, Willadean's father. We were all afraid of Mr. Wills.

Mr. Wills was a big man. He had bright, fierce eyes under heavy brows and, when he looked down at you, you just withered. The idea of having him directly and immediately angry at one of us was enough to shrivel the soul. All that summer Willadean walked up and down the high road or sat on their front porch in a rocking chair, her dress flared out around her, and not one of us dared to do more than say good morning to her.

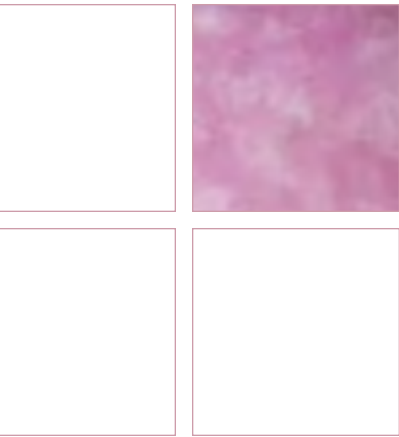
Mr. Wills was the best farmer in the community. My father said he could drive a stick into the ground and grow a tree out of it. But it wasn't an easy thing with him; Mr. Wills fought the earth when he worked it. When he ploughed his fields, you could hear him yelling for a mile. It was as though he dared the earth not to yield him its sustenance.

Above all, Mr. Wills could raise watermelons. Now, watermelons are curious things. Some men can send off for the best watermelon seed, they can plant it in the best ground they own, they can hoe it and tend it with the greatest of care, and they can't raise a melon bigger than your two fists. Other men, like Mr. Wills, can throw seed on the ground, scuff dirt over it, walk off and leave it, and have a crop of the prettiest, biggest melons you ever saw.

Mr. Wills always planted the little field directly behind his barn to watermelons. It ran from the barn to the creek, a good piece of land with just the right sandy soil for melon raising. And it seemed as though the melons just bulged up out of the ground for him.

But they were Mr. Wills's melons; he didn't have any idea of sharing them with the boys of the neighbourhood. He was fiercer about his melons than anything else; if you just happened to walk close to his melon patch, you'd see Mr. Wills standing and watching you with a glower on his face. And likely as not he'd have his gun under his arm.

Everybody expected to lose a certain quantity of their watermelons to ter-rapins and a certain quantity to boys. It wasn't considered stealing to sneak into a man's melon patch and judiciously borrow a sample of his raising.



You might get a load of salt in the seat of your pants if you were seen, but that was part of the game. You'd be looked down on only if you got malicious and stamped a lot of melons into the ground while you were about it. But Mr. Wills didn't think that way.

That summer I was sixteen Mr. Wills raised the greatest watermelon ever seen in the country. It grew in the very middle of his patch, three times as big as any melon anybody had ever seen. Men came from miles around to look at it. Mr. Wills wouldn't let them go into the melon patch. They had to stand around the edge.

Just like all other daredevil boys in that country, I guess, Freddy Gray and J.D. and I had talked idly about stealing that giant watermelon. But we all knew that it was just talk. Not only were we afraid of Mr. Wills and his rages but we knew that Mr. Wills sat in the hayloft window of his barn every night with his shotgun, guarding the melon. It was his seed melon. He meant to plant next year's crop out of that great one and maybe raise a whole field of them. Mr. Wills was in a frenzy of fear that somebody would steal it. Why, he would rather you stole Willadean than his melon. At least, he didn't guard Willadean with his shotgun.

Every night I could sit on our front porch and see Mr. Wills sitting up there in the window of his hayloft, looking fiercely out over his melon patch. I'd sit there by the hour and watch him, the shotgun cradled in his arm, and feel the tremors of fear and excitement chasing up and down my spine.

"Look at him," my father would say. "Scared to death somebody will steal his seed melon. Wouldn't anybody steal a man's seed melon."

"He ought to be in the house taking care of that wife of his," my mother would say tartly. "She's been poorly all year."

You hardly ever saw Mrs. Wills. She was a wraith of a woman, pale as a butter bean. Sometimes she would sit for an hour or two on their porch in the cool of the day. They didn't visit back and forth with anybody though.

"There's Willadean," my father would say mildly.

My mother would make a funny kind of sound that meant disgust. "He cares more about that seed melon than he does his wife," she'd say. "I wish somebody *would* steal it. Maybe then—"

"Helen," my father would say, chiding, "you shouldn't even think of such a thing."

About the time the great watermelon was due to come ripe, there was a night of a full moon. J.D. and Freddy Gray and I had decided we'd go swimming in the creek, so I left the house when the moon rose and went to meet them. The moon floated up into the sky, making everything almost as bright as day, but at the same time softer and gentler than ever daylight could be. It was the kind of night when you feel as though you can do any-

thing in the world, even boldly asking Willadean Wills for a date. On a night like that, you couldn't help but feel that she'd gladly accept.

"Boy, what a moon!" J.D. said when I met them.

"Wouldn't you like to take old Willadean out on a night like this?" Freddy Gray said.

We scoffed at him, but secretly in our hearts we knew how he felt. We were getting old enough to think that that sort of thing might be a lot more fun than going swimming in the moonlight.

As I said before, I was part of the bunch. J.D. and Freddy Gray were my good friends. But because I was still new, there were certain things and certain feelings where I was left out. This was one of them; they were afraid, because I was more of a stranger to Willadean, that she might like the idea of dating me better than she did either of them. This was all way down under the surface, because none of us had admitted to ourselves that we wanted to be Willadean's boyfriend. But far down though it was, I could feel it, and they could feel it.

"I wish I had a newspaper," I said then. "I'll bet you could read it in this moonlight."

We had reached the swimming hole in the creek, and we began shucking off our clothes. We were all excited by the moonlight, yelling at one another and rushing to be first into the water. Freddy Gray made it first, J.D. and I catapulting in right behind him. The water was cold, and the shock of it struck a chill into us. But we got rid of it by a brisk water fight and then we were all right.

We climbed out finally, to rest, and sat on the bank. That big old moon sailed serenely overhead, climbing higher into the sky, and we lay on our backs to look up at it.

"Old Man Wills won't have to worry about anybody stealing his melon tonight, anyway," Freddy Gray said. "Wouldn't anybody dare try it, bright as day like it is."

"He's not taking any chances," J.D. said. "I saw him sitting up in that hayloft when I came by, his shotgun loaded with buckshot. That melon is as safe as it would be in the First National Bank."

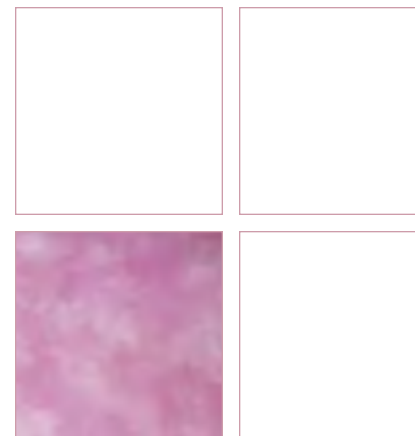
"Shucks," I said in a scoffing voice, "he ain't got buckshot in that gun. He's just got a load of salt, like anybody else guarding a watermelon patch."

Freddy Gray sat upright, looking at me. "Don't kid yourself, son," he said loftily. "He told my daddy that he had it loaded with double-ought buckshot."

"Why," I said, "that would kill a man."

"That's what he's got in mind," Freddy Gray said, "if anybody goes after that seed melon."

It disturbed me more than it should have. After all, I'd never had it in





mind to try for the melon, had I? "I don't believe it," I said flatly. "He wouldn't kill anybody over a watermelon. Even a seed melon like that one."

"Old Man Wills would," J.D. said.

Freddy Gray was still watching me. "What's got you into such a swivet?" he said. "You weren't planning on going after that melon yourself?"

"Well, yes," I said. "As a matter of fact, I was."

There was a moment of respectful silence. Even from me. I hadn't known I was going to say those words. To this day I don't know why I said them. It was all mixed up with Willadean and the rumour of Mr. Wills having his gun loaded with double-ought buckshot and the boys still thinking of me as an outsider. It surged up out of me—not the idea of making my name for years to come by such a deed, but the feeling that there was a rightness in defying the world and Mr. Wills.

Mixed up with it all there came into my mouth the taste of watermelon. I could taste the sweet red juices oozing over my tongue, feel the delicate threaded redness of the heart as I squeezed the juices out of it.

I stood up. "As a matter of fact," I said, "I'm going after it right now."

"Wait a minute," J.D. said in alarm. "You can't do it on a moonlight night like this. It's 200 yards from the creekbank to that melon. He'll see you for sure."

"Yeah," Freddy Gray said, "wait until a dark night. Wait until—"

"Anybody could steal it on a dark night," I said scornfully. "I'm going to take it right out from under his nose. Tonight."

I began putting on my clothes. My heart was thudding in my chest. I didn't taste watermelon any more; I tasted fear. But it was too late to stop now. Besides, I didn't want to stop.

We dressed silently, and I led the way up the creekbank. We came opposite the watermelon patch and ducked down the bank. We pushed through the willows on the other side and looked toward the barn. We could see Mr. Wills very plainly. The gun was cradled in his arms, glinting from the moonlight.

"You'll never make it," J.D. said in a quiet, fateful voice. "He'll see you before you're six steps away from the creek."

"You don't think I mean to walk, do you?" I said.

I pushed myself out away from them, on my belly in the grass that grew up around the watermelon hills. I was absolutely flat, closer to the earth than I thought it was possible to get. I looked back once, to see their white faces watching me out of the willows.

I went on, stopping once in a while to look cautiously up toward the barn. He was still there, still quiet. I met a terrapin taking a bite out of a small melon. Terrapins love watermelon, better than boys do. I touched him on the shell and whispered, "Hello, brother," but he didn't acknowl-



edge my greeting. He just drew into his shell. I went on, wishing I was equipped like a terrapin for the job, outside as well as inside.

It seemed to take forever to reach the great melon in the middle of the field. With every move, I expected Mr. Wills to see me. Fortunately the grass was high enough to cover me. At last the melon loomed up before me, deep green in the moonlight, and I gasped at the size of it. I'd never seen it so close.

I lay still for a moment, panting. I didn't have the faintest idea how to get it out of the field. Even if I'd stood up, I couldn't have lifted it by myself. A melon is the slipperiest, most cumbersome object in the world. And this was the largest I'd ever seen. It was not a long melon, but a fat round one. Besides, I didn't dare stand up.

For five minutes I didn't move. I lay there, my nostrils breathing up the smell of the earth and the musty smell of the watermelon vines, and I wondered why I was out here in the middle of all that moonlight on such a venture. There was more to it than just bravado. I was proving something to myself—and to Mr. Wills and Willadean.

I thought of a tempting way out then. I would carve my name into the deep greenness of the melon. Mr. Wills would see it the next morning when he inspected the melon, and he would know that I could have stolen it if I'd wanted to. But no—crawling to the melon wasn't the same thing as actually taking it.

I reached one hand around the melon and found the stem. I broke the tough stem off close against the smooth roundness, and I was committed. I looked toward the barn again. All quiet. I saw Mr. Wills stretch and yawn, and his teeth glistened; the moon was that bright and I was that close.

I struggled around behind the melon and shoved at it. It rolled over sluggishly, and I pushed it again. It was hard work, pushing it down the trough my body had made through the grass. Dust rose up around me, and I wanted to sneeze. My spine was crawling with the expectation of a shot. Surely he'd see that the melon was gone out of its accustomed space.

It took about a hundred years to push that melon out of the field. I say that advisedly, because I felt that much older when I finally reached the edge. With the last of my strength I shoved it into the willows and collapsed. I was still lying in the edge of the field.

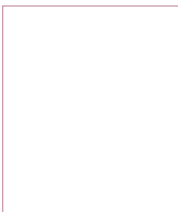
"Come on," Freddy Gray said, his voice pleading. "He's—"

I couldn't move. I turned my head. He was standing up to stretch and yawn to his content, and then he sat down again. By then I was rested enough to move again. I snaked into the willows, and they grabbed me.

"You did it!" they said. "By golly, you did it!"

There was no time to bask in their admiration and respect. "Let's get it on out of here," I said. "We're not safe yet."

We struggled the melon across the creek and up the bank. We started



toward the swimming hole. It took all three of us to carry it, and it was hard to get a grip. J.D. and Freddy Gray carried the ends, while I walked behind the melon, grasping the middle. We stumbled and thrashed in our hurry, and we nearly dropped it three or four times. It was the most difficult object I'd ever tried to carry in my life.

At last we reached the swimming hole and sank down, panting. But not for long; the excitement was too strong in us. Freddy Gray reached out a hand and patted the great melon.

"By golly," he said, "there it is. All ours."

"Let's bust it and eat it before somebody comes," J.D. said.

"Wait a minute," I said. "This isn't just any old melon. This is old man Wills's seed melon, and it deserves more respect than to be busted open with a fist. I'm going to cut it."

I took out my pocketknife and looked at it dubiously. It was small, and the melon was big. We really needed a butcher knife. But when the little knife penetrated the thick green rind, the melon split of itself, perfectly down the middle. There was a ragged, silken, tearing sound, and it lay open before us.

The heart meat, glistening with sweet moisture, was grained with white sugar specks. I tugged at it with two fingers, and a great chunk of the meat came free. I put it into my mouth, closing my eyes. The melon was still warm from the day's sun. Just as in my anticipation, I felt the juice trickle into my throat, sweet and seizing. I had never tasted watermelon so delicious.

The two boys were watching me savour the first bite. I opened my eyes. "Dive in," I said graciously. "Help yourselves."

We gorged ourselves until we were heavy. Even then, we had still only eaten the heart meat, leaving untouched more than we had consumed. We gazed with sated eyes at the leftover melon, still good meat peopled with a multitude of black seeds.

"What are we going to do with it?" I said.

"There's nothing we can do," J.D. said. "I can just see us taking a piece of this melon home for the folks."

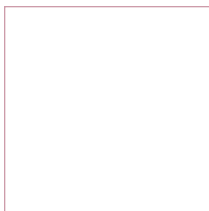
"It's eat it or leave it," Freddy Gray said.

We were depressed suddenly. It was such a waste, after all the struggle and the danger, that we could not eat every bite. I stood up, not looking at the two boys, not looking at the melon.

"Well," I said. "I guess I'd better get home."

"But what about this?" J.D. said insistently, motioning toward the melon.

I kicked half the melon, splitting it in three parts. I stamped one of the chunks under my foot. Then I set methodically to work, destroying the rest of the melon. The boys watched me silently until I picked up a chunk of rind and threw it at them. Then they swept into the destruction also, and we



were laughing again. When we stopped, only the battered rinds were left, the meat muddied on the ground, the seed scattered.

We stood silent, looking at one another. "There was nothing else to do," I said and they nodded solemnly.

But the depression went with us toward home and, when we parted, we did so with sober voices and gestures. I did not feel triumph or victory, as I had expected, though I knew that tonight's action had brought me closer to my friends than I had ever been before.

"Where have you been?" my father asked as I stepped up on the porch. He was sitting in his rocker.

"Swimming," I said.

I looked toward Mr. Wills's barn. The moon was still high and bright, but I could not see him. My breath caught in my throat when I saw him in the field, walking toward the middle. I stood stiffly, watching him. He reached the place where the melon should have been. I saw him hesitate, looking around, then he bent, and I know he was looking at the depression in the earth where the melon had lain. He straightened, a great strangled cry tearing out of his throat. It chilled me deep down and all the way through, like the cry of a wild animal.

My father jerked himself out of the chair, startled by the sound. He turned in time to see Mr. Wills lift the shotgun over his head and hurl it from him, his voice crying out again in a terrible, surging yell of pain and anger.

"Lord, what's the matter?" my father said.

Mr. Wills was tearing up and down the melon patch, and I was puzzled by his actions. Then I saw, he was destroying every melon in the patch. He was breaking them open with his feet, silent now, concentrating on his frantic destruction. I was horrified by the awful sigh, and my stomach moved sickly.

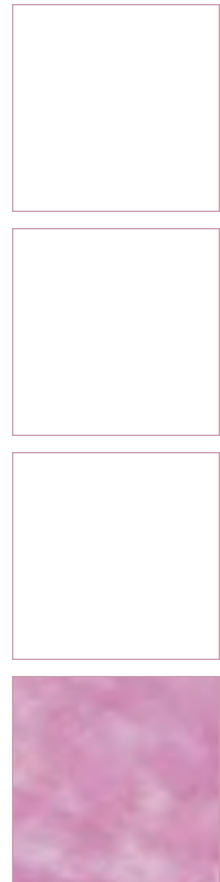
My father stood for a moment, watching him, then he jumped off the porch and ran toward Mr. Wills. I followed him. I saw Mrs. Wills and Willadean huddled together in the kitchen doorway. My father ran into the melon patch and caught Mr. Wills by the arm.

"What's come over you?" he said. "What's the matter, man?"

Mr. Wills struck his grip away. "They've stolen my seed melon," he yelled. "They took it right out from under me."

My father grabbed him with both arms. He was a brave man, for he was smaller than Mr. Wills, and Mr. Wills looked insane with anger, his teeth gripped over his lower lip, his eyes gleaming furiously. Mr. Wills shoved my father away, striking at him with his fist. My father went down into the dirt. Mr. Wills didn't seem to notice. He went back to his task of destruction, raging up and down the field, stamping melons large and small.

My father got up and began to chase him. But he didn't have a chance.



Every time he got close, Mr. Wills would sweep his great arm and knock him away again. At last Mr. Wills stopped of his own accord. He was standing on the place where the great melon had grown. His chest was heaving with great sobs of breath. He gazed about him at the destruction he had wrought, but I don't think that he saw it.

"They stole my seed melon," he said. His voice was quieter now than I had ever heard it. I had not believed such quietness was in him. "They got it away, and now it's gone."

I saw that tears stood on his cheeks, and I couldn't look at him any more. I'd never seen a grown man cry, crying in such strength.

"I had two plans for that melon," he told my father. "Mrs. Wills has been poorly all the spring, and she dearly loves the taste of melon for eating, and my melon for planting. She would eat the meat, and the next spring I would plant the seeds for the greatest melon crop in the world. Every day she would ask me if the great seed melon was ready yet."

I looked toward the house. I saw the two women, the mother and the daughter, standing there. I couldn't bear any more. I fled out of the field toward the sanctuary of my house. I ran past my mother, standing on the porch, and went into my room.

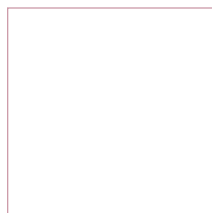
I didn't sleep that night. I heard my father come in, heard the low-voiced conversation with my mother, heard them go to bed. I lay wide-eyed and watched the moon through the window as it slid slowly down the sky and at last brought a welcome darkness into the world.

I don't know all the things I thought that night. Mostly it was about the terrible thing I had committed so lightly, out of pride and out of being sixteen years old and out of wanting to challenge the older man, the man with the beautiful daughter.

That was the worst of all, that I had done it so lightly, with so little thought of its meaning. In that country and in that time, watermelon stealing was not a crime. It was tolerated, laughed about. The men told great tales of their own watermelon-stealing days, how they'd been set on by dogs and peppered with salt-loaded shotgun shells. Watermelon raiding was a game, a ritual of defiance and rebellion by young males. I could remember my own father saying, "No melon tastes as sweet as a stolen one," and my mother laughing and agreeing.

But stealing this great seed melon from a man like Mr. Wills lay outside the safe magic of the tacit understanding between man and boy. And I knew that it was up to me, at whatever risk, to repair as well as I could the damage I had done.

When it was daylight I rose from my bed and went out into the fresh world. It would be hot later on; but now the air was dew-cool and fragrant. I had found a paper sack in the kitchen, and I carried it in my hand as I





walked toward the swimming hole. I stopped there, looking down at the wanton waste we had made of the part of the melon we had not been able to eat. It looked as though Mr. Wills had been stamping here too.

I knelt down on the ground, opened the paper sack and began picking up the black seeds. They were scattered thickly, still stringy with watermelon pulp, and soon my hands were greasy with them. I kept on doggedly, searching out every seed I could find, until at the end I had to crawl over the ground, seeking for the last ones.

They nearly filled the paper sack. I went back to the house. By the time I reached it, the sun and my father had risen. He was standing on the porch.

"What happened to you last night?" he said. "Did you get so frightened you had to run home? It was frightening to watch him, I'll admit that."

"Father," I said, "I've got to go talk to Mr. Wills. Right now. I wish you would come with me."

He stopped, watching me. "What's the matter?" he said. "Did you steal that seed melon of his?"

"Will you come with me?" I said.

His face was dark and thoughtful. "Why do you want me?"

"Because I'm afraid he'll shoot me," I said. My voice didn't tremble much, but I couldn't keep it all out.

"Then why are you going?" he said.

"Because I've got to," I said.

My father watched me for a moment. "Yes," he said quietly, "I guess you do." He came down the steps and stood beside me. "I'll go with you," he said.

We walked the short distance between our house and his. Though it was so near, I had never been in his yard before. I felt my legs trembling as I went up the brick walk and stood at the bottom of the steps, the paper sack in my hand. I knocked on the porch floor, and Willadean came to the screen door.

I did not look at her. "I want to talk to your father."

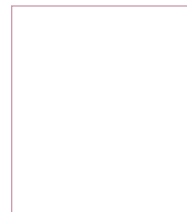
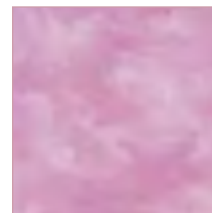
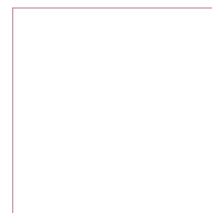
She stared at me for a moment, then she disappeared. In a moment Mr. Wills appeared in the doorway. His face was marked by the night, his cheeks sunken, his mouth bitten in. He stared at me absent-mindedly, as though I were only a speck in his thinking.

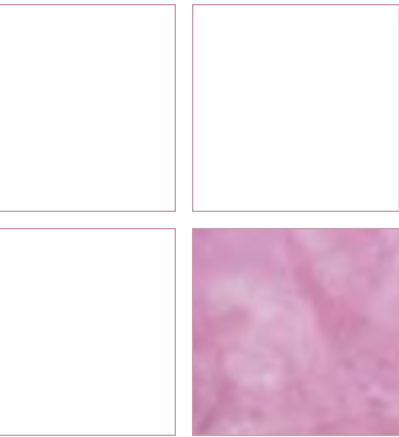
"What do you want, boy?" he said.

I felt my teeth grit against the words I had to say. I held out the paper bag toward him.

"Mr. Wills," I said, "here's the seeds from your seed melon. That's all I could bring back."

I could feel my father standing quietly behind me. Willadean was standing in the doorway, watching. I couldn't take my eyes away from Mr. Wills's face.





"Did you steal it?" he said.

"Yes, sir," I said.

He advanced to the edge of the porch. The shotgun was standing near the door, and I expected him to reach for it. Instead he came toward me, a great powerful man, and leaned down to me.

"Why did you steal it?" he said.

"I don't know," I said.

"Didn't you know it was my seed melon?"

"Yes sir," I said. "I knew it."

He straightened up again and his eyes were beginning to gleam. I wanted to run, but I couldn't move.

"And my sick wife hungered for the taste of that melon," he said. "Not for herself, like I thought. But to invite the whole neighbourhood in for a slice of it. She knew I wouldn't ever think of anything like that myself. She hungered for that."

I hung my head. "I'm sorry," I said.

He stopped still then, watching me. "So you brought me the seeds," he said softly. "That's not much, boy."

I lifted my head. "It's was all I could think to do," I said. "The melon is gone. But the seeds are next year. That's why I brought them to you."

"But you ruined this year," he said.

"Yes, sir," I said. "I ruined this year."

I couldn't look at him any more. I looked at Willadean standing behind him. Her eyes were a puzzle, watching me, and I couldn't tell what she was thinking or feeling.

"I'm about as ashamed of myself last night as you are of yourself," Mr. Wills said. He frowned at me with his heavy brows. "You ruined the half of it, and I ruined the other. We're both to blame, boy. Both to blame."

It seemed there ought to be something more for me to say. I searched for it in my mind and discovered only the thought that I had found this morning in the grey light of dawning.

"The seeds are next year." I said. I looked at him humbly. "I'll help you plant them, Mr. Wills. I'll work very hard."

Mr. Wills looked at my father for the first time. There was a small hard smile on his face, and his eyes didn't look as fierce as they had before.

"A man with a big farm like mine needs a son," he said. "But Willadean here was all the good Lord saw fit to give me. Sam, I do wish I had me a boy like that."

He came close to me then, put his hand on my shoulder. "We can't do anything about this year," he said. "But we'll grow next year, won't we? We'll grow it together."

"Yes, sir," I said.

I looked past him at Willadean, and her eyes were smiling too. I felt my heart give a great thump in my chest.

"And you don't have to offer the biggest melon in the world to get folks to come visiting," I blurted. "Why, I'll set on the porch with Willadean any time."

Mr. Wills and my father burst out laughing. Willadean was blushing red in the face. But somehow she didn't look mad. Flustered, I began to beat a retreat toward the gate. Then I stopped, looking back at Mr. Wills, I couldn't leave yet.

"Can I ask you one thing, Mr. Wills?" I said.

He stopped laughing, and there was no fierceness in his voice. "Anything you want to, boy," he said.

"Well, I just wanted to know," I said. "Was there double-ought buckshot in that gun?"

He reached around and picked up the gun. He unbreeched it and took out a shell. He broke the shell in his strong fingers and poured the white salt out into his palm.

"You see?" he said.

"Yes, sir," I said, taking a deep breath. "I see."

I went on then, and the next year started that very day. ■

## Activities

1. Have you ever done anything you knew was wrong in order to fit in or be admired? Write about the experience, and what you learned from it.
2. **a)** Identify two moments of climax in the story.  
**b)** How would the story be different if the author had chosen to end it sooner? Identify a possible ending point for the story. What do the scenes that follow add to the plot? Discuss which ending you prefer, and why.
3. Since the narrator relates the events of the story as they unfold, there is a difference between his imaginary picture of Mr. Wills at the outset, and the real Mr. Wills revealed at the end. Chart the differences between the imaginary and the real Mr. Wills, using quotations from the story.
4. **a)** The melon represents many different things to different characters in the story. In groups of three, choose one of the characters and discuss what the melon means to him or her.  
**b)** Create a monologue in which the character you have chosen expresses his feelings about the melon. Form new groups, and take turns presenting your monologues. Provide constructive feedback on each other's delivery, language, and character portrayal.

# I WAS A TEENAGE INGÉNUUE

## Undercover at Canada's National Bimbo Rag

LEAH ROSS

### Focus Your Learning

Reading this article will help you:

- analyse the writer's viewpoint
- explore language use in popular culture
- identify the characteristics of magazines
- produce a magazine

So, like, there we were! Six totally wired teens, selected from like kajillions of other girls to be the Teen Advisory Council for Maclean Hunter's new teen rag, *Ingénue*. Ohmigod, I was sooo excited!

So, editor Kara Lee Smart bounces into the room on platform shoes and goes, "Hi-eee!" And all us girls are like "Hi-eee!" back. Then she passes around all these pictures of chronically *hot* guys and she's like, "These are the male models we're considering for our next fashion shoot and I want you guys to rate them from one to 10."

I am not joking—it was the hardest decision of my life. Eventually, I had to go with the brunette straddling a motorcycle.

After that, it was out for a power lunch at the restaurant of our choice (Lime Rickey's). Then we went to the Maclean Hunter corporate offices to meet our real boss, Fatima. She told us she was the executive assistant to the president.

For the rest of the summer, Fatima was going to be kind of like our camp counsellor. You know, she'd take us out shopping and let us play with the fax machine and stuff. On the

first day she showed us our office. It was like this really big sunny room with a long desk and this little computer that you didn't even have to plug in. Cool!

Then we met this old dude who was like the president of Maclean Hunter for all of Canada. We hung in his office for a bit and he told us about golf and the importance of advertising and stuff. He was a pretty rad guy (minus the loafers).

Later on we went back to our office to do some paperwork. Kara had given us these reader surveys to fill out. They were photocopied from the latest issue of *Seventeen*. The questions were like: "What's your fave piece of clothing and where'd you get it?" It wasn't very hard, not like school or anything. But then there was this one question: "If you were stranded on a desert island and you could only have one beauty product, which one would you choose?"

I was totally stumped so I asked the girl behind me what she put. She goes, "Tough call, but I went with Revlon Summer Peach Lipliner."

I wrote down, "Does a canoe count as a beauty product???"

Such was my first day on the job. Working on *Ingénue's* Teen Advisory Council was, to put it mildly, not what I had expected. The job description in the ad had been vague—it called for a few teenage girls to work for the summer on a new teen magazine set to launch in the fall. We were asked to submit a short essay describing "Why I am perfect for this job."

I wrote about how the majority of magazines targeted to young women—like *Seventeen* and *YM*—are a bunch of Barbie Doll dreck that seek nothing more than to sell warped ideals of beauty and romance to vulnerable minds. These ideals serve one purpose: They sell the

products advertised within the magazine. A survey of "What boys like" runs beside an ad for Clearasil—first, diminish self-esteem, then offer a cure available at your local drugstore.

Apparently the *Ingénue* creators liked what I had to say, since they hired me. But what they hired me to do was a mystery. A few weeks into the job, our duties and responsibilities as the teen council were still murky. Either no one had bothered to think of any, or there simply were none. I suppose it was the kind of job that many people dream of, but I quickly got bored with reading the July issue of *Flare* over and over again.

You see, I had imagined that the *Ingénue* job would be something along the lines of *Sassy* magazine's annual reader-produced issue, which includes articles written by young women on issues like date rape and body image. I was eager to have a role in the making of Canada's first mainstream teen magazine.

Most of the other girls' interests lay in fashion and beauty, but I wanted to have some editorial input. I had ideas for a column about underground teen culture and feature articles that would make current political issues accessible and applicable to teenage girls. I don't mean to moralize or anything, but I wanted to excite the substance-starved minds of my peers by creating a magazine that didn't try to pacify or patronize young women. (Forget Revlon, we need *revolution!*)

And I figured I was in a good position to do it. All through my adolescence I was lucky enough to be exposed to a huge range of reading materials—from *The New Yorker* and *Ms.* to quirky underground comics and independent music zines. I'm lucky because my parents







encouraged me to read whatever I wanted from day one. I'm also lucky because I attended a high school for the performing arts, where the word "freak" didn't exist in my friends' vocabularies.

But as a teen council member at *Ingénue*, my eclectic tastes didn't seem to count. I had been hired as a typical teen with typical interests; the kind of girl who follows *The Young and the Restless* and dreams of nothing more than having a nice boyfriend. My job, in short, was to be this girl.

Over the first couple of weeks, the teen council was led on a seemingly endless tour of the Maclean Hunter offices. We met the white men in suits in the corporate offices, the brown-skinned women in customer service, and the harried-looking staff in the newsrooms. Each time we arrived on a new floor, Fatima would find someone—an editor, a secretary, or a photocopier repairman—and, regardless of what they were doing, direct them to take us on a guided tour of the office in question. Most employees smiled charmingly at Fatima and reluctantly led us around for a while. In the meantime, Fatima scooted back to her own office, returned some phone calls, arranged a few meetings, and was back in time to deliver us to the next department.

A question began to arise: "What the heck are we doing here?"

"Just learning a little bit about the publishing industry so we can put your talents to use," Fatima assured everyone. I was sceptical. The tours continued.

Sometime during the second week we met with Brian Segal, the publisher of *Maclean's*. We knew he was a bigwig because we actually had to make an appointment. So there we were, all six of us, sitting in his office when he cheerfully

asked, "So how do you kids like the name of the magazine? It took everyone a long time to decide on *Ingénue* and I think it's fabulous."

A couple of my fellow council members murmured things like, "Cool!" and, "Very French."

I had been waiting for this question. "Do any of you guys know exactly what an ingénue is?" I asked.

Everyone, including Mr. Segal, drew a blank.

I took out a definition scrawled from the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "Ingénue—An artless, innocent, or naive girl, esp. of the type represented on the stage." They all just stared at me. Brian Segal shrugged. No one seemed shocked or insulted like I had been.

"Come on guys!" I cried out. "It's the French word for bimbo!"

One girl commented diplomatically, "Well, I mean, like, we *are* naive."

As the summer weeks passed, our jobs dwindled into non-existence. At the beginning, Fatima had planned activities for us, like touring the Maclean Hunter printing plant, or visiting the Mac Cosmetics factory and getting a free makeover. We spent a couple of days hanging around a fashion shoot and a couple more shopping at the Eaton Centre. I was getting pretty darn tired of talking about the season's colours, but kept in mind I was getting paid for this. As the days wore on, however, Fatima just ran out of things for us to do. She did, after all, have a full-time job other than baby-sitter-in-chief.

Feeling useless, I contacted Kara, the editor of *Ingénue*, to see if she could give me some writing or research to do. I offered to act as an intern, an apprentice, a gopher—anything to get me out of the corporate offices and give my life some meaning again. I craved stress and challenge. Even my old waitressing job was beginning to seem appealing.



# To Christine

S U S A N F O R D E

I wish I could tell you  
That you're not too fat  
That you're fine the way that you are  
That you're pretty enough  
And you don't have to wear punishing heels  
I wish I could make you believe  
That you don't have to starve yourself  
Or add to your chest  
To fit this year's fashions.  
And I wish I could tell you,  
To love yourself as much as you love him.  
You don't have to make yourself  
Into his ideal  
The real you is worth so much more.  
But I am only one voice,  
Against so many  
The magazines with diets and makeovers  
That you read  
The fairy tale your mother read you,  
Where the mermaid gave her voice  
To be what the prince wanted.  
Oh, I wish I could make you listen  
But I'm only one voice  
Drowned out by so many.



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- create a collage to illustrate a theme
- write from a different perspective
- compare different texts with similar themes

## Activities

1. Media have a lot to do with reinforcing our self-image. Create a collage of words and images from magazines, advertisements, etc. that may have affected Christine's view of what she should be. Refer to the poem for clues.
2. Write an e-mail message to Susan Forde from Christine's point of view. Consider how she might view herself.
3. There is a reference in the poem to "The Little Mermaid" by Hans Christian Andersen. Read a copy of the fairy tale, and consider why the poet might have made reference to this story in her poem. What do both stories share?

# The Game

K E N D R Y D E N



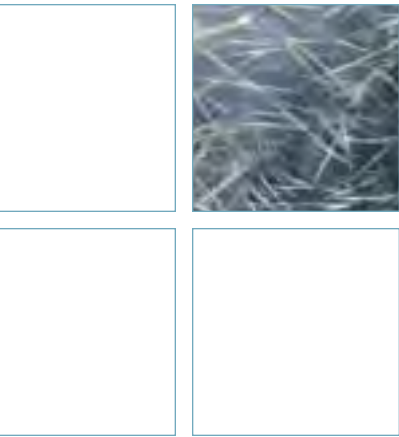
Once I used to wait in line like everyone else. Then one day a bank teller motioned me out of the line, and I haven't been back in one since. I feel no small guilt each time; nonetheless I continue to accept such favours. For the tellers and me, it has become normal and routine. They treat me the way they think people like me expect to be treated. And I accept.

It is the kind of special treatment professional athletes have grown accustomed to, and enjoy. It began with hockey, with teenage names and faces in local papers, with hockey jackets that only the best players on the best teams wore, with parents who competed not so quietly on the side; and it will end with hockey. In between, the longer and better we play the more all-encompassing the treatment becomes. People give, easily and naturally. And we accept. Slippers, sweaters, plant holders, mitts, baby blankets, baby clothes sent in the mail. Paintings, carvings, etchings, sculptures

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this article will help you:

- make connections between your own research and the text
- write and present a script
- analyse your own opinions
- conduct an interview



in clay, metal, papier-mâché. Shirts, slacks, coats, suits, ties, underwear; cars, carpets, sofas, chairs, refrigerators, beds, washers, dryers, stoves, TVs, stereos, at cost or no cost at all. After all, a special person deserves a special price. A hundred letters a week, more than 3,000 a year—"You're the best," all but a few of them say. On the street, in restaurants and theatres, we're pointed at, talked about like the weather. "There he is, the famous hockey player," your own kids announce to their friends. In other homes, your picture is on a boy's bedroom wall. Magazines, newspapers, radio, TV; hockey cards, posters, T-shirts, and curios, anywhere, everywhere, name, face, thousands of times.

And we love it. We say we don't, but we do. We hate the nuisance and inconvenience, the bother of untimely, unending autographs, handshakes, and smiles, living out an image of ourselves that isn't quite real, abused if we fail to, feeling encircled and trapped, never able to get away. But we also feel special—head-turning, chin-dropping, forget-your-name special. What others buy Rolls-Royces and votes and hockey teams for, what others take off their clothes for, what others kill for, we have. All we have to do is play.

If exposure is the vehicle of celebrity, attention is what separates one celebrity from another. Guy Lafleur and Yvon Lambert are both celebrities, yet on the same ice, the same screen, Lafleur is noticed, Lambert is not. Lambert, methodical and unspectacular, has nothing readily distinctive about him. His image is passed over, his name unheard. Lafleur is distinctive. The way he skates, the sound of the crowd he carries with him, the goals he scores.

And so, too, others, for other reasons. Mario Tremblay, for his fiery, untamed spirit; Bob Gainey, for his relentless, almost palpable will; Tiger Williams, Eddie Shack, Ron Duguay, each colourful and exciting; and Dave Schultz, once king of the mountain. As sports coverage proliferates beyond games, as it becomes entertainment and moves to prime time, as we look for the story behind the story, off-ice performance becomes important. And so personas are born, and sometimes made, and cameras and microphones are there as it happens. The crazies, the clowns, the "sports intellectuals," the anti-jock rebels (Jim Boulton, Bill "Spaceman" Lee), the playboys (Joe Namath, Derek Sanderson), each a distinctive personality, each a bigger celebrity because of what he does away from the game.

Television has given us a new minimum off-ice standard. The modern player must be articulate (or engagingly inarticulate, especially southern style). It's not enough to score a goal and have it picked apart by the all-seeing eyes of replay cameras. A player must be able to put it in his own eloquent words. How did you do it? How did you feel? Live, on-camera words that cannot be edited for the morning paper.



Celebrity is a full, integrated life, earned on-ice, performed, sustained, strengthened, re-earned off-ice. As Roger Angell once put it, we want our athletes to be “good at life.” Role models for children, people we want to believe earned what they have, every bit as good at things off the ice as on. If they’re inarticulate, harsh, and pejorative, they’re suddenly just jocks. Merely lucky, less likable, less good at life, less celebrated; finally, they even seem less good *on* the ice.

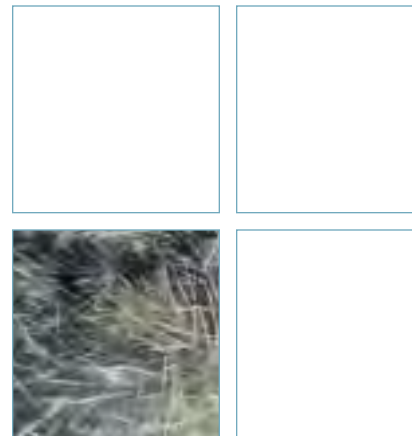
At its extreme, the process creates the category of professional celebrity, people “famous for being famous,” so accomplished at being celebrities that their original source of deity is forgotten. At the least, it encourages all celebrities to learn the *skills* of the public person. How to look good, how to sound modest and intelligent, funny and self-deprecatory, anything you want. It’s a celebrity’s shortcut to the real thing, but it works.

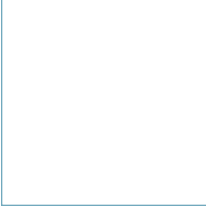
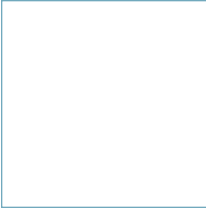
It’s a game—an ad game, an image game, a celebrity game—that no one really loses. Everyone needs someone to talk about—why not about us? Everyone needs heroes and villains. We earn a little money, get some exposure. The commercials are going to be done anyway. Besides, it doesn’t last long. A few years and images change, celebrity cools, it’s over. It all evens out.

But it doesn’t. We all lose, at least a little. We lose because you think I’m better than I am. Brighter than I am, kinder, more compassionate, capable of more things, as good at life as I am at the game. I’m not. Off the ice I struggle as you do, but off the ice you never see me, even when you think you do. I appear good at other things because I’m good at being a goalie; because I’m a celebrity; because there’s always someone around to say I’m good. Because in the cozy glow of success, of good news, you want me to be good. It’s my angle, and so long as I play well the angle won’t change. I appear bright and articulate because I’m an athlete, and many athletes are not bright and articulate. “Like a dog’s walking on his hind legs,” as Dr. Johnson once put it, “it is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all.”

But you don’t believe that, just as I don’t believe it about celebrities I don’t know. They’re taller, more talented, more compassionate. They glitter into cameras and microphones, give each other awards for talent and compassion, “great human beings” every one. Wet-eyed I applaud, and believe. And all of us lose. You, because you feel less worthy than you are. Me, because once, when I was twenty-three years old and trying to learn about myself, I wanted to believe I was, or soon would be, everything others said I was. Instead, having learned much and grown older, I feel co-conspirator to a fraud.

Professional athletes do exciting, sometimes courageous, sometimes ennobling things, as heroes do, but no more than you do. Blown up on a





TV screen or a page, hyped by distance and imagination, we seem more heroic, but we're not. Our achievement seems grander, but it isn't. Our cause, our commitment, is no different from yours. We are no more than examples, metaphors, because we enter every home; we're models for the young because their world is small and we do what they do.

A few years ago, Joe McGinniss, author of *The Selling of the President, 1968*, wrote a book called *Heroes*. It sketches McGinniss's own tormented trail from being *the youngest*, to *the highly acclaimed*, to *the former*—all before he was thirty. At the same time, he ostensibly searches for the vanished American hero. He talks to George McGovern and Teddy Kennedy, General William Westmoreland, John Glenn, Eugene McCarthy, author William Styron, playwright Arthur Miller—some of them heroes of his, all of them heroes to many.

But it's like chasing a rainbow. He finds that, as he gets closer, his heroes disappear. In homes and bars, on campaign trails, they're distinctly, disappointingly normal. Not wonderfully, triumphantly, down-to-earth normal, but up-close, drinking-too-much, sweating, stinking, unheroically normal. And for heroes, normal isn't enough. We are allowed one image; everything must fit.

The Greeks gave their gods human imperfections. In the modern hero, however, every flaw is a fatal flaw. It has only to be found, and it *will* be. Moving from celebrity to hero is like moving from a city to a small town. In a city, the camera's eye, though always present, is distant. In a small town, there isn't that distance. There's no place to hide.

"Whom the gods would destroy," Wilfrid Sheed wrote in *Transatlantic Blues*, "they first oversell." Superficially created, superficially destroyed—for the hero, for the celebrity, it all evens out. Except a heavy price is paid along the way. We all lose again. You, because, saddened and hurt by heroes who turn out not to be heroes at all, you become cynical and stop believing. Me, because I'm in a box. What is my responsibility? Is it, as I'm often told, to be the hero that children think I am? Or is it to live what is real, to be something else?

Recently, a friend asked me to speak to his college seminar. Near the end of two hours, we began to talk about many of these questions. A girl raised her hand. She said that a year or two earlier, on the Academy Awards, she had seen Charlton Heston receive an award for his "humanitarian" work. Heston had made the point, the girl said, that thousands of volunteers had done far more than he, that they deserved the award.

I asked the class what that story told them about Charlton Heston. That he's even modest, they decided. A few of the students laughed; then, one by one, several others joined in. ■

## Activities

1. Read the article closely. Outline all of the qualities of the “sports hero” or celebrity identified by Dryden. Select a sports figure to research, and compare Dryden’s description with your research model. Create a chart to show your findings.
2. The artist Andy Warhol once predicted that in today’s media-rich world, everyone would have fifteen minutes of fame. Create a scenario that has made you famous. Did you win the lottery? Perform a heroic deed? Break a record? Write a script describing your fifteen minutes of fame. With a partner or small group, present your script to the class in the form of a role play, audiotape, or videotape.
3. Write a fan letter to a celebrity, identifying the qualities and characteristics that make him or her admirable to you. Your letter should contain specific examples that demonstrate these qualities.
4. Interview a notable local sports figure (from a school team, a local university team, or local professional team). Ask questions to determine whether these athletes receive privileged treatment, and whether they think they deserve it. Present your interview to the class, and invite questions.

# Commercial

JOHN UPDIKE



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this description will help you:

- discuss the impact of media images
- describe persuasive techniques used in advertising
- analyse and use techniques for creating satire

It comes on every night, somewhere in the eleven o'clock news. A CHILD runs down a STAIRCASE. A rotund ELDERLY WOMAN stands at the foot, picks up the CHILD, gives him a shake (friendly), and sets him down. There is MUSIC, containing the words "laughing child," "fur-lined rug," etc.

The STAIRCASE looks unexpectedly authentic, oaken and knobby and steep in the style of houses where we have childhoods. We know this STAIRCASE. Some treads creak, and at the top there is a branching many-cornered darkness wherein we are supposed to locate security and sleep.

The wallpaper (baskets of flowers, at a guess, alternating with ivied medallions) would feel warm, if touched.

The CHILD darts off-screen. We have had time to register that it is a BOY, with long hair cut straight across his forehead. The camera stays with the ELDERLY WOMAN, whom by now we identify as the GRANDMOTHER. She gazes after the (supposedly) receding BOY so fondly we can imagine “(*gazes fondly*)” in the commercial’s script.

The second drags; her beaming threatens to become blank. But now, with an electrifying touch of uncertainty, so that we do not know if it was the director’s idea or the actress’s, GRANDMOTHER slowly wags her head, as if to say, *My, oh my, what an incorrigible little rascal, what a lovable little man-child!* Her heart, we feel, so brims with love that her plump body, if a whit less healthy and compact, if a whit less compressed and contained by the demands and accoutrements of GRANDMOTHERLINESS, would burst. GRANDMOTHERLINESS massages her from all sides, like the brushes of a car wash.

And now (there is so much to see!) she relaxes her arms in front of her, the fingers of one hand gently gripping the wrist of the other. This gesture tells us that her ethnic type is Anglo-Saxon. An Italian mama, say, would have folded her arms across her bosom; and, also, wouldn’t the coquetry of Mediterranean women forbid their wearing an apron out of the kitchen, beside what is clearly a front STAIRCASE? So, while still suspended high on currents of anticipation, we deduce that this is not a commercial for spaghetti.

Nor for rejuvenating skin creams or hair rinses, for the camera cuts from GRANDMOTHER to the BOY. He is hopping through a room. Not quite hopping, nor exactly skipping: a curious fey gait that bounces his cap of hair and evokes the tender dialectic of the child–director encounter. This CHILD, who, though a child actor acting the part of a child, is nevertheless also truly a child, has been told to move across the fictional room in a childish way. He has obeyed, moving hobbled by self-consciousness yet with the elastic bounce that Nature has bestowed upon him and that no amount of adult direction can utterly squelch. Only time can squelch it.

We do not know how many “takes” were sifted through to get this second of movement. Though no child in reality (though billions of children have crossed millions of rooms) ever moved across a room in quite this way, an impression of CHILDHOOD pierces us. We get the message: GRANDMOTHER’S HOUSE (and the montage is so swift we cannot itemize the furniture, only concede that it appears fittingly fusty and congested) is cozy, safe—a place to be joyful in. Why? The question hangs.

We are in another room. A kitchen. A shining POT dominates the foreground. The BOY, out of focus, still bobbing in that unnatural, affecting way, enters at the background, comes forward into focus, becomes an alarmingly



large face and a hand that lifts the lid of the pot. STEAM billows. The BOY blows the STEAM away, then stares at us with stagily popped eyes. Meaning? He has burned himself? There is a bad smell? The director, off-screen, has shouted at him? We do not know, and we are made additionally uncomfortable by the possibility that this is a spaghetti commercial after all.

Brief scene: GRANDMOTHER washing BOY'S face. Bathroom fixtures behind. Theme of heat (COZY HOUSE, hot POT) subliminally emerges. Also: supertime?

We do not witness supper. We are back at the STAIRCASE. New actors have arrived: a tall and vigorous YOUNG COUPLE, in stylish overcoats. Who? We scarcely have time to ask. The BOY leaps (flies, indeed; we do not see his feet launch him) upward into the arms of the MAN. These are his PARENTS. We ourselves, watching, welcome them; the depth of our welcome reveals to us a dread within ourselves, of something morbid and claustral in the old HOUSE, with its cunningly underlined snugness and its lonely household of benevolent crone and pampered, stagy brat. These other two radiate the brisk air of outdoors. To judge from their clothes, it is cold outside; this impression is not insignificant; our sense of subliminal coherence swells. We join in the BUSTLE OF WELCOME, rejoicing with the YOUNG COUPLE in their sexual energy and safe return and great good fortune to be American and modern and solvent and fertile and to have such a picture-book GRANDMOTHER to babysit for them whenever they partake of some innocent infrequent SPREE.

But whose mother is GRANDMOTHER, the FATHER'S or the MOTHER'S?

All questions are answered. The actor playing the YOUNG FATHER ignores GRANDMOTHER with the insouciance of blood kinship, while the actress playing the YOUNG MOTHER hugs her, pulls back, reconsiders, then dips forward to bestow upon the beaming plump cheek a kiss GRANDMOTHER does not, evidently, expect. Her beaming wavers momentarily, like a candle flame when a distant door is opened. The DAUGHTER-IN-LAW again pulls back, as if coolly to contemplate the product of her affectionate inspiration. Whether her tense string of hesitations was spun artfully by an actress fulfilling a role or was visited upon the actress as she searched her role for nuances (we can imagine how vague the script might be: *Parents return. Greetings all around. Camera medium tight*), a ticklish closeness of manoeuvre, amid towering outcroppings of good will, has been conveyed. The FAMILY is complete.

And now the underlying marvel is made manifest. The true HERO of these thirty seconds unmasks. The FAMILY fades into a blue cartoon flame, and the MUSIC, no longer buried by visual stimuli, sings with clarion brilliance, "NATURAL GAS is a Beautiful Thing!" ■

## Activities

1.
  - a) The commercial John Updike describes is very idealized. What effect do you think media depictions like this have on our expectations of family life? Discuss in groups of three.
  - b) Think about the members of your own family. How would the commercial be different if your family were in it? Create a storyboard depicting such a commercial.
2. A satire pokes fun at its subject by using irony to reveal its true nature. In small groups, discuss the ways in which John Updike creates satire in "Commercial." Give examples from the text.
3. Choose a commercial that relies on an emotional appeal, and write your own satirical description. Analyse the images used and their effect on the audience, and try to imagine what the script directions might say at various key points in the commercial. Read your description aloud to an audience of your classmates.

## End-of-unit Activities

1. "Examine "Our Appearance," "Imperfectly," "The Toad," and "To Christine" and decide what theme they all share in common. Explain how the theme is evident in each selection. Discuss your findings as a class, and compose a comparison chart to show similarities and differences in the way each piece deals with the theme.
2. Use the shape technique employed in "Crosswords" and apply it to "The Brute." Take all of the angry words from the play and write them in the form of a shape poem, including the ironic twist at the end.
3. Hold a panel discussion on the issues surrounding racism and Canadian society. If possible, some of the panel members should reflect the area's cultural diversity. Members of the audience should compose questions which relate to the experience of growing up in a specific cultural group, or how others respond to issues of difference. Use the short story "Long, Long After School" and the excerpt from "I Live in a Language That's Not Mine" as a starting point for discussion.
4. Write a "catalogue of romance." Use the different types of romantic relationships described in "Someone Who Used to Love Someone," "The Brute," "Golden Girl" and "The Masks of Love" as a starting point, and add any other romantic types you can think of. Provide a technical name for each type, and include an example to illustrate it.
5. Select a visual from any one of the selections in this section, and write a response, explaining why you think it accurately reflects the tone, mood, or theme of the selection. Share your response with other students to compare your analyses.
6. In "The Game," Ken Dryden writes that in the image game, "all of us lose. You, because you feel less worthy than you are. Me, because once, when I was twenty-three years old and trying to learn about myself, I wanted to believe I was, or soon would be, everything others said I was." In a group of three or four, discuss how this quotation can be applied to the themes expressed in "To Christine," and "Commercial." How do media images hurt us? Organize your findings into an oral report. You may want to include in your presentation examples of "perfect" media images from magazines or other media.
7. With a partner, compose three to five advice column letters based on any of the situations described in these selections. For example, you might write a letter from Anna Murphy in "Golden Girl" asking for advice about her infatuation with the student teacher. Put all the letters into a pile, and take turns playing the role of the advice columnist. Pick a letter at random, and read it out loud. Then compose a short one- or two-line oral response to the problem posed. As a class, vote on whether you agree or disagree with the advice given.
8. Imagine that Anna Murphy from "Golden Girl," Wes Holman from "Long, Long After School," and the narrator from "A Taste of Melon" are all residents at the same retirement home. Role-play how they would recount the memories of their past, and how they worked to either fit in or remain apart from the crowd.

# 3 Look back



How did we get here?  
From mythical creatures to  
life on the frontier, from  
romantic adventures  
to daring modern-day  
escapes, take an exciting  
journey through time that will  
bring you right back to where  
you began...

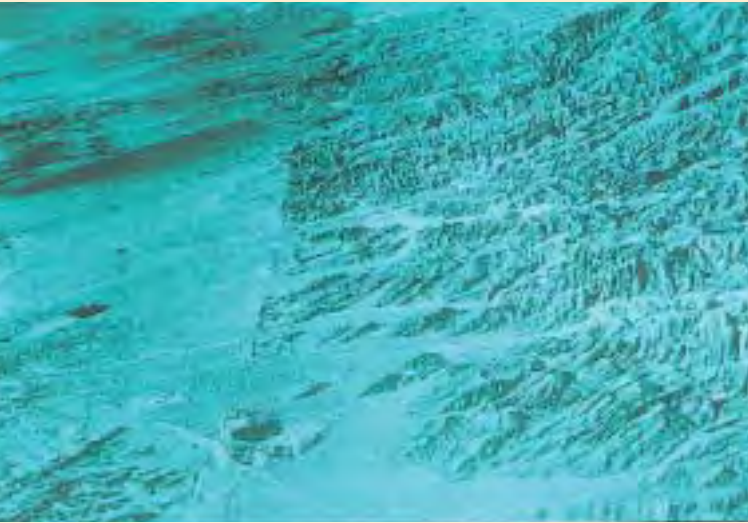
This unit looks back at  
literature from earlier times:  
traditional tales, westerns,  
and romance. It also talks  
about the adventures of  
immigrants in our society.



# Pangaea

SALLY ITO

*Wegener is the scientist who developed the theory of continental drift. Pangaea was the name he gave to the original land mass that existed before it split apart to form the various continents.*



Wegener had it right.  
We are all from the same continent,  
from the same void  
of disturbed memories.

Our feet, swift and light,  
traversed the plain  
through night's darkness;  
set up tents near water,  
breathed air pure as sound.

No gulf or expanse of water  
threatened our vision;  
no animal skirted our sight  
into the unknown.  
Everything was knowledge,  
accessible  
and defined as sunlight  
on our hands.

More than hundreds or millions of years  
will have passed,  
and all kindred will claim that earth  
never split, that it was always whole,  
that there was never rift nor river  
to break the earth's surface.



But the earth knows its painful birth,  
remembers its limbs torn and cracked,  
how animals frantic and desperate  
stampeded across its yawning chasms  
and folding mountains, and we  
who have forgotten,  
will stumble across  
it in our dreams  
as Wegener did,  
and wonder at the startling  
similarity of our thoughts  
as they traverse plains,  
come to edges,  
and fall softly, soundlessly,  
into the ocean's gleaming waters.

#### Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- visualize poetry
- recognize literary techniques
- understand the use of allusion

## Activities

1. Read the poem carefully looking for visual images. Create a series of cartoons or drawings representing the images.
2. Define the following terms: personification, metaphor, simile. Identify examples of the author's use of these figures of speech. For each example, consider how it affects the meaning of the poem, and how it deepens the reader's understanding of the theme. Explain why you think the author chose that particular technique.
3. Define the term allusion. What allusion does Sally Ito use in this poem? Talk with a partner about the poet's choice of allusion. How does it relate to the theme of the poem? Prepare a summary of your discussion to present to the class.

# Tlingit National Anthem

AS RETOLD BY ROBERT WILLARD JR.  
(RAVEN/BEAVER CLAN ELDER)



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this myth will help you:

- attend to details of place
- understand choices and outcomes
- write descriptively in the first person

This is the story of the Tlingit national anthem, a song that entwines our people with their past and keeps our ancient heritage alive. At potlatch ceremonies, Tlingit elders sing the anthem and tell how it came about—for many years in secret, for this ritual was long forbidden by the government—always passing the story on to the new generations.

Long ago, the Tlingit Indians lived in the area now called British Columbia and the Yukon Territory. They decided to move from this region of lakes to the great ocean—now called the Pacific—where they heard the fish were abundant. When all of the clans had assembled, they began a great trek through the mountain canyons leading to the sea.

After many, many miles, the way was blocked by a glacier that filled the canyon. To go back in search of a different route would be a long and wast-

ing journey, so the leaders, both women and men, climbed the mountain to look for a safe way around the ice; there was none. But they saw a stream, flowing from the narrow mouth of the glacier, which emptied into a great bay on the distant side. The passage under the glacier seemed too dangerous, the ice caverns too narrow to pass through. Determined to continue the migration to the ocean, the leaders met to plot a new course.

Then, four women stepped forward and volunteered to journey beneath the glacier. Two were barren, one was a widow, and the fourth was well along in years. Because the women had no children to nurture and protect, the leaders agreed to their risky plan. So the men built a raft of logs and the women set forth early next morning. With renewed hopes the leaders once again climbed the mountain, keeping watch all morning and into the afternoon.

Toward evening, they heard distant voices calling from the bay. It was the four women, waving their arms and shouting "We made it, we made it through, under the ice." Then, the youngest and strongest of the Tlingits set out for the other side. When they arrived, they began building large boats for the next part of the journey, and explored the region beyond the glacier for a safe place abundant in resources. Then, all of the Tlingit people followed behind them. After three days and three nights, they came through the ice caverns. So, they set up camps and rested.

The next day, the people asked the Great Spirit to be with them. They decided to row in all directions and settle as much unoccupied territory as possible. It was a sad, sad day as the people sang goodbye to their uncles and aunts and cousins and friends. They wept as they rowed, but it was the beginning of the Tlingit Nation, which today occupies more than twenty-three million acres of land and water in southeast Alaska. ■

## Activities

1. Use a map of the BC/Yukon/Alaska area to trace the possible journey of this group of natives. Draw your own version of the map and mark areas where you think they might have camped. Include on your map landmarks from the story, for example, the glacier, the mountain, the stream, the bay.
2. Create a decision-making chart to show the decisions the leaders of the group made along the journey. Show the alternatives and possible outcomes of each potential choice.
3. Write the story of one of the women who made the journey beneath the glacier. Write the story as the woman, in the first person. Describe your feelings and experiences. Show rather than tell, using descriptive words and images.

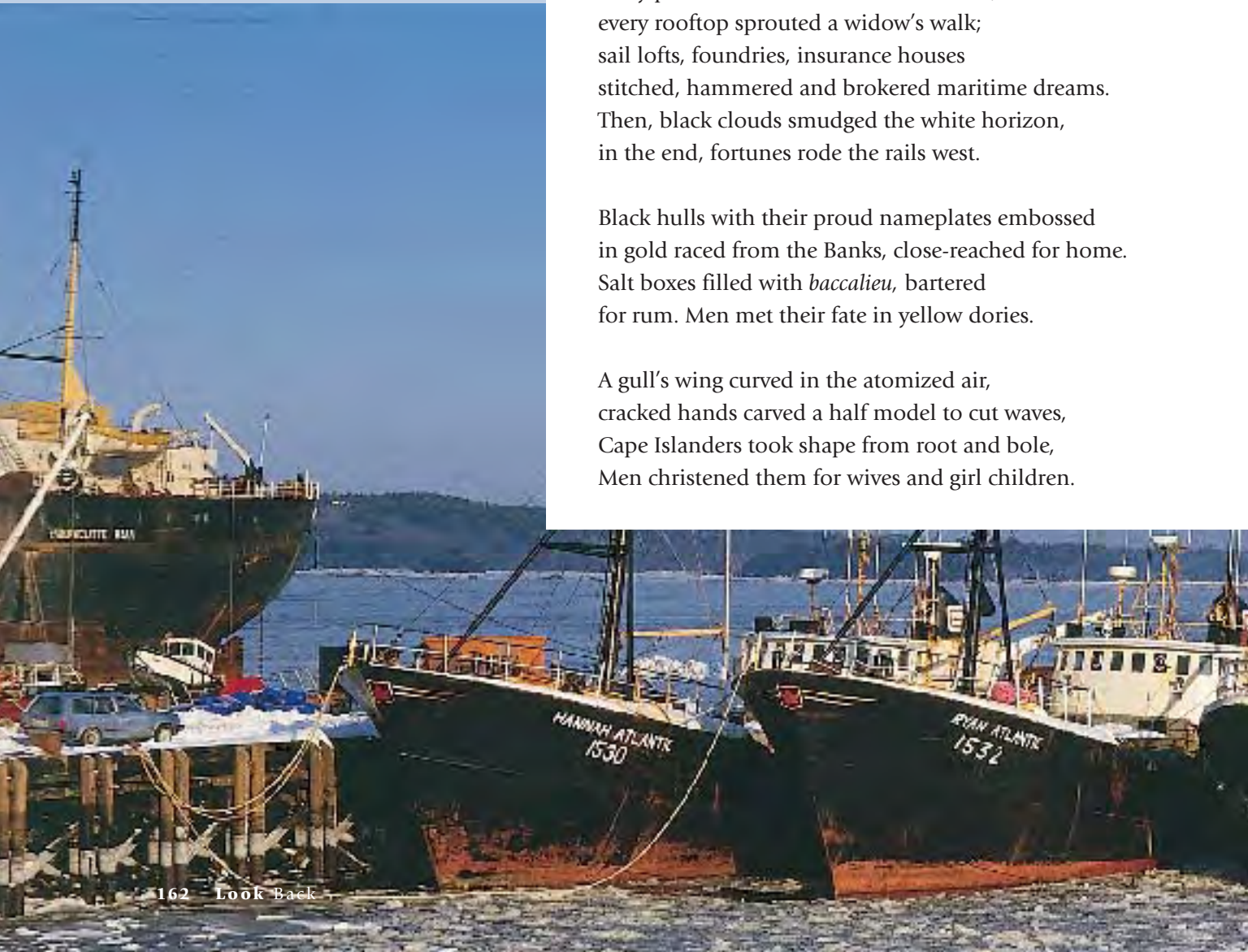
# Black Hull

FROM THE POEM "ATLANTIC ELEGY"  
HARRY THURSTON

The sea is memory. Forests of masts  
growing in the harbours, white pine with sails  
for leaves, reefed, expectant as held breath.  
Every mud creek bed cradled a keel,  
every ocean hailed a bluenose captain,  
every parlour blossomed with the exotic,  
every rooftop sprouted a widow's walk;  
sail lofts, foundries, insurance houses  
stitched, hammered and brokered maritime dreams.  
Then, black clouds smudged the white horizon,  
in the end, fortunes rode the rails west.

Black hulls with their proud nameplates embossed  
in gold raced from the Banks, close-reached for home.  
Salt boxes filled with *baccalieu*, bartered  
for rum. Men met their fate in yellow dories.

A gull's wing curved in the atomized air,  
cracked hands carved a half model to cut waves,  
Cape Islanders took shape from root and bole,  
Men christened them for wives and girl children.





Trawls ousted hook-and-line, bulged with fish  
 thrown overboard, time after time. All  
 so some restaurateur could serve a fillet  
 the size of his palm, caught to order,  
 some stockbroker could clip a coupon,  
 some politician could be elected.  
 Names old as the continent disappear,  
 fishers, fish-cutters become eco-refugees.  
 Now we have remembrance, rust, and rot,  
 bureaucracies and empty seas are our lot.

No longer do sage cod, big as gaffers  
 (Atlantic gods sporting pharaonic whiskers)  
 gather in our coves, waters thicken with eggs  
 like tapioca, beaches bear witness  
 to the strange love-making of capelin.

Seabirds drown in bilge oil, brass propellers  
 split open the last whales, fish spawn tumours.  
 We scrape the bottom for urchin, pick winkles,  
 dig bloodworms, strip the very rocks for weed,  
 in despair burn boats to the waterline—  
 wait, wait for what may never come again.



### Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- listen to others' interpretations
- create a choral reading
- explore human experiences

## Activities

1. Work with a partner to create three or four questions about the poem. Choose questions that require more than a yes or no answer. Take turns presenting the questions to the class, sharing answers, and listening attentively to others. Make sure the discussion makes reference to the poem to justify answers.
2. **a)** Form a small group and choose a stanza, so that each stanza is represented. Read your stanza carefully, discuss what is happening in it, and prepare a choral reading. Focus on word stresses, pauses, tone of voice, etc.  
**b)** Present the choral readings in the order they appear in the text. Discuss as a class how each of the different groups interpreted the mood of the poem in their presentation.
3. The poet explains how the fishing industry has changed over the years.  
**a)** Use a chart to help you organize the details of the changes, such as the one below:

Before	Now
	→
	→

- b)** Use the information from your chart to write a journal entry as if you were a fisherman/woman who can no longer fish. Compare your memories of the fishery with the reality of the fishery today.



# Iraweka, Mischief-maker

RETOLD BY  
PHILIP  
SHERLOCK



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this myth will help you

- relate the theme to your own experience
- compare two myths
- represent the theme visually

In the beginning there was friendship between man and all the animals. The Caribs who made their homes on the red-earth terraces between the brown river and the dark forest did not fear the jaguar, nor did the jaguar crouch at the sight of man, yellow-green flame in his eyes, anger coursing through his tense body, motionless but for the nervous flick of the tip of his tail.

In those days men did not hunt down the wild pig, nor did Mapuri seek refuge when his sharp ears caught the sound of man's naked feet on the carpet of grass and leaves.

Many of the animals worked for man in those far-off days. Parrot, perched on the high branch of a tree, preening his gaudy feathers and blink-

ing in the strong light, called out to the Carib sitting at the root of the tree, telling him the news of the world. The serpent went before man, showing him the quickest and easiest ways through the jungle. Dog and the great baboon and the giant sloth helped man, though often Sloth fell fast asleep in the middle of the work that he was doing. Even the restless, small brown monkey, Irraweka, gave man a hand.

And man helped the animals to find food. When, at Kabo Tano's command, he cut down the great tree and took cuttings from the trunk and branches, he did not forget the animals and their need. He knew that Mapuri felt thirst and hunger as he did, and the dog and jaguar, so he gave to all the animals pieces of the tree to plant as they wished, in the places where they dwelt.

But Irraweka hindered rather than helped, for he was always up to some trick. He pinched Mapuri the wild pig, pulled the tail of Abeyu the wild cow, shook the branch on which the parrot was balancing himself, leapt on the back of the jaguar dozing after lunch, and scolded Wise Owl for sleeping by daylight.

There came a time when Irraweka the mischief-maker nearly destroyed man and all the animals by interfering with man's work.

One day man went to the place where he had cut down the great tree and found a stream of water flowing fast from the root of the tree. Man was troubled, for the stream did not flow steadily like a river but swiftly, springing up as if it meant to cover the earth. To the rising water man said:

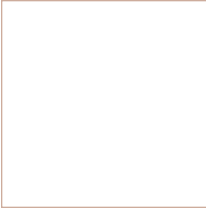
"O Stream, why are you flowing from the rest of the great tree, and why do you flow so swiftly?"

"I flow quickly because there is much to do," replied the stream. "Before the sun rises tomorrow I must cover the face of the earth."

Terrified, man called out to the Ancient One, asking him what to do. The Ancient One put it into man's heart to make a large basket from the reeds that grew nearby, and to cover with this the hole from which the water flowed. As soon as man placed the basket over the hole the flow of water ceased, and he went away content.

Now the brown monkey Irraweka saw man go into the forest in the direction of the great tree and he followed him. He saw man making the basket, and he watched from the far-off top of a cedar tree while man put the basket over the hole whence the water flowed, but he was too far off to hear what man said. He thought to himself: "Man is our master but he does not think of us. He keeps the best food for himself. He has hidden the best fruit beneath the basket. When he goes I will take away the basket and taste the food that man seeks to keep for himself."

After man had gone away, Irraweka removed the basket. The stream flowed faster than ever. Soon it grew into a river and then into a raging tor-



rent that swept away the terrified brown monkey, but not before the other animals heard his cries. Parrot, perched aloft, saw the river rising, saw Irraweka being swept away, and gave the alarm; and the animals cried out, "O Man, save us, save us."

Man saw what was happening. He knew that he was in peril and all the animals with him, so he led them to the top of a high hill, on which grew coconut trees, tall and deeply rooted.

"Climb the coconut trees," cried man. "Climb the trees quickly before the flood sweeps you away."

For five days all the animals and man lived in the top of the coconut trees, where the green branches spring from the trunk and the nuts grow. The rain fell and the water rose until no land could be seen. The sky was blanketed with dark clouds, and thick mist hid the world.

Now a strange thing happened. While the flood was rising, all the animals were frightened, and man also, but the baboon was more terrified than any other animal. In those days his voice was shrill, his throat small, but at the sound of the rising water lapping around the trunk of the coconut tree his shrill cries became hoarse shouts, his shouting became a loud roaring, and his throat grew to twice its former size. To this day all baboons have huge throats and the loudest voices in the forest.

Of a sudden, on the fifth night, there came stillness. The thunder and the lightning ceased. The rain stopped. The animals began to move from their places of refuge among the boughs of the coconut trees, but man bade them stay where they were, saying that they should wait until the day dawned. On the morning of the tenth day the sun rose, but mist still covered the earth, and from below the trees came the sound of lapping water. Man dropped a coconut, and listened. In a moment there was a great splash. The animals knew that the water was still high.

Each day man dropped a coconut and all the animals listened. At first, the sound of splashing was close below them. Two days later it seemed more distant. On the following day there was no sound of splashing, only a dull thud. The listening animals eagerly made ready to climb down from the trees, but man told them to stay where they were. He would climb down first to make sure that all was safe.

The trumpeter bird did not do as man bade. Tired of sitting on the boughs of the coconut tree, and proud of his long legs, he climbed down, while man shouted to him, "Be careful, be careful, come back; you do not know what lies below."

The trumpeter bird paid no heed. Climbing down quickly, he stepped into a nest of large ants that had buried themselves deep down within the earth while the rains were falling. Now they had come out of their hiding-place in search of food. Fierce with hunger, they bit at the long legs of the

trumpeter bird, stripping the flesh from them before man could rescue the bird. To this day the trumpeter bird mourns because his legs are so thin.

Following after man, the other animals climbed down to the earth, sodden and cold. The toucan shivered so much that his long beak made music like a pair of castanets. Wise Owl shivered with cold for all his warm grey feathers. Mapuri the wild pig, who loves mud, found for once that there was too much mud for his pleasure and tried desperately to find a dry place.

While the animals were shivering with the cold, man began to make a fire. He found two sticks, rubbed them together until they grew hot, and so kindled a flame. Strangest of all was the fate that befell the alligator, a grumpy, quick-tempered animal, much disliked because he was so greedy. Alligator was proud of his long tongue, using it to sweep food into his mouth before any other animal could eat his fill. He went to pay his respects to man, hoping to get some food, for he was hungry. It was just after the marudi bird had swallowed the coal of fire, and man was angry because the labour of a morning had been lost and he must start all over again, rubbing two stick together until he kindled a flame.

When the animals saw Alligator coming, they shouted, "Perhaps he took the fire! Perhaps it was Alligator who stole your coal of fire, sweeping it into his mouth with his long tongue!" At these words man forced Alligator to open his mouth, and Alligator, in fear, swallowed half his tongue. To this day the alligator has a shorter tongue than any other animal.

These things happened because of Irraweka, mischief-maker. Up to this time all the animals had one language. They could speak to each other and to man. From this time of the great rains and the flood they grew fearful of each other, and each animal refused to speak to any other but his own kind. The birds chirruped and sang to each other, the baboon roared to his mate, the parrot screeched and laughed in his own language, the wild cow Abeyu lowed, the wild pig Mapuri grunted, the jaguar snarled, and the wise owl hooted as he flew through the dusk on flapping wings. Because Irraweka removed the basket from the fast-flowing spring at the root of the great tree, man and the animals no longer understood each other. ■

## Activities

1. Many myths describe a time when humans lived in harmony with each other and with nature. As a class, discuss why you think this is the case. How is this sense of division expressed in our lives today?
2. With a partner, make a list of all of the natural phenomena which are explained in this myth. Research to find another myth that contains a similar explanation. Create a chart to compare the two myths.
3. Create a visual representation of this story, before and after the flood. Be prepared to offer an oral explanation of your interpretation.



# How Rocks Were Born

TRANSLATION BY LAWRENCE MILLMAN



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this myth will help you:

- write in the first person
- present and evaluate an oral interpretation
- experiment with techniques of scripting

Once upon a time there weren't any rocks in the world, only one very large boulder. Wolverine went over to this boulder and said, "I bet I can outrun you, friend."

To which the boulder replied, "That's probably true, for I can't run at all. In fact, I've been sitting in this same place for as long as I can remember."

"*Can't run?* But even Lemming can run. Even Ant can do it. You must be the lowest of the low, friend."

And with that Wolverine gave the boulder a strong kick. The boulder did not like this kick or Wolverine's insults, so it began rolling toward him.

"Well, at least you can *move*," Wolverine laughed, and he took off down a hill with the boulder rolling after him.



"Are you pleased now?" the boulder said.

"I am, but I wish you'd slow down. You're hurting my heels."

"I thought you wanted to see me run ..."

Suddenly Wolverine fell down, and the boulder rolled right on top of him. "Get off! You're breaking my body!" he yelled. But the boulder just sat there and went on breaking his body.

Now Wolverine called on his brothers to help him.

"Wolf, get rid of this boulder!"

"Fox, get rid of this boulder!"

Neither Wolf nor Fox would help him. They said it was only fair, since he'd insulted the boulder, that he be stuck under it.

"Frog, come here and help me get rid of this boulder!"

Frog tried to lift the boulder, but his hands were so slippery that he couldn't move it at all.

"Mouse, can you help me?"

"Sorry, brother," said Mouse, "but I'm too small."

At last Wolverine called on his brother Thunderstorm. Thunderstorm took one look at him and roared with laughter. "What are you doing under that boulder, brother?"

"Being silly again," sighed Wolverine. "Now will you please help me get up?"

Thunderstorm called on Lightning, who zigzagged down from the sky and struck the boulder *bamm!* It broke into many, many little pieces.

That's how rocks were born.

From then on Wolverine said only kind things to these rocks.

For he did not want his body broken again. ■

## Activities

1. Using information, ideas, and images from the story, write a diary entry as if you were the boulder. Include your thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Focus on descriptive and powerful language. In a small group, read your diary entries to each other. Consider how the story changes when interpreted from another point of view. Does the meaning stay the same? Is it easier or more difficult to understand? Why?
2. Present the story orally. Work as a class to develop criteria for an effective oral interpretation, and come to a class consensus on the criteria for evaluating the oral readings. In small groups, assign roles for each character, plus a narrator. Practise reading your roles within the group, using praise and encouragement, as well as suggestions for improvement. Present your version to another group and evaluate each other according to the predetermined criteria.
3. Work with a partner to create a script for the movie version of this story. Include directions to the actors regarding tone of voice and emphasis. Also include information about lighting, camera angles, scenery, props, and dialogue to help maintain the mood and develop interest. (Directions should be in italics if a word-processing program is available, underlined if not.)

# Postcards to Pele

JAMES HOUSTON

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this article will help you:

- write collaboratively and independently
- create a story based on speculation
- write a newspaper story
- explore how point of view and format affect meaning

At the headquarters of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, rocks arrive nearly every day. They arrive in the mail, in packages large and small, ten or so in an average week. They come from New Jersey, from Florida, from Hong Kong, from L.A. and Dallas and Chicago. Some are black chunks as large as a horse's head. Some are merely pebbles or packets of black sand.

They arrive in tiny cardboard boxes tightly wrapped, like jewellery. They arrive in padded envelopes shipped via UPS or Air Express. The shipping charges can run to \$16—clear evidence that the enclosed souvenir became more trouble than it was worth and the time had come for the sender to *get this out of the house!*

Why are the rocks sent here? According to a myth of undetermined origin, if you pick up even one small shard of lava and carry it off, terrible things can happen to you. The word is *kapu*, a Hawaiian version of the more familiar Tongan word of warning, *tabu*. Since Hawaii is the island of the fire goddess Pele, there is a *kapu* on everything spewed from the volcanoes that have formed it. And Hale-ma'uma'u, Pele's traditional home, happens to be inside the boundaries of the park.

The letters tell the story. Some are addressed to "Superintendent" or simply "Park Headquarters." But others are addressed to Pele herself. The only thing I can think of that might be remotely akin to this is the annual

blizzard of letters kids send to Santa Claus, hoping they will reach the North Pole in time for Christmas. But these letters are not from kids. They're from adults. They are usually typed and rather formal. They are often detailed, full of a need to be understood, to be unburdened.

I recognize this need. I too once wrote to Pele, asking her forgiveness. My wife, Jeanne, encouraged me to do it. We composed the letter together. This was some time ago, a few days after we'd returned from a family trip. When no one else was looking, our youngest daughter, Gabrielle, then 11, had innocently picked up a Big Island souvenir to take back to her sixth-grade class. At home in Santa Cruz we set the rock on the kitchen table and looked at it. "If we keep this," Jeanne said, "probably nothing will happen. But you hear so many stories. I think we ought to send it back."

In Japan, where Jeanne's father came from, there is a long tradition of rocks that have to be attended to. She would call it part of her inheritance, a lingering, transpacific memory of the Shinto belief in nature deities that inhabit gardens, groves, creatures, ancestral stones.

"Sending it back can't hurt anything," I said.

Now I am flipping through this week's sheaf of letters, and touching the rocks heaped in the corridor—and I ask myself: How do you prove that something exists? In the realm of subatomic particles, it is often done by inference. *A* either occurs or does not occur, therefore *B* is probable. And so forth. The same is true for the elusive black holes at the farthest edge of observable space or the mysteries of acupuncture.

Here in the earth and in the air of the Big Island you have this presence called Pele. She has a home, visited regularly by local residents who talk to her and leave offerings at the brink

of the fire pit. I have heard chants dedicated to her, seen dances performed in her honour. I have now met people who claim to be descended from her. Many claim to have seen her—sometimes as a young woman, sometimes as an ageing crone—before and during eruptions. Books have been written about her, and at least one opera. And now, as visitors to this island continue to multiply, thousands of people send her mail. Clearly Pele is in a class by herself. Can there be another goddess, in the United States or elsewhere, with a zip code and a permanent mailing address?

*Dear Madame Pele: I am returning the lava I took from Black Sands Beach in 1969. I hope this pleases you, so my husband and I will have better luck on future trips ...*

*Dear Madame Pele: Your volcanic rock is enclosed. There is no return address on this because I don't want any return ...*

*Enclosed [writes a fellow from Cleveland] please find three small pieces of volcanic rock. I am not a superstitious person. However, in the last three years since I removed these from the Park, the following has occurred .... [His grim sequence of misfortunes includes the break-up of a marriage, the loss of a home, the wreck of a brand-new car.]*

Is it possible that chunks and bits of lava can actually carry ancient signals thousands of miles across the water? Reason of course says, No, a rock is a rock, and the rest is hocus-pocus. Yet it's not easy to dismiss the letters from people in faraway urban centres who live by the laws of concrete and spreadsheets and who, if pressed, would probably claim to know better.

Maybe it's superstition. Maybe it's a collective hallucination. Maybe it's a form of recognition. Behind the *kapu* is a Hawaiian reverence for their extraordinary island terrain. What the *kapu* tells

us is that these rocks have a natural place in the world, and maybe that's where they would like to remain. ■

## Activities

1. In your own words, define superstition. List superstitions that are commonly held, yet not really believed. For each superstition, speculate on reasons why it came into existence; for example, it's bad luck to walk under a ladder ... because a working person might drop something on your head. Use one of your superstitions to create a short oral story with your own explanation of how the superstition came into being. Present your story to the class.
2. The managers of the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park are worried they may be held liable for the problems tourists experience after stealing lava rocks. You are hired by the managers to create an advertising campaign to discourage theft of the rocks. Working in small groups, gather information from the article necessary to your campaign. Identify the main problem and brainstorm possible solutions that make use of advertising. Use persuasive strategies in your campaign. As each group presents to the class, give them feedback on good points and areas that need work.
3. Write a newspaper story in which someone has taken some lava rock from Hawaii. What are the consequences of this action? What events take place afterwards? Make sure you follow the conventions of a newspaper article: include who, what, where, when, why, and how; write a headline, sub-headings, columns; include a picture; etc.
4. Create a cartoon sequence with Pele as the main character. Through captions, show what she feels and thinks when tourists take her lava. Present your cartoons to a small group. Discuss how the message/meaning changes as the presentation of the information changes.

# Beside a Stone...

CHRISTINE M. KRISHNASAMI

beside a stone three  
thousand years old: two  
red poppies of today



## Focus Your Learning

This poem will help you:

- define haiku poetry
- create a haiku poem
- consider the use of imagery

## Activities

- With a partner discuss what you know about Haiku poetry already. Look carefully at the poem and write some criteria for writing Haiku. Consider the number of syllables, themes, images, etc. Remember not to be specific about content.
  - Using a dictionary of literary terms, find a definition of Haiku. Compare your own list of criteria with the definition, and make any changes you think are necessary. Share your criteria with others in the class and develop a class set of criteria for Haiku poetry.
- The author contrasts the image of the rock with the image of the poppy. Work with a partner and list as many contrasts as you can that are implied by this comparison. Share your contrasts with others in the class, and add any new possibilities to your list. Using the list to guide you, prepare a statement to suggest what impression the author wished to make.
- Write your own Haiku poem(s) about a subject of your choice. Use a thesaurus to help you develop strong images. Ask a partner to comment on your poem, and then post your finished haikus around the classroom.



# The Song of the Lambton Worm

ANONYMOUS

*This song is based on the legend of the Lambton worm. According to the medieval story, young John Lambton, while fishing, caught nothing but a worm, which he threw in the well. There, it grew and grew until it was a fearsome, hungry creature. When Lambton went off to fight in the Crusades, the worm crawled out of the well and started killing sheep, cows, and babies. When he returned, Lambton was horrified at what had happened. He was told that if he wanted to kill the creature, he would have to promise to slay the very next living thing he met after that. He killed the worm ... and then was warmly greeted by his own father. Because the young hero could not bring himself to carry out the promise and kill his father, the Lambton family was cursed with untimely deaths for nine generations.*



One Sunday morn young Lambton  
went a-fishin' in the Wear;  
An' caught a fish upon his huek,  
He thowt leuk't varry queer,  
But whatt'n a kind a fish it was  
Young Lambton couldn't tell.  
He waddn't fash to carry it hyem,  
So he hoyed it in a well.

**Chorus:**

*Whisht! lads, haad yor gobs,  
Aa'll tell ye aall an aaful story,  
Whisht! lads, haad yor gobs,  
An' aal tell ye 'bout the worm.*

Noo Lambton felt inclined to gan  
An' fight in foreign wars.  
He joined a troop o' knights that cared  
For neither wounds nor scars,  
An' off he went to Palestine  
Where queer things him befel,  
An' varry seun forgot about  
The queer worm i' the well.  
(Chorus)

But the worm got fat an' growed an' growed,  
An' growed an aaful size;  
He'd greet big teeth, a greet big gob,  
An' greet big goggle eyes.  
An' when at neets he craaled about  
To pick up bits o'news,  
If he felt dry upon the road,  
He milked a dozen coos.  
(Chorus)

This feorful worm wad often feed  
On calves an' lambs an' sheep,  
An' swally little bairns alive  
When they laid doon to sleep.  
An' when he'd eaten aal he cud  
An' he had had his fill,  
He craaled away an' lapped his tail  
Seven times roond Pensher Hill.  
(Chorus)

The news of this most aaful worm  
An' his queer gannins on  
Seun crossed the seas, gat to the ears  
Of brave an' bowld Sir John.  
So hyem he cam an' caught the beast  
An' cut 'im in three halves,  
An' that seun stopped he's eatin' bairns,  
An' sheep an' lambs and calves.  
(Chorus)

So noo ye knaa hoo aall the folks  
On byeth sides of the Wear  
Lost lots o' sheep an' lots o' sleep  
An' lived in mortal feor.  
So let's hev one to brave Sir John  
That kept the bairns frae harm  
Saved coos an' calves by myekin' haalves  
O' the famis Lambton Worm

Noo lads, Aa'll haad me gob,  
That's aall Aa knaa about the story  
Of Sir John's clivvor job  
Wi' the aaful Lambton Worm

**the Wear:** a river in Sunderland, in the north of England  
**waddn't fash:** wasn't keen  
**hoyed:** threw  
**haad yer gobs:** shut your mouths  
**swally little bairns:** swallow little babies  
**coo:** cow  
**myekin':** making  
**byeth:** both

### Focus Your Learning

Reading this song will help you:

- recognize dialect and archaic language
- paraphrase a story
- explore publishing forms

## Activities

1. Work with a small group and pick a verse from the song. Practise reading the lines out loud, focussing on pronunciation and stresses. Present your verse to the class. Listen carefully to the other groups, thinking about how the expression affects your understanding of the story.
2. Retell the story to a friend in your own words. Listen to his or her version. Write your version of the story, recalling as many details as you can.
3. Create a mini-book for children based on the song. Divide the song to fit on the pages of the book. Create appropriate illustrations for the book.



# SIR GAWAIN and the LOATHLY LADY



Retold by SELINA HASTINGS

Illustrations by JUAN WIJNGAARD

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- review figurative language
- read for details
- develop and defend your opinion
- write alternate endings
- discuss stereotypes

King Arthur and his court had moved to the castle of Carlisle for Christmas. Every evening there was feasting and dancing, while by day the King and his knights rode out into the Inglewood to hunt. One morning the King, galloping fast in pursuit of a young stag, found himself separated from his companions, his quarry having outrun the hounds and disappeared. Reining in his horse, he saw that he was in an unfamiliar part of the forest, on the edge of a black and brackish pond surrounded by pine trees whose dark foliage obscured the light of day. Suddenly Arthur noticed in the shadows on the other side of the pond a man on horseback, watching him. The man was covered from head to foot in black armour, and he sat motionless on a charger which was itself as black as midnight.

All at once the stranger spurred forward, splashing through the muddy water toward the King. As he drew within hailing distance, he stopped.

“Arthur!” he shouted through his steel helmet. “I challenge you to fight!”

Your crown shall be mine. Come and defend it—if you can!” And the Black Knight threw back his head and laughed.

Arthur’s hand went instantly to his scabbard; but his great sword Excalibur, whose magic protected him from harm, was lying far away in Camelot. Arthur felt the strength drain from him. He sat helpless in the saddle as though turned to stone. Now he knew that he was in an evil place, and that his challenger was no ordinary foe.

“I have you now, Arthur Pendragon!” roared the Knight, pointing his lance straight at Arthur’s heart. Then he paused, seeming to consider, and the tip of his lance dropped a little. “But there is no pleasure in killing you too easily,” he went on. “I shall give you one chance to save both your kingdom and your life. Listen carefully. You must come back here in three days’ time, on New Year’s Day, with the answer to this question: what is it that women most desire? If you can tell me that,” and the Knight smiled to himself, “you will go a free man. If not, then you will die, and I shall be High King of Britain in your place!” With that the Knight wheeled around and was gone.

Gradually Arthur felt his strength return. As he rode slowly homeward, he thought over the riddle whose solution would save his life. What *was* it that women most desired? On the way, he stopped every woman he met—a goose girl, an abbess on a grey mare, a merchant’s fat wife with a retinue of servants—to ask what it was she most desired. And every one of them gave him a different answer.

When at last he reached the castle, to be greeted by Guinevere his Queen, he was careful to conceal the danger he was in, saying only that he had accepted a wager from an unknown knight to find within three days what it was that women most desired. The ladies of the court, pretty as peacocks in their brightly coloured silks and velvets, clustered around Arthur, eager to supply him with the answer. Some said beauty, some wealth, others wanted power or spiritual salvation. One lady, getting on in years, wished for a young husband. None could agree.

That night Arthur lay sleepless, his heart heavy at the thought of the terrible encounter in front of him. But true to his word he set off on New Year’s morning to meet the Black Knight, knowing that he still had not heard the answer to the riddle, and that unless a miracle occurred his life would be lost.

Cantering along a grassy ride on the outskirts of the forest, he heard a woman’s voice call his name, and looking around caught sight of a flash of red by the side of the road. Puzzled, Arthur drew up his horse and dismounted.

He walked back a few steps and saw in front of him, sitting on a tree stump, a woman in a scarlet dress. She looked up at him—and Arthur gasped.





She was the ugliest living thing he had ever set eyes on, a freak, a monster, a truly loathly lady. Her nose was a pig's snout; from a misshapen mouth stuck out two yellowing rows of horse's teeth; her cheeks were covered in sores; she had only one eye, rheumy and red-rimmed; and from a naked scalp hung a few lank strands of hair. Her whole body was swollen and bent out of shape, and her fingers, on which were several fine rings, were as gnarled and twisted as the roots of an old oak.

"My lord King," said the hag in a surprisingly sweet voice, "why do you look so dismayed?"

Quickly Arthur explained that he had been deep in thought, and he told the Loathly Lady about his quest, how he was honour-bound to accept the Black Knight's challenge, and how, without the answer to the question, he was sure to die. The Lady laughed.

"I can answer your question," she said. "There's no mystery to that! But if I do, you must promise to grant me one wish—whatever that wish may be."

"Madam, you have my word," the King eagerly replied. "*Anything* you ask shall be yours."

The Lady whispered a few words in his ear. And then Arthur knew with absolute certainty that he had nothing more to fear. Joyfully he turned to go, but the Lady caught his sleeve.

"Now for your side of the bargain," she said, still holding him by the sleeve. "My request is this: you must give me one of your knights to be my husband."

Arthur turned pale. One of his brave knights of the Round Table to take this hell-hag for a wife! "Madam, that I cannot do! You are asking the impossible!"

"A king never breaks his word," said the Lady. And still her hand was on his arm.

"Your pardon, madam. I shall keep my promise. I will return here tomorrow bringing with me your future husband." Arthur bowed and turned quickly away, full of horror at the thought of what he must do, and ashamed, too, of his lack of courtesy toward the Loathly Lady.

But first he must complete his quest. Briskly he rode on through the forest until he came to the pond where the Black Knight waited. As before the Knight was sitting on his great charger, deep in the shadows of the trees. He watched Arthur approach, his lance lifted in a mocking salute.

"Well, Arthur Pendragon, High King of Britain, have you come to surrender your kingdom?"

"I have the answer to your question," Arthur quietly replied. For a moment there was silence: no bird song, no rustle of movement on the forest floor, not even the chink and creak of harness. "What all women most desire is to have their own way."



When he heard these words, the Black Knight let out a bellow of rage that rang throughout the Inglewood. "God curse you, Arthur! You have tricked me of my prize!" And with that he plunged off into the trees.

That evening Arthur sat before the fire in the great hall of the castle, gazing miserably into the flames. His life had been saved, but at a high cost. How could he condemn one of his knights to the embraces of the Loathly Lady? And yet he must keep his word. Guinevere, worried by her husband's melancholy air, knelt beside him, taking his hand in hers, and asked him the cause of his distress.

"My honour is at stake," he said. "I do not know how I may save it."

Sir Gawain, the youngest of the company, was sitting close by playing chess. On hearing Arthur's words he leapt up, scattering the ivory chessmen at his feet. "Sire, I beg you, let *me* defend you! Grant *me* the quest, that I may be the one to save the honour of my King!"

Arthur loved this knight, always the first to come forward, ever ready to put his courage to the test; and his heart sank. He saw Gawain's youth, his face so full of innocence and hope, and he remembered the frightful features of the Lady in the forest. But Arthur had no choice. Taking a deep breath he began the tale of his meeting with the Black Knight, of the challenge, and of how the Loathly Lady came to his rescue, of her terrible deformity, and the price she demanded for saving his life. As he talked, the other knights and their ladies drew near to listen. When he had finished, not a word was spoken. Those who were married looked thankfully at their wives; those who were not prayed that the young man's courage would not desert him.

Gawain looked stunned, but his spirit never faltered. "Take me to her, Sire," he said. "I will marry her tomorrow."

Then next morning Arthur and Gawain, with Sir Kay, the King's steward, and a small company of knights escorting a richly decorated litter, set out for the Forest of Inglewood. The day was crisp and bright and the sun shone in a cloudless sky, but the little band was melancholy. All too soon Arthur caught sight of the flash of scarlet, and there she was, the Loathly Lady, sitting on her tree stump by the side of the road. Arthur dismounted and kissed the gnarled hand she held out. Behind him the knights sat still as statues, hardly able to believe their eyes.

"Good God, Sire!" burst out Sir Kay, never famous for the kindness of his tongue. "The woman's a monster! We can't bring *her* to live among the ladies of our court!"

Before Arthur could rebuke his steward, Gawain jumped down from his horse and knelt before the Lady. "Madam," he said, "will you honour me with your hand in marriage?"

"Oh, Sir Gawain, not you. Have you, too, come to mock me?" said the





Lady. But when she looked into the knight's honest face, she knew he had spoken sincerely, so she gave him her hand and let him lead her to the litter which was waiting to carry her to the castle.

As the little party rode through the narrow streets of the town, the Lady hid her face in her hands so none could see her ugliness. But when they reached the castle yard, she was obliged to step into view, and trembled as she heard the gasps of horror that greeted her appearance. Only Guinevere appeared to notice nothing; she gave no shiver of disgust as she welcomed the poor monster and took her hand to lead her to the bridal chamber. For Gawain and the Lady were to be married that night.

The wedding of Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady was a dismal occasion. Gawain moved as though in a trance, and not all the jewels nor the fine velvet robe given her by the Queen could disguise the hideousness of the bride as she stumbled through the great hall on the arm of her husband. After the ceremony there was a feast; but no one had the appetite to eat. And after the feast the musicians began to play; but no one had the heart to dance. Then Gawain seemed to shake himself awake, and gently leading his wife into the centre of the hall, he guided her through the slow steps of a courtly measure. Arthur followed with Guinevere, and then all the knights with their ladies, so that the grotesque sight of the limping, lurching Loathly Lady should not remain thus pitifully exposed.

As midnight struck, and the hour could no longer be postponed, the King and Queen dismissed the company, and then escorted the couple to their chamber. Arthur gloomily embraced Gawain and wished him a good night, while Guinevere kissed the bride on both her pitted cheeks—and then they left them, alone together.

The chamber had been decorated with fresh leaves; sweet-smelling rushes were strewn on the floor; the great carved bed, hung with velvet, was covered in soft furs. But Gawain saw none of this. With a groan he flung himself into a chair in front of the fire. What was he to do? What did the code of chivalry demand? Was he to spend the rest of his life shackled to a creature more hideous than the demon of a nightmare? Just then he heard the rustle of silk behind him, and his wife's sweet voice: "Will you not come to bed, my lord?"

Shuddering with horror he slowly turned his head. Standing before him was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. She had long golden hair hanging to her waist, her figure was slender as a fairy's, her pale skin as perfect as a piece of polished ivory.

Slowly placing her arms about his neck, she kissed him gently on the cheek. "I am your wife, Sir Gawain. This is the Loathly Lady whom you see before you. By marrying me you have half-released me from a spell which doomed me to that disgusting shape in which King Arthur found me. But

only half-released." She looked down and sadly sighed. "I must return to that foul form for half of every day unless you can answer me one question."

"My wife," whispered Sir Gawain wonderingly, gazing at the Lady's lovely face. "My dearest wife, what is your question?"

"You must tell me this: would you rather have me beautiful by day and hideous by night? Or would you have me beautiful at night, as I am now, and my old ugly shape during the day?" The Lady took a step back, and regarded Gawain intently.

"Oh, my love, how can I tell?" said Gawain, distracted by the choice before him. Then, recalling that it was his wedding night, and drawing near to take her in his arms, he said, "Come to me at night beautiful as you are now."

The Lady frowned, and took another step back. "That is strangely uncharitable of you, sir. Do you condemn me to the contempt of the whole court, to be mocked and despised everywhere I go, unable to let darkness hide my shame? That is not what I expect a loving husband to wish for me, that I should suffer in this way!"

"Oh, forgive me," cried Gawain, penitent. "That was cruelly thoughtless of me. Be beautiful by day, my love, and at night resume your old shape." He held out a hand to her.

But still the Lady was not pleased; she did not take his hand. "Oh, husband," said she, "do you love your wife so little that you care not how vile she looks lying beside you? Are you so indifferent as to be content with an ugly witch as the companion of your private hours? do you not consider *my* feelings at having to come to you every night repellent and deformed?"

Gawain, at a loss for words, hung his head. Whichever choice he made—by day, by night—was wrong. "Madam, I am unable to answer your question. I must leave it to you. *You* must choose whichever you prefer."

At this the Lady laughed and clapped her hands with joy. "That," she cried, flinging her arms about his neck, "is the right answer to my question. You have given me what every woman wants—her own way. And now the spell is broken. You will never see that hideous old hag again. I am my true self—and will be yours for ever."

The next morning Arthur, anxious to know how Gawain had survived the night, wondered that such a reluctant bridegroom should stay in his chamber so late, expecting rather that he would leave the side of his Loathly Lady as soon as courtesy allowed. But when at midday Gawain finally appeared, leading his bride into the hall, Arthur wondered no more. The pair were so happy and so much in love. Now he saw that all was well—his kingdom safe, the Lady free of her enchantment, and ahead of them a night of celebration such as the castle of Carlisle had never known before. ■



## Activities

1. Review the definitions of simile, metaphor, and alliteration. Find examples in the story and create an illustration for each example. In your opinion, has the author used figurative language effectively? Discuss with a small group where figurative language is used well, and where it could be improved.
2. Pretend you are King Arthur. Write a reference letter for Sir Gawain. Describe the qualities that would make him a good employee, his previous work experience, and your personal assessment of him. Use examples from the story to justify your judgments.
3. Write the story of the Loathly Lady explaining how she came to be condemned to live as the “monster.” Or write a new ending to the story. If Sir Gawain doesn’t marry her, what happens to the kingdom?
4. Work in a small group to prepare a debate. Support or refute this statement: The story “Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady” presents a stereotypical view of women. Use examples from the text to support your argument. Present to the class.

# Habitant Farm

CORNELIUS KRIEGHOFF



National Gallery of Canada.

## Activities

- What is the focus of interest in this painting?
  - What evidence from the painting backs up your response?
  - Draw a thumbnail sketch of the painting showing why you think the focus of interest is located where you suggest.
- Which people in the painting have the artist's sympathy? What evidence suggests this?
- Develop a short story describing what is happening here from the point of view of one of the characters.
  - Share your story with a group. Ask for suggestions for improvement.
  - Listen to and give constructive feedback about another student's story.

### Focus Your Learning

Working with this visual will help you:

- discuss and explain
- evaluate
- tell an oral story
- provide constructive feedback



# The Highwayman

ALFRED NOYES

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees.  
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas.  
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,  
And the highwayman came riding—

Riding—riding—

The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace at his chin,  
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin.

They fitted with never a wrinkle. His boots were up to the thigh.

And he rode with a jewelled twinkle,

His pistol butts a-twinkle,

His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jewelled sky.



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- determine rhyme scheme
- interpret the poem visually
- explore characterization

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the dark inn-yard.  
He tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and barred.  
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there  
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,  
    Bess, the landlord's daughter,  
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.


And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked  
Where Tim the ostler listened. His face was white and peaked.  
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like mouldy hay,  
But he loved the landlord's daughter,  
    The landlord's red-lipped daughter.  
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say—

“One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize to-night,  
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light;  
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,  
Then look for me by moonlight,  
    Watch for me by moonlight,  
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way.”

He rose upright in the stirrups. He scarce could reach her hand,  
But she loosened her hair in the casement. His face burnt like a brand  
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast;  
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,  
    (O, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)  
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the west.

He did not come in the dawning. He did not come at noon;  
And out of the tawny sunset, before the rise of the moon,  
When the road was a gypsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,  
A red-coat troop came marching—  
    Marching—marching—  
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

They said no word to the landlord. They drank his ale instead.  
But they gagged his daughter, and bound her to the foot of her narrow bed.  
Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at their side!  
There was death at every window;  
    And hell at one dark window;  
For Bess could see, through her casement, the road that *he* would ride.



They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest.  
They had bound a musket beside her, with the muzzle beneath her breast!  
“Now, keep good watch!” and they kissed her. She heard the doomed man say—

*Look for me by moonlight;*

*Watch for me by moonlight;*

*I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!*

She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots held good!  
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or blood!  
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years,

Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,

Cold, on the stroke of midnight,

The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!

The tip of one finger touched it. She strove no more for the rest.  
Up, she stood at attention, with the muzzle beneath her breast.  
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;  
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;  
Blank and bare in the moonlight;  
And the blood of her veins, in the moonlight, throbbed to her love's refrain.

*Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot!* Had they heard it? The horse-hoofs ringing clear;  
*Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot,* in the distance? Were they deaf that they did not hear?  
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,  
The highwayman came riding—

Riding—riding—

The red-coats looked to their priming! She stood up, straight and still.

*Tlot-tlot,* in the frosty silence! *Tlot-tlot,* in the echoing night!

Nearer he came and nearer. Her face was like a light.

Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath,

Then her finger moved in the moonlight,

Her musket shattered the moonlight,

Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him—with her death.



He turned. He spurred to the west; he did now know who stood  
Bowed with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own blood!  
Not till the dawn he heard it, and his face grew grey to hear  
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,  
    The landlord's black-eyed daughter,  
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.

Back, he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,  
With the white road smoking behind him and his rapier brandished high.  
Blood-red were his spurs in the golden noon; wine-red was his velvet coat;  
When they shot him down on the highway,  
    Down like a dog on the highway,  
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with a bunch of lace at his throat.

*And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,  
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,  
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,  
A highwayman comes riding—  
    Riding—riding—  
A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.*

*Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard.  
He taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred.  
He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there  
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,  
    Bess, the landlord's daughter,  
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.*

## Activities

1. Working in pairs, each student reads a stanza from the poem aloud to his or her partner. Note interesting words that your partner stresses when reading aloud. Note the words that rhyme and determine the rhyme scheme for the poem.
2. Pick one of the stanzas to illustrate. Make sure your illustration includes all the details and description used in the stanza.
3. Tim's plan to get rid of his rival backfired. Write a journal entry as if you were Tim, describing your actions and their consequences. Make sure you include details of what he did, and his thoughts and feelings about what happened.

# Messages Are Everywhere



- 
- Create a list of all the souvenirs that you can find in your home. Using the list, write a brief paragraph on why you think people collect souvenirs. Are all souvenirs symbols?

- 
- Many people in Canada belong to affiliations which meet regularly to share ideas, to support one another, and to work together in the community. List groups in your community that meet with a similar purpose and categorize them into religious, cultural, political, and educational groups.





# RECENT IMMIGRANTS

by country of last residence\*

AFRICA	13,460	14,598	14,862	14,226	14,649
ASIA	146,629	135,509	133,912	148,198	115,475
INDIA	19,450	15,802	19,511	20,764	17,572
HONG KONG	41,524	39,873	28,500	29,516	12,115
PHILIPPINES	20,919	16,745	14,165	11,775	7,799
EUROPE	40,072	41,110	41,166	37,506	41,225
WEST INDIES	12,365	9,546	9,999	8,410	7,596
SOUTH AMERICA	8,102	8,279	6,534	5,582	5,618

\*From July 1 of one year to June 30 of the next year  
Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, Matrix 2

- What features of Canada and the Canadian people would make it an appealing destination for immigrants? What drawbacks or obstacles do immigrants to Canada face?



- Work in small groups to discuss the full meaning of Canadian citizenship. Research what is required of new immigrants before they can become Canadian citizens.



- Individuals use many ways to commemorate important events in their lives. What events and people are commemorated on the money you have in your pocket or purse? Choose one of these events or people. Research to get more information. Create your own visual commemorating that person or event.

# In the Silence

PEGGY S. CURRY



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- attend to details of setting
- write instructions
- recognize a dynamic character
- develop an understanding of theme

Daylight was there at his eyes before it seemed he'd been asleep. Then he saw the big foot by the tarp-covered bedroll, and the foot moved to prod him again. "Are you sleepin' all day?" demanded Angus Duncan.

Jimmy McDonald sat up and blinked at the big red-haired man who towered above him. Then he reached into the breast pocket of his heavy wool shirt and his chapped fingers brought out the silver brooch with its glinting purple jewel. He'd worn the brooch on his kilt when he left the hills of Scotland to come to Wyoming and learn the sheep business.

"Ah, that miserable glass and cheap silver," Angus Duncan muttered. "What kind of a never-grow-up are you when you must carry a trinket in your pocket?"

Jimmy couldn't answer. There was no way to put into words what he felt about the brooch. It meant home, the home he'd left to be under the guid-

ance of this distant cousin of his father, the home he hadn't seen for two years. *Aye, that was a green and wonderful land across the ocean*, Jimmy thought, trying to stretch himself awake. *Not mean country like this with its late, cold spring and its mountain always there, frowning down on you.*

Jimmy shivered. Already he feared the mountain that lowered above the campground almost as much as he feared Angus Duncan. Terrifying tales were told of those who lived too long alone on the mountains. "In the silence," the herders called it, and sometimes, they said, a man too long in the silence was daft for the rest of his lifetime.

"Get up and stir the sheep," Angus Duncan said now. "Lambs should be at their breakfast before we start them up the mountain. Then we'll not have the ewes hiding from us among the rocks and brush to feed their young."

Jimmy bent to pull on his boots. Finally he stood, tall for his fourteen years, and looked up at Angus Duncan. "And what's my wages for sitting the summer alone on the mountain with your sheep?"

Angus Duncan's frosty blue eyes looked down on him from under the heavy red eyebrows and the stern mouth moved at the corners in what might have been a smile. "Not content with grub and decent blankets anymore, eh? Well, I'll tell you—" Angus Duncan paused and looked at the mountain, its pines still black against the first morning light.

"Your summer's wages," Angus Duncan said at last, "will be the long-tailed lambs."

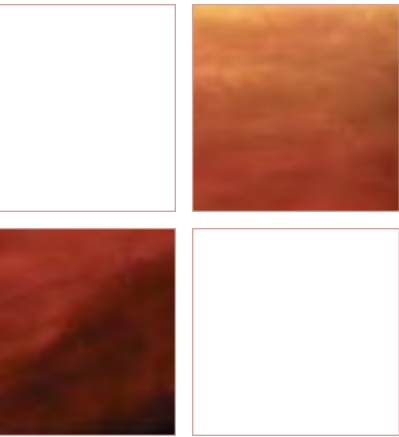
A terrible empty ache began in Jimmy's stomach. "But—they can die. The coyotes can kill them, and the wild range horses run over them, trampling them. I—I could work the whole summer and have nothing left to show for it."

Angus Duncan grunted. "Well said for a lad that's slow to grow up. You've spoken the truth, and the truth can be a hard thing to face. If you save the lambs, you'll beat the best herder's wages. If you lose them, you've yourself to reckon with."

So Angus Duncan was laying out a hard lot for him, a mean job, and Jimmy recalled saying as much when he'd asked Angus Duncan to let him stay another month on the prairie with the other herders in their comfortable canvas-roofed wagons. "Let me stay with them," Jimmy had said. "Let me move to high country when they do."

Angus Duncan had laughed in his face. "Does a boy learn sheep business by sitting with old men under shelter? Why, when I was ten years old, I trailed to the Big Horn Mountains ..."

Now, in the cold of this June morning, Jimmy went to where the sheep were bedded on the gentle slope that marked the beginning of the mountain. As he moved among them, they stirred like old grey stones coming



suddenly to life and got up and stretched and nudged their sleeping lambs. These were the dock-tailed lambs, tails cut on the level prairie and with their legs already strong for the mountain trip.

He looked carefully for the swollen ewes, their bellies like grey barrels; the late lambs would run to sixty or seventy. *Aye*, he thought, *if I could keep only half I'd be a man of wealth*. But his lambs would be the late catches, born far from the familiar ground of the drop herd, prey to coyotes, early snowstorms that hit the mountain, and the salt-hungry horses that ran wild on the open range. Far from the world his lambs would be, brought to life near the sky, with no one to help him keep them from harm.

Jimmy's shoulders sagged as he moved toward the small fire with its smoke and fragrance of coffee. Angus Duncan silently handed him a tin plate, and they ate without speaking to each other, then loaded the packhorses and put saddles on the riding horses. On the packhorses were Jimmy's supplies for the summer—a tent, a small teepee, sacks of salt for the sheep, food, and bedding.

It took five hours to get the sheep on the mountain, moving them slowly along the narrow paths between trees and rocks. But the dogs worked well. Jimmy and Angus walked, leading the horses, and it was hot before they nooned up in the high country. They rested while the sheep were quiet and in the afternoon moved them across the broad back of the mountain to where the snowdrifts still lay with their adjoining pools of water. Here the sheep would drink while there was water, and later use the springs that sometimes went dry by the end of summer.

"You'll set up your main tent here," Angus Duncan said, "and come back for food and to water the sheep. At night set up your teepee by the bed ground. I'll be back in a couple of weeks to move you on a bit. And one day, if you keep your wits about you, I'll let you be a camp mover instead of a herder."

*He'll make me no camp mover, when my long-tailed lambs are dead*, Jimmy thought bitterly. *I'll be at the herding till I'm an old man if all the wages I get are long-tailed lambs*. And in anger he said loudly, "Why do you come up here so soon—snow still on and nights like the middle of winter and not a soul to keep me company? I see no other sheep outfits up here."

"The early sheep get the best grass and plenty of water," Angus Duncan said. "You'll have company by July—and the finest lambs." Then Angus nodded to himself and rode away, leading the packhorses.

The silence of the mountain seemed to grow out of the grass and trees until it came to stand all around Jimmy. His heart beat loudly and sweat broke out on his body. He called to the sheepdogs, his voice sounding strange and hollow, then went into the tent where the small stove, left from last year's early camp, had been set up. He put his bacon in a white sack

and hung it high in a tree, for the flies wouldn't go high in the wind or the thin air. He stacked his canned goods in the corner and put other groceries in a box with a strong catch to keep it shut. Here he had his flour, salt, sugar, baking powder, soda, and sourdough mix.

The silence kept coming into the tent while he worked. And suddenly he felt an overwhelming desire for candy. But Angus Duncan wasn't one to feed his herders anything sweet. Plain food, Angus Duncan always said, kept a man lean and strong and did no harm to his teeth.

*Forget about teeth*, Jimmy thought, finding a can of condensed milk and punching holes in it with his pocketknife. Then he got a tin cup and filled it with snow from a drift near the tent. He poured canned milk over the snow and covered this with sugar. He ate greedily. *Maybe the silence won't bother so much with a full belly.*

Jimmy set up a small teepee near where the sheep were gathering to bed down for the night. "Don't bull the sheep about their bed ground," Angus had cautioned. "They know better than you where they'll sleep best." He set his .22 rifle in the corner of the teepee. It was a single-shot and Angus Duncan had said, "Enough gun for you, and see you don't ventilate a leg or foot with it. Nobody'll be around to bandage your bleeding."

*No*, Jimmy thought, feeling cold, *there is nobody around.*

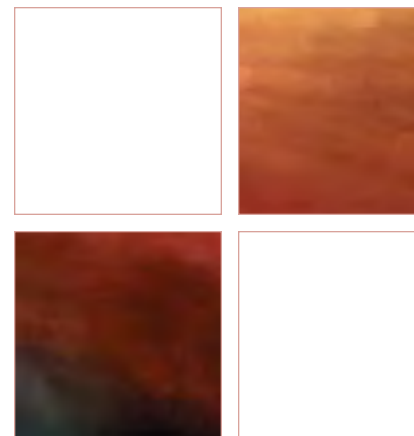
Two of the late lambs were born just before twilight and no sooner had the mothers licked their faces clean and the yellow saddles of membrane started to dry on their backs than the coyotes began howling.

Jimmy hurried to build fires around the bed ground, heaping up broken tree limbs and sagebrush, swinging the axe until his arms ached. When darkness came, he lighted the fires that circled the sheep. The thin, eerie *yip-yapping* of the coyotes rang out from time to time. Jimmy got his gun and walked around the bed ground. Once he saw coyotes at the edge of the firelight, their eyes glowing red, and he rushed toward them, the gun ready. They slipped away into the darkness.

He slept little that night, curled half in and half out of the teepee, the rifle close beside him. And it wasn't until the sheep nooned up that he felt free to lie down among the sagebrush and sleep deeply, the sun pouring over him.

He wakened to the thunder of horses' hooves and sat up blinking. He knew before he saw them come racing out of the trees into the open plateau that these were the wild range horses. Some had broken away from corrals and jumped fences and had run for years on open ranges. Now they wandered onto the mountain and were crazy in their need for salt, for there no salt sage grew.

While he screamed and groped for rocks to throw, they thundered past him, scattering the sheep. When they had gone, one of his new long-tailed





lambs lay trampled and bloody and dead. He put out more salt for the sheep and vowed to shoot the range horses if they came back.

That night Jimmy again built fires to keep away the coyotes and from time to time paced around the bed ground. Five late lambs came during the night. The wind blew in from the north, spitting rain, but this he didn't fear as much as the coyotes or the range horses. There was shelter for the new lambs under the big sagebrush, and Angus Duncan had told him that sheared ewes died from cold more easily than lambs. From the moment of breath, the lamb was at home in the chill, Angus said, but the sheared ewe was without the cover she'd grown used to and couldn't stand much cold.

When the sheep nooned again, Jimmy was in need of sleep, but now the great silence of the mountain plagued him more than weariness. He got on his saddle horse and rode quickly to the rim of the mountain where he could look down on the prairie and see the white-roofed sheepwagons of other herders.

It was almost like talking to another person to see the wagons. He reached in his shirt pocket and took out the silver brooch he'd worn on his kilt in that long-ago time when he'd left Scotland. He turned the brooch in his hand, as though the faraway herders could see it shining. The silence roared in his ears.

At last he rode back to the big tent near the melting snowdrift. He unsaddled the horse and put hobbles on him. Then he noticed the big footprints where the ground was moist near the water hole. *He was not alone in the silence.*

Jimmy ran to the tent, shouting, "Hey there!" But his voice seemed to bounce back at him from the canvas walls and he saw that the tent was empty. Disappointment filled him. It was surely a strange thing that a man would not stay and talk with him. In such a big, lonely country men didn't pass up the opportunity to talk to one another.

The silence of the mountain came pouring into the tent. He closed the tent flap as though to shut it out, but gigantic and real, the silence was there, all around him. *I must take hold of myself*, he thought. *I must look after the sheep.* And after a while the big silence ebbed out of the tent, much the way a tide draws back from the shore.

That night the coyotes were bad, circling the fringe of the lighted fires and making the sheep restless. Doggedly, Jimmy kept the fires going and walked around and around the ring of bedded sheep. Once he stopped and stared, for he was sure he had caught a glimpse of a man at the edge of the firelight. Then, it seemed, the man faded away. Queer little prickles ran up the back of Jimmy's neck. *Am I going daft?* he wondered.

At the end of ten days Jimmy was thin and hard, and his eyes, red from wind and sun, burned fiercely in his taut young face. Loneliness was in him,

filling him like a bitter food he couldn't digest. Periodically the silence dropped over him in a smothering cloud and within it he'd stand, trembling and sweating. Once it was so terrifying he dropped to his knees and clutched the sagebrush to assure himself of his own reality.

There were now fourteen of the small long-tailed lambs. The bold, brassy blue sky mocked him, and out of it came the big eagles, plummeting down toward the new lambs. Sometimes he ran, shouting, to frighten them away. Sometimes he shot at them. Once, on the far side of the herd from where he stood, an eagle got a lamb, soared high with it, and dropped it. Returned and soared again and dropped it. By the time the eagle came in for the third catch, Jimmy was close enough to shoot at it. The eagle went away, but when Jimmy got to the lamb, the life had gone.

In these days that became more dream than reality, he ceased to hate Angus Duncan. He knew if Angus Duncan were to ride out of the aspen trees, now coming green in a quick mist, he'd run to the big man as though he were a lad again and running to his father.

On a late afternoon, when the wind was down and the shadows were long from the rocks and trees, a man came suddenly and stood by the big tent, a man with a gun in a bloody hand. There was something terrible and frightening about him; it breathed out of his dirty clothes, the blood on his hand, the mad light in his eyes.

He said clearly to Jimmy: "I've come to take the long-tailed lambs. The coyotes will get them anyhow."

Blinding anger came up in Jimmy. He tried to collect his wits, hold in check his rising terror. Then slowly he reached in his shirt pocket and brought out the silver brooch with the shiny purple stone that was the colour of heather in bloom. He let the treasure lie in the palm of his hand where the sunlight struck it from the west.

"You'll kill me to get my lambs," Jimmy said quietly, turning the brooch to catch more sunlight so that it gleamed brighter than before.

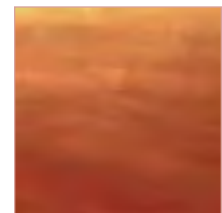
"What's that in your fist?" the stranger asked.

"Silver and precious stone," Jimmy replied. "Worth more than all the band of sheep." He looked into the stranger's eyes and saw them glitter.

"If you steal this," Jimmy went on, "a curse will be on you. This can't be killed for or stolen. But it can be bargained for."

Now that he was making a story, he ceased to be afraid. It was like listening to his mother talk when the sea was rough and the fishing boats were in danger. Always his mother had told the children stories until the sea seemed a friend, and faith would come to them that their father would get home.

"I heard of a man who stole one of these jewels," Jimmy said, "killing a man to get it. Blindness struck him." And he turned the silver brooch until





the sun glinted on the glass, making a light that fell full in the stranger's eyes.

"But," Jimmy went on, "it can be bargained for, and no harm done. I'll bargain with you—this for you, if you leave my long-tailed lambs." And he moved closer so the wild eyes could look more closely at the stone.

"I can take it—and the lambs." The stranger spat on the ground.

"Aye." Jimmy nodded. "That is so. And you'll have to kill me, for I'll fight. It's for you to choose whether there's a curse on you or not."

The stranger didn't speak.

Jimmy's hand tightened on the brooch. "I'll never be the same without it," he said, more to himself than to the stranger. "It is giving something inside me away."

Then the evil-smelling man moved close and held out the hand with the bloody fingers. "I'll take it—and leave your sheep."

When the brooch fell from his hand to the hand of the stranger, tears began to run down Jimmy's cheeks and the strength left his legs. He fell down to the ground and lay as one dead. When he awoke, it was dark, and he was cold and hungry. He jumped up, thinking only of the sheep, and ran to build fires and walk the bed ground. The dogs greeted him and licked his hands.

Two days later when Angus Duncan came riding up from the flat country, he looked sharply at Jimmy and said. "Have you forgotten to eat, boy? What's happened to you?" And the big man got off his horse and put his hand gently on Jimmy's shoulder.

Jimmy talked slowly and carefully, telling his story of the stranger. Afterward he waited for Angus Duncan to laugh at him or tease him. But Angus neither laughed nor spoke, he walked over to the dwindling water hole near the snowdrift that now was almost gone and looked at the ground. "There is no track of a man here," he said, "but, of course, the sheep have been in to drink and trampled the earth."

He came back to Jimmy and said, "I brought you some sweets. Strange, how a man hungers for them on the mountain." And he took a sack of candy and put it in Jimmy's hand.

Once Jimmy would have stood there and stuffed the candy in his mouth and eaten until the sack was empty. But now he only held the sack and said casually, "I may have some tonight after my supper. Thank you."

"In the silence," Angus Duncan said, "a man learns to be strong. And the silence is not only on the mountain, Jimmy. Somewhere—before he dies—every man must meet it and struggle with it on his own terms. In the silence we must face only ourselves." Again Angus Duncan's hand touched the boy's shoulder. "I see now you have done that."

Jimmy's hand moved to his empty shirt pocket. *I could have lost the*

*brooch, there at the edge of the mountain when I was looking to the prairie and the wagons of other herders, he thought. Still—*

“Well,” he said, “you’ll want to take a look at the sheep over there. I’ve lost only two lambs—one to the wild horses and another to the eagles.”

He walked with Angus Duncan toward the sheep. The light of later afternoon had given new shapes to everything, making even the grass look thicker and stronger. The silence was still there. But Jimmy smiled to himself, letting it move beside him as an old and familiar friend. ■

## Activities

1. Draw a map of Jimmy’s camp. Show as many details as you can, using information from the author’s description of the setting.
2. Work with a partner to review what Jimmy learned about tending sheep. Write a list of instructions that he can give to the person who will watch the sheep next year.
3. Jimmy is a dynamic character who undergoes a number of changes during this story. Create a flowchart to show how his experiences develop his character.
4. Angus tells Jimmy, “In the silence we must face only ourselves.” Discuss this statement with a partner, explaining to each other what you think he means by this. Rewrite the line as a statement that could be given as advice to any young person starting out in life. Present your advice to the class. Discuss how your advice resembles or differs from the advice of other students. What could account for these differing interpretations?

# The Time of the Wolves

MARCIA MULLER



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- review elements of a short story
- consider author's technique
- write the story from a different perspective
- role-play a conversation

"It was in the time of the wolves that my grandmother came to Kansas." The old woman sat primly on the sofa in her apartment in the senior citizens' complex. Although her faded blue eyes were focussed on the window, the historian who sat opposite her sensed Mrs. Clark was not seeing the shopping malls and used-car lots that had spilled over into what once was open prairie. As she'd begun speaking, her gaze had turned inward—and into the past.

The historian—who was compiling an oral account of the Kansas pioneers—adjusted the volume button on her tape recorder and looked expectantly at Mrs. Clark. But the descendant of those pioneers was in no hurry; she waited a moment before her story.

"The time of the wolves—that's the way I thought of it as a child, and I speak of it that way to this very day. It's fitting; those were perilous times, in



the 1870s. Vicious packs of wolves and coyotes roamed; fires would sweep the prairie without warning; there were disastrous floods; and, of course, blizzards. But my grandmother was a true pioneer woman: she knew no fear. One time in the winter of 1872 ..."

Alma Heusser stood in the doorway of the sod house, looking north over the prairie. It was gone four in the afternoon now, and storm clouds were building on the horizon. The chill in the air penetrated even her heavy buffalo-skin robe; a hush had fallen, as if all the creatures on the barren plain were holding their breath, waiting for the advent of the snow.

Alma's hand tightened on the rough doorframe. Fear coiled in her stomach. Every time John was forced to make the long trek into town she stood like this, awaiting his return. Every moment until his horse appeared in the distance she imagined that some terrible event had taken him from her. And on this night, with the blizzard threatening ...

The shadows deepened, purpled by the impending storm. Alma shivered and hugged herself beneath the enveloping robe. The land stretched before her: flat, treeless, its sameness mesmerizing. If she looked at it long enough, her eyes would begin to play tricks on her—tricks that held the power to drive her mad.

She'd heard of a woman who had been driven mad by the prairie: a timid, gentle woman who had travelled some miles east with her husband to gather wood. When they had finally stopped their wagon at a grove, the woman had gotten down and run to a tree—the first tree she had touched in three years. It was said they had had to pry her loose, because she refused to stop hugging it.

The sound of a horse's hooves came from the distance. Behind Alma, ten-year-old Margaret asked, "Is that him? Is it Papa?"

Alma strained to see through the rapidly gathering dusk. "No," she said, her voice flat with disappointment. "No, it's only Mr. Carstairs."

The Carstairs, William and Sarah, lived on a claim several miles east of there. It was not unusual for William to stop when passing on his way from town. But John had been in town today, too; why had they not ridden back together?

The coil of fear wound tighter as she went to greet him.

"No, I won't dismount," William Carstairs said in response to her invitation to come inside and warm himself. "Sarah doesn't know I am here, so I must be home swiftly. I've come to ask a favour."

"Certainly. What is it?"

"I'm off to the East in the morning. My mother is ill and hasn't much longer; she's asked for me. Sarah is anxious about being alone. As you know, she's been homesick these past two years. Will you look after her?"

"Of course." Alma said the words with a readiness she did not feel. She did not like Sarah Carstairs. There was something mean-spirited about the young woman, a suspicious air in the way she dealt with others that bordered on the hostile. But looking after neighbours was an inviolate obligation here on the prairie, essential to survival.

"Of course we'll look after her," she said more warmly, afraid her reluctance had somehow sounded in her voice. "You need not worry."

After William Carstairs had ridden off, Alma remained in the doorway of the sod house until the horizon had receded into darkness. She would wait for John as long as was necessary, hoping that her hunger for the sight of him had the power to bring him home again.

"Neighbours were the greatest treasure my grandparents had," Mrs. Clark explained. "The pioneer people were a warmhearted lot, open and giving, closer than many of today's families. And the women in particular were a great source of strength and comfort to one another. My grandmother's friendship with Sarah Carstairs, for example ..."

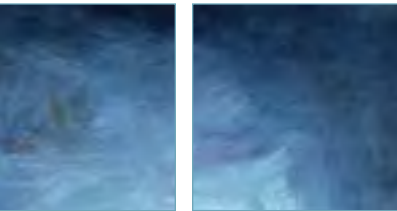
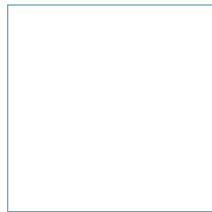
"I suppose I must pay a visit to Sarah," Alma said. It was two days later. The snowstorm had never arrived, but even though it had retreated into Nebraska, another seemed to be on the way. If she didn't go to the Carstairs' claim today, she might not be able to look in on Sarah for some time to come.

John grunted noncommittally and went on trimming the wick of the oil lamp. Alma knew he didn't care for Sarah either, but he was a taciturn man, slow to voice criticism. And he also understood the necessity of standing by one's neighbours.

"I promised William. He was so worried about her." Alma waited, hoping her husband would forbid her to go because of the impending storm. No such dictum was forthcoming, however: John Heusser was not one to distrust his wife's judgment; he would abide by whatever she decided.

So, driven by a promise she wished she had not been obligated to make, Alma set off on horseback within the hour.

The Carstairs' claim was a poor one, although to Alma's way of thinking it need not be. In the hands of John Heusser it would have been bountiful with wheat and corn, but William Carstairs was an unskilled farmer. His crops had parched even during the past two summers of plentiful rain; his animals fell ill and died of unidentifiable ailments; the house and outbuildings grew ever more ramshackle through his neglect. If Alma were a fanciful woman—and she preferred to believe she was not—she would have said there was a curse on the land. Its appearance on this grim February day did little to dispel the illusion.



In the foreground stood the house, its roof beam sagging, its chimney askew. The barn and other outbuildings behind it looked no better. The horse in the enclosure was bony and spavined; the few chickens seemed too dispirited to scratch at the hard-packed earth. Alma tied her sorrel to the fence and walked toward the house, her reluctance to be there asserting itself until it was nearly a foreboding. There was no sign of welcome from within, none of the flurry of excitement that the arrival of a visitor on the isolated homesteads always occasioned. She called out, knocked at the door. And waited.

After a moment the door opened slowly and Sarah Carstairs looked out. Her dark hair hung loose about her shoulders; she wore a muslin dress dyed the rich brown of walnut bark. Her eyes were deeply circled—haunted, Alma thought.

Quickly she shook off the notion and smiled. "We've heard that Mr. Carstairs had to journey East," she said. "I thought you might enjoy some company."

The younger woman nodded. Then she opened the door wider and motioned Alma inside.

The room was much like Alma's main room at home, with narrow, tall windows, a rough board floor, and an iron stove for both cooking and heating. The curtains at the windows were plain burlap grain sacks, not at all like Alma's neatly stitched muslin ones, with their appliqués of flowers. The furnishings—a pair of rockers, pine cabinet, sideboard, and table—had been new when the Carstairs arrived from the East two years before, but their surfaces were coated with the grime that accumulated from cooking.

Sarah shut the door and turned to face Alma, still not speaking. To cover her confusion Alma thrust out the corn bread she had brought. The younger woman took it, nodding thanks. After a slight hesitation she set it on the table and motioned somewhat gracelessly at one of the rockers. "Please," she said.

Alma undid the fastenings of her heavy cloak and sat down, puzzled by the strange reception. Sarah went to the stove and added a log, in spite of the room already being quite warm.

"He sent you to spy on me, didn't he?"

The words caught Alma by complete surprise. She stared at Sarah's narrow back, unable to make a reply.

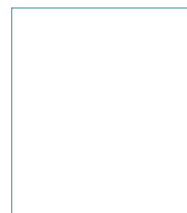
Sarah turned, her sharp features pinched by what might have been anger. "That is why you're here, is it not?" she asked.

"Mr. Carstairs did ask us to look out for you in his absence, yes."

"How like him," Sarah said bitterly.

Alma could think of nothing to say to that.

Sarah offered her coffee. As she prepared it, Alma studied the young



woman. In spite of the heat in the room and her proximity to the stove, she rubbed her hands together; her shawl slipped off her thin shoulders, and she quickly pulled it back. When the coffee was ready—a bitter, nearly unpalatable brew—she sat cradling the cup in her hands, as if to draw even more warmth from it.

After her earlier strangeness Sarah seemed determined to talk about the commonplace: the storm that was surely due, the difficulty of obtaining proper cloth, her hope that William would not forget the bolt of calico she had requested he bring. She asked Alma about making soap: Had she ever done so? Would she allow her to help the next time so she might learn? As they spoke, she began to wipe beads of moisture from her brow. The room remained very warm; Alma removed her cloak and draped it over the back of the rocker.

Outside, the wind was rising, and the light that came through the narrow windows was tinged with grey. Alma became impatient to be off for home before the storm arrived, but she also became concerned with leaving Sarah alone. The young woman's conversation was rapidly growing erratic and rambling; she broke off in the middle of sentences to laugh irrelevantly. Her brow continued moist, and she threw off her shawl, fanning herself. Alma, who like all frontier women had had considerable experience at doctoring the sick, realized Sarah had been taken by a fever.

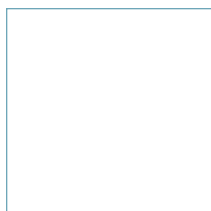
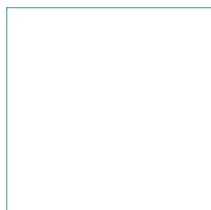
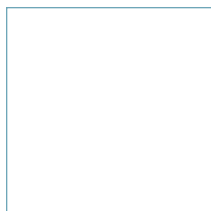
Her first thought was to take Sarah to her own home, where she might look after her properly, but one glance out the window discouraged her. The storm was nearing quickly now; the wind gusted, tearing at the dried cornstalks in William Carstairs's uncleared fields, and the sky was streaked with black and purple. A ride of several miles in such weather would be the death of Sarah; do Alma no good, either. She was here for the duration, with only a sick woman to help her make the place secure.

She glanced at Sarah, but the other woman seemed unaware of what was going on outside. Alma said, "You're feeling poorly, aren't you?"

Sarah shook her head vehemently. A strand of dark brown hair fell across her forehead and clung there damply. Alma sensed she was not a woman who would give in easily to illness, would fight any suggestion that she take to her bed until she was near collapse. She thought over the remedies she had administered to others in such a condition, wondered whether Sarah's supplies included the necessary sassafras tea or quinine.

Sarah was rambling again—about the prairie, its loneliness and desolation. "... listen to that wind! It's with us every moment. I hate the wind and the cold, I hate the nights when the wolves prowl ..."

A stealthy touch of cold moved along Alma's spine. She, too, feared the wolves and coyotes. John told her it came from having Germanic blood. Their older relatives had often spoken in hushed tones of the wolf packs in



the Black Forest. Many of their native fairy tales and legends concerned the cruel cunning of the animals, but John was always quick to point out that these were only stories. "Wolves will not attack a human unless they sense sickness or weakness," he often asserted. "You need only take caution."

But all of the settlers, John included, took great precautions against the roaming wolf packs; no one went out onto the prairie unarmed. And the stories of merciless and unprovoked attacks could not all be unfounded ...

"I hear the wolves at night," Sarah said. "They scratch on the door and the sod. They're hungry. Oh, yes, they're hungry ..."

Alma suddenly got to her feet, unable to sit for the tautness in her limbs. She felt Sarah's eyes on her as she went to the sideboard and lit the oil lamp. When she turned to Sarah again, the young woman had tilted her head against the high back of the rocker and was viewing her through slitted lids. There was a glitter in the dark crescents that remained visible that struck Alma as somehow malicious.

"Are you afraid of the wolves, Alma?" she asked slyly.

"Anyone with good sense is."

"And you in particular?"

"Of course I'd be afraid if I met one face-to-face!"

"Only if you were face-to-face with it? Then you won't be afraid staying here with me when they scratch at the door. I tell you, I hear them every night. Their claws go *snick, snick* on the boards ..."

The words were baiting. Alma felt her dislike for Sarah Carstairs gather strength. She said calmly, "Then you've noticed the storm is fast approaching."

Sarah extended a limp arm toward the window. "Look at the snow."

Alma glanced over there, saw the first flakes drifting past the wavery pane of glass. The sense of foreboding she'd felt upon her arrival intensified, sending little prickles over the surface of her skin.

Firmly she reined in her fear and met Sarah's eyes with a steady gaze. "You're right; I must stay here. I'll be as little trouble to you as possible."

"Why should you be trouble? I'll be glad of the company." Her tone mocked the meaning of the words. "We can talk. It's a long time since I've had anyone to talk to. We'll talk of my William."

Alma glanced at the window again, anxious to put her horse into the barn, out of the snow. She thought of the revolver she carried in her saddlebag as defence against the dangers of the prairie; she would feel safer if she brought it inside with her.

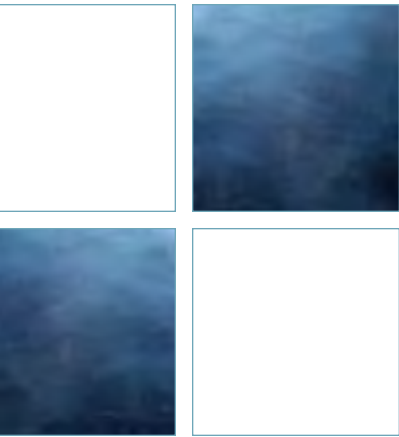
"We'll talk of my William," Sarah repeated. "You'd like that, wouldn't you, Alma?"

"Of course. But first I must tend to my horse."

"Yes, of course you'd like talking of William. You like talking *to* him. All







those times when he stops at your place on his way home to me. On his way home, when your John isn't there. Oh, yes, Alma, I know about those visits." Sarah's eyes were wide now, the malicious light shining brightly.

Alma caught her breath. She opened her mouth to contradict the words, then shut it. It was the fever talking, she told herself, exaggerating the fears and delusions that life on the frontier could sometimes foster. There was no sense trying to reason with Sarah. What mattered now was to put the horse up and fetch her weapon. She said briskly, "We'll discuss this when I've returned," donned her cloak, and stepped out into the storm.

The snow was sheeting along on a northwesterly gale. The flakes were small and hard; they stung her face like hailstones. The wind made it difficult to walk; she leaned into it, moving slowly toward the hazy outline of her sorrel. He stood by the rail, his feet moving skittishly. Alma grasped his halter, clung to it a moment before she began leading him toward the ramshackle barn. The chickens had long ago fled to their coop. Sarah's bony bay was nowhere in sight.

The doors to the barn stood open, the interior in darkness. Alma led the sorrel inside and waited until her eyes accustomed themselves to the gloom. When they had, she spied a lantern hanging next to the door, matches and flint nearby. She fumbled with them, got the lantern lit, and looked around.

Sarah's bay stood in one of the stalls, apparently accustomed to looking out for itself. The stall was dirty, and the entire barn held an air of neglect. She set the lantern down, unsaddled the sorrel, and fed and watered both horses. As she turned to leave, she saw the dull gleam of an axe lying on top of a pile of wood. Without considering why she was doing so, she picked it up and carried it, along with her gun, outside. The barn doors were warped and difficult to secure, but with some effort she managed.

Back in the house, she found Sarah's rocker empty. She set down the axe and the gun, calling out in alarm. A moan came from beyond the rough burlap that curtained off the next room. Alma went over and pushed aside the cloth.

Sarah lay on a brass bed, her hair fanned out on the pillows. She had crawled under the tumbled quilts and blankets. Alma approached and put a hand to her forehead; it was hot, but Sarah was shivering.

Sarah moaned again. Her eyes opened and focussed unsteadily on Alma. "Cold," she said. "So cold ..."

"You've taken a fever." Alma spoke briskly, a manner she'd found effective with sick people. "Did you remove your shoes before getting into bed?"

Sarah nodded.

"Good. It's best you keep your clothes on, though; this storm is going to be a bad one; you'll need them for warmth."

Sarah rolled onto her side and drew herself into a ball, shivering violently. She mumbled something, but her words were muffled.

Alma leaned closer. "What did you say?"

"The wolves ... they'll come tonight, scratching—"

"No wolves are going to come here in this storm. Anyway, I've a gun and the axe from your woodpile. No harm will come to us. Try to rest now, perhaps sleep. When you wake, I'll bring some tea that will help break the fever."

Alma went toward the door, then turned to look back at the sick woman. Sarah was still curled on her side, but she had moved her head and was watching her. Her eyes were slitted once more, and the light from the lamp in the next room gleamed off them—hard and cold as the icicles that must be forming on the eaves.

Alma was seized by an unreasoning chill. She moved through the door, out into the lamplight, toward the stove's warmth. As she busied herself with finding things in the cabinet, she felt a violent tug of home.

Ridiculous to fret, she told herself. John and Margaret would be fine. They would worry about her, of course, but would know she had arrived here well in advance of the storm. And they would also credit her with the good sense not to start back home on such a night.

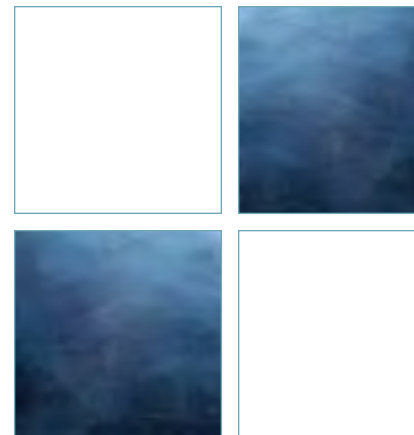
She rummaged through the shelves and drawers, found the herbs and tea and some roots that would make a healing brew. Outside, there was a momentary quieting of the wind; in the bedroom Sarah also lay quiet. Alma put on the kettle and sat down to wait for it to boil.

It was then that she heard the first wolf howls, not far away on the prairie.

"The bravery of the pioneer women has never been equalled," Mrs. Clark told the historian. "And there was a solidarity, a sisterhood among them that you don't see any more. That sisterhood was what sustained my grandmother and Sarah Carstairs as they battled the wolves ..."

For hours the wolves howled in the distance. Sarah awoke, throwing off the covers, complaining of the heat. Alma dosed her repeatedly with the herbal brew and waited for the fever to break. Sarah tossed about on the bed, raving about wolves and the wind and William. She seemed to have some fevered notion that her husband had deserted her, and nothing Alma would say would calm her. Finally she wore herself out and slipped into a troubled sleep.

Alma prepared herself some tea and pulled one of the rockers close to the stove. She was bone-tired, and the cold was bitter now, invading the lit-



tle house through every crack and pore in the sod. Briefly she thought she should bring Sarah into the main room, prepare a pallet on the floor nearer the heat source, but she decided it would do the woman more harm than good to be moved. As she sat warming herself and sipping the tea, she gradually, became aware of an eerie hush and realized the wind had ceased.

Quickly she set down her cup and went to the window. The snow stopped, too. Like its sister storm of two days before, this one had retreated north, leaving behind a barren white landscape. The moon had appeared near to full, and its stark light glistened off the snow.

And against the snow moved the black silhouettes of the wolves.

They came from the north, rangy and shaggy, more like ragged shadows than flesh-and-blood creatures. Their howling was silenced now, and their gait held purpose. Alma counted five of them, all of a good size yet bony. Hungry.

She stepped back from the window and leaned against the wall beside it. Her breathing was shallow, and she felt strangely light-headed. For a moment she stood, one hand pressed to her midriff, bringing her senses under control. Then she moved across the room, to where William Carstairs's Winchester rifle hung on the wall. When she had it in her hands, she stood looking irresolutely at it.

Of course Alma knew how to fire a rifle; all frontier women did. But she was only a fair shot with it, a far better shot with her revolver. She could use the rifle to fire at the wolves at a distance, but the best she could hope for was to frighten them. Better to wait and see what transpired.

She set the rifle down and turned back to the window. The wolves were still some distance away. And what if they did come to the house, scratch at the door as Sarah had claimed? The house was well built; there was little harm the wolves could do it.

Alma went to the door to the bedroom. Sarah still slept, the covers pushed down from her shoulders. Alma went in and pulled them up again. Then she returned to the main room and the rocker.

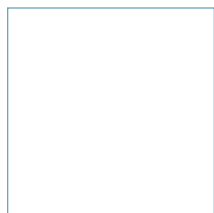
The first scratchings came only minutes later. *Snick, snick* on the boards, just as Sarah had said.

Alma gripped the arms of the rocker with icy fingers. The revolver lay in her lap.

The scratching went on. Snuffling noises, too. In the bedroom Sarah cried out in protest. Alma got up and looked in on her. The sick woman was writhing on the bed. "They're out there! I know they are!"

Alma went to her. "Hush, they won't hurt us." She tried to rearrange Sarah's covers, but she only thrashed harder.

"They'll break the door, they'll find a way in, they'll—"



Alma pressed her hand over Sarah's mouth. "Stop it! You'll only do yourself harm."

Surprisingly Sarah calmed. Alma wiped sweat from her brow and waited. The young woman continued to lie quietly.

When Alma went back to the window, she saw that the wolves had retreated. They stood together, several yards away, as if discussing how to breach the house.

Within minutes they returned. Their scratchings became bolder now; their claws ripped and tore at the sod. Heavy bodies thudded against the door, making the boards tremble.

In the bedroom Sarah cried out. This time Alma ignored her.

The onslaught became more intense. Alma checked the load on William Carstairs's rifle, then looked at her pistol. Five rounds left. Five rounds, five wolves ...

The wolves were in a frenzy now—incited, perhaps, by the odour of sickness within the house. Alma remembered John's words: "They will not attack a human unless they sense sickness or weakness." There was plenty of both here.

One of the wolves leapt at the window. The thick glass creaked but did not shatter. There were more thumps at the door; its boards groaned.

Alma took her pistol in both hands, held it ready, moved toward the door.

In the bedroom Sarah cried out for William. Once again Alma ignored her.

The coil of fear that was so often in the pit of Alma's stomach wound taut. Strangely it gave her strength. She trained the revolver's muzzle on the door, ready should it give.

The attack came from a different quarter: the window shattered, glass smashing on the floor. A grey head appeared, tried to wriggle through the narrow casement. Alma smelled its foul odour, saw its fangs. She fired once ... twice.

The wolf dropped out of sight.

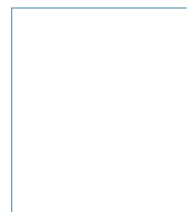
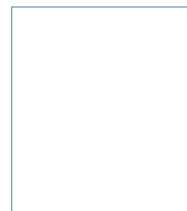
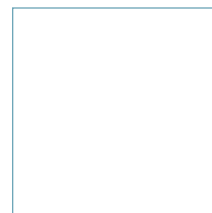
The assault on the door ceased. Cautiously Alma moved forward. When she looked out the window, she saw the wolf lying dead on the ground—and the others renewing their attack on the door.

Alma scrambled back as another shaggy grey head appeared in the window frame. She fired. The wolf dropped back, snarling.

It lunged once more. Her finger squeezed the trigger. The wolf fell.

One round left. Alma turned, meaning to fetch the rifle. But Sarah stood behind her.

The sick woman wavered on her feet. Her face was coated with sweat, her



hair tangled. In her hands she held the axe that Alma had brought from the woodpile.

In the instant before Sarah raised it above her head, Alma saw her eyes. They were made wild by something more than fever: The woman was totally mad.

Disbelief made Alma slow. It was only as the blade began its descent that she was able to move aside.

The blade came down, whacked into the boards where she had stood.

Her sudden motion nearly put her on the floor. She stumbled, fought to steady herself.

From behind her came a scrambling sound. She whirled, saw a wolf wriggling halfway through the window casement.

Sarah was struggling to lift the axe.

Alma pivoted and put her last bullet into the wolf's head.

Sarah had raised the axe. Alma dropped the revolver and rushed at her. She slammed into the young woman's shoulder, sent her spinning toward the stove. The axe crashed to the floor.

As she fell against the hot metal Sarah screamed—a sound more terrifying than the howls of the wolves.

"My grandmother was made of stronger cloth than Sarah Carstairs," Mrs. Clark said. "The wolf attack did irreparable damage to poor Sarah's mind. She was never the same again."

Alma was never sure what had driven the two remaining wolves off—whether it was the death of the others or the terrible keening of the sick and injured woman in the sod house. She was never clear on how she managed to do what needed to be done for Sarah, nor how she got through the remainder of that terrible night. But in the morning when John arrived—so afraid for her safety that he had left Margaret at home and braved the drifted snow alone—Sarah was bandaged and put to bed. The fever had broken, and they were able to transport her to their own home after securing the battered house against the elements.

If John sensed that something more terrible than a wolf attack had transpired during those dark hours, he never spoke of it. Certainly he knew Sarah was in grave trouble, though, because she never said a word throughout her entire convalescence, save to give her thanks when William returned—summoned by them from the East—and took her home. Within the month the Carstairs had deserted their claim and left Kansas, to return to their native state of Vermont. There, Alma hoped, the young woman would somehow find peace.

As for herself, fear still curled in the pit of her stomach as she waited for





John on those nights when he was away. But no longer was she shamed by the feeling. The fear, she knew now, was a friend—something that had stood her in good stead once, would be there should she again need it. And now, when she crossed the prairie, she did so with courage, for she and the lifesaving fear were one.

Her story done, Mrs. Clark smiled at the historian. “As I’ve said, my dear,” she concluded, “the women of the Kansas frontier were uncommon in their valour. They faced dangers we can barely imagine today. And they were fearless, one and all.”

Her eyes moved away to the window, and to the housing tracts and shoddy commercial enterprises beyond it. “I can’t help wondering how women like Alma Heusser would feel about the way the prairie looks today,” she added. “I should think they would hate it, and yet ...”

The historian had been about to shut off her tape recorder, but now she paused for a final comment. “And yet?” she prompted.

“And yet I think that somehow my grandmother would have understood that our world isn’t as bad as it appears on the surface. Alma Heusser has always struck me as a woman who knew that things aren’t always as they seem.” ■

## Activities

1. Work with one or two other students and pick one of the elements of this short story: foreshadowing, suspense, Sarah or Alma’s character, setting, conflict, or figurative language. Prepare a mini-lesson for the class on that element. Review the definition of the element, and strategies used by authors to develop it. Discuss how the element is used in the story. Prepare an overhead or handout to help you lead a discussion of the author’s technique.
2. The story is written from two sometimes contradictory perspectives: that of the granddaughter, and that of the narrator, who uses the third person to describe the action of the story. Reread the granddaughter’s comments, and list her assumptions about pioneer women. Compare this list with “reality” as it appears in the story. As either Sarah or Alma, write a note to the granddaughter, referring to the assumptions she has made about your life and your relationship with the other character. Explain what you were really like and how things really were.
3. Pretend you are one of the surviving wolves. Rewrite the story from your perspective. Include your attitude toward the settlers, your plan of attack, the experience of the attack, and what happened next.
4. Work with a partner and role-play a conversation between Sarah and her husband in which she tries to convince him to move to a bigger town or city. Use evidence from the story to justify her desire to move.

# The Fighting Days

WENDY LILL



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this play excerpt will help you:

- consider audience
- look at stereotypes
- write a business letter
- reflect on subtleties of language

*Place: office of the Rural Review, a farm newspaper published in Winnipeg*

*Time: 1912 or 1913*

*Characters: Francis Beynon, George McNair*

*Shortly after arriving in Winnipeg, Francis lands a job writing for the women's page of The Rural Review. Influenced by Nellie McClung, who is a friend of Francis' sister Lily, she has transformed the women's page into a forum for women's suffrage. Francis' editor, George McNair, views this transformation with wry amusement. One senses that he tolerates Francis' opinions because he is in love with her; he will later ask her to marry him.*

**McNAIR:** Let's see what you've got on your page this week.

*(He pulls the page out of the typewriter and begins to read aloud.)*

"We have too long been contented with the kind of motherhood that can turn its back on mere children toiling incredible hours in factories making bullets and ammunition and uniforms for some faraway war and yet calmly say, 'Thank God it's not my children.' What we need now is a new spirit of national motherhood." And someone who can write shorter sentences. National motherhood. National motherhood? You make it sound like the railway, Miss Beynon.

**FRANCIS:** (*Deflated*) I quite liked that expression.

**McNAIR:** Is it yours?

**FRANCIS:** Well ...

**McNAIR:** It sounds like something off of Mrs. McClung's bat. You seem to have an opinion about everything lately. National motherhood, intemperate husbands, the German war machine, the profession of parenthood, the Boy Scout movement, and suffrage ad nauseam. But I find myself wondering ... what happened to your columns on mothers and babies, gingersnaps and peonies? What about the little crocheted sweaters for the wee ones. Hmmm? What about those things? They're important, too.

**FRANCIS:** Do you think they are more important than freedom from cruel husbands and fathers, from hypocritical ministers, from war-mongering politicians?

**McNAIR:** Oh, don't bludgeon me with adjectives. Just say what you mean.

**FRANCIS:** I'm sorry.

**McNAIR:** Unfortunately, the things you mention will always be with us. Scotch broth and shortbread and a garden full of bluebells make them a bit more tolerable. My mother knew that. She would never have bothered herself with voting and chasing men out of bars.

**FRANCIS:** But was she happy?

**McNAIR:** Happy? I don't know. She seemed content. She smiled a lot.

**FRANCIS:** You mean she just put up with it.

**McNAIR:** Perhaps. But the point is, she had enough to do in the home. You'll be wise to keep that in mind.

**FRANCIS:** If you think that women belong in the home, why did you hire me?

**McNAIR:** I had no choice. What self-respecting man would want to write about “women’s things”? Unfortunately, you don’t seem interested in writing about them either.

**FRANCIS:** Mr. McNair, are you not finding my work satisfactory?

**McNAIR:** Did I say that?

**FRANCIS:** You imply that.

**McNAIR:** I do not. I think that the suffrage question is ... interesting, but you take it much too far. Mrs. McClung need only pen one of her silly little verses and it somehow finds its way into your editorials.

**FRANCIS:** Mrs. McClung is at the forefront of the suffrage cause.

**McNAIR:** She is a dilettante and a debutante. And a hypocrite. She’s an upper-class snob who wouldn’t have given my poor mother the time of day.

**FRANCIS:** That’s not true. Nellie McClung is fighting for the vote for women.

**McNAIR:** For women who don’t need the vote. For women who’ve got something better than the vote! Influence! And furthermore, the proper lineage!

**FRANCIS:** No!

**McNAIR:** No? Then tell me why your suffrage club list is full of names like Stewart, Titheradge, Ward, Galbraith, Gordon, and not ... Lewycky, Schapansky and Swartz?

**FRANCIS:** Well, maybe their husbands won’t let them come.

**McNAIR:** They’re not there because your suffrage club doesn’t want them there. Neither do they want them living next to them on Chestnut Street nor their children sitting beside theirs at school.

**FRANCIS:** Mr. McNair, I believe in democracy for ALL women. I do!

**McNAIR:** Then you’re in the minority. Isobel Graham has gone on record saying she’s afraid the entire western hemisphere is sinking under the weight of the immigrants.

**FRANCIS:** Isobel has ... a blind spot.

**McNAIR:** And Laura McLaughlin, another one of your leading lights, is

heading up the fight to eliminate any foreign language in the schoolyard.

**FRANCIS:** That's because Laura thinks it's important that newcomers learn English.

**McNAIR:** That's because she hates the very idea of them.

**FRANCIS:** I admit there are some members who don't feel comfortable with all the strangers in our midst, but that will change. It takes time to alter attitudes. It takes time to remove the walls of class and privilege and ethnic differences that ...

**McNAIR:** Oh, don't start that again! The fact is the suffragists are an exclusive club. And you'd do well to stay away from them.

**FRANCIS:** I find it curious how you suddenly spring to the defence of foreign women. Because in the year that I've known you, you have never shown interest in ANY women having the vote, whether their name was Gordon or Schapansky! I'm beginning to think that you just enjoy muddying the waters!

**McNAIR:** (*Winking*) I enjoy arguing with you. You argue like a man!

**FRANCIS:** Well, I am not.

**McNAIR:** And I'm glad you're not.

**FRANCIS:** (*Flustered*) I believe in the vote for women, all women, and I am going to keep fighting for it.

**McNAIR:** Now don't get so flustered. It's not that important, is it?

**FRANCIS:** Mr. McNair, let me try to explain something to you. When I was a child, on the farm, I was constantly asking questions. Does God ever change his mind? Why was he angry all the time? Why couldn't I talk to the Polish children on the next farm? Why didn't my father help them out like the other neighbours? But nobody wanted to answer my questions. There seemed to be a secret fraternity at work that I didn't understand. My father and the Methodist minister and later my teachers thrashed and sermonized and ridiculed me until my spirit shrank and I began to doubt my very worth.

**McNAIR:** It doesn't seem to have been a lasting affliction. You seem to have quite an unswerving confidence.

**FRANCIS:** Well, I don't. I still cower at the voice of authority. Even now, I tense up as you, my editor, come into the room. Do you understand what I'm talking about?



**McNAIR:** Yes, I think so, but I'm not sure what it has to do with suffrage.

**FRANCIS:** Oh, but it's all connected! When I came to the city, I met women fighting for the freedom to think and worship and question for themselves, women who challenge authority ... who look it right in the eye and say, prove you're worthy of respect! I felt like I'd been let out of prison. I felt like a great gleam of sunlight had broken through the fog. And I didn't feel alone any more!

**McNAIR:** You're a funny one. You remind me of those little birds I found trapped in the house when I was a child. My mother would make me catch them and let them go free outside. And whenever I caught them, I could feel their little hearts beating in my hand, and I wanted to tell them not to be afraid, that I wasn't going to hurt them. You're like one of those little birds. Miss Beynon, I understand you live alone since your sister married. Perhaps you might be needing someone to look in on you once in a while.

**FRANCIS:** I would like that very much.

**McNAIR:** Good, then. I will do that. It's time you associated with someone who still holds womanhood sacred.

**FRANCIS:** No! I don't need anyone to hold womanhood sacred. I hold womanhood sacred myself. I do!

**McNAIR:** Well, you hold it at quite a distance. It might help your cause if you applied some rouge to your cheeks occasionally. Good day, Miss Beynon, I'll let you get back to national motherhood. ■

## Activities

- McNair hired Francis to write articles to appeal to a particular audience. Describe this audience.
  - What traditional stereotypes was Francis' column meant to maintain and encourage? In your own words, explain how Francis uses her column to try to break the stereotypes.
- Work with a partner to write a pair of newspaper articles, one that would have appeared on the women's page before Francis took over the column, and another that she might have written. Pay attention to the content of both, and consider the audience for each.
- Francis is ready to move on to a new job at a bigger newspaper. Pretend you are McNair and write a reference letter for her. Emphasize her skills and abilities. Use correct business-letter format.
- You are a harassment specialist hired by the government to investigate allegations of harassment of employees by employers. Consider the way that McNair speaks to Francis. To what extent would this be considered harassment today? Prepare a report as if you had investigated this event. Suggest ways that McNair should alter his behaviour to be more sensitive to issues of gender equity in the work place.

# Myself

PARASKEVA CLARK



National Gallery of Canada.

## Focus Your Learning

Working with this visual will help you:

- analyse visual emphasis
- examine artistic techniques
- express a message in another medium

## Activities

- a) Where is the emphasis in this painting?
  - b) What factors contribute to the emphasis of particular features?
2. How has the artist used line, shadow, texture, and proportion in this painting?
- a) What is the main message of this painting?
  - b) Write a poem or develop a cartoon with the same message.

# In Service

MAXINE TYNES

*This poem is dedicated to the generations of Black women who sustained life and survival for their families by bending low in labour in generations of White kitchens.*



Saturday morning armies  
of Black women  
young  
and old  
and, young and old at the same time  
in the same face  
in the same care and time and work-worn hands  
you rise with the dawn  
leaving home and brown babies  
behind you, in the day's early light  
pulling coat and scarf close  
avoiding the mirror  
shrinking from the cold morning of  
bus ride  
to prestigious street corner.

you are not alone  
you are with your sisters in this  
Northend — to Southend  
Jane Finch — to Rosedale  
Montreal — to Outremont  
Harlem — to Scarsdale  
wearing head-rag  
carrying dust-mop, scrub-bucket  
in-service three days a week march in the dawn.

you possess a key, cherished girl (never woman)  
of this house  
you tap and scuffle and wipe feet at the back  
and enter the world of  
day's  
day's  
day's work in service  
taking your place in that army of  
round and strong and weary backs  
moving with grace and sure familiar stride  
from your kitchen  
your babies  
your own forgotten morning at home  
to this  
three days-a-week armies of Black women  
in service.

### Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- study metaphor
- recognize and use repetition for effect
- write a monologue
- explore human experiences

## Activities

1. The author describes the housekeepers as an army. List the words and images that establish this metaphor throughout the poem. Why has the author chosen this image?
2. Look for words used repeatedly. What effect does this repetition have on the poem? Think of an image to describe school life. Use these images in a poem about school, using repetition to reinforce the image.
3. Write a short monologue describing your day as a housekeeper. Use details and images from the poem, but expand with your own ideas about what the feelings and experiences of these women might have been.
4. Write a letter to the author of the poem outlining your views on housekeeping. Is it demeaning work? Is it appreciated? Has the job changed over the years? To what extent is the author suggesting that the housekeepers in this poem were mistreated? Do you think they were mistreated?



# The Jade Peony

WAYSON CHOY



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- develop insight into character motivation
- understand and explain symbolism
- write instructions

When Grandmama died at 83 our whole household held its breath. She had promised us a sign of her leaving, final proof that her present life had ended well. My parents knew that without any clear sign, our own family fortunes could be altered, threatened. My stepmother looked endlessly into the small cluttered room the ancient lady had occupied. Nothing was touched; nothing changed. My father, thinking that a sign should appear in Grandmama's garden, looked at the frost-killed shoots and cringed: *no, that could not be it.*



My two older teenage brothers and my sister, Liang, age 14, were embarrassed by my parents' behaviour. What would all the white people in Vancouver think of us? We were Canadians now, *Chinese-Canadians*, a hyphenated reality that my parents could never accept. So it seemed, for different reasons, we all held our breath waiting for *something*.

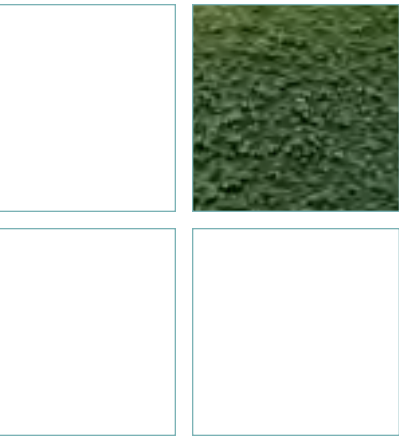
I was eight when she died. For days she had resisted going into the hospital ... *a cold, just a cold* ... and instead gave constant instruction to my stepmother and sister on the boiling of ginseng roots mixed with bitter extract. At night, between wracking coughs and deadly silences, Grandmama had her back and chest rubbed with heated camphor oil and sipped a bluish decoction of a herb called Peacock's Tail. When all these failed to abate her fever, she began to arrange the details of her will. This she did with my father, confessing finally: "I am too stubborn. The only cure for old age is to die."

My father wept to hear this. I stood beside her bed; she turned to me. Her round face looked darker, and the gentleness of her eyes, the thin, arching eyebrows, seemed weary. I brushed the few strands of grey, brittle hair from her face; she managed to smile at me. Being the youngest, I had spent nearly all my time with her and could not imagine that we would ever be parted. Yet when she spoke, and her voice hesitated, cracked, the sombre shadows of her room chilled me. Her wrinkled brow grew wet with fever, and her small body seemed even more diminutive.

"I—I am going to the hospital, Grandson." Her hand reached out for mine. "You know, Little Son, whatever happens I will never leave you." Her palm felt plush and warm, the slender, old fingers bony and firm, so magically strong was her grip that I could not imagine how she could ever part from me. Ever.

Her hands *were* magical. My most vivid memories are of her hands: long, elegant fingers, with impeccable nails, a skein of fine, barely-seen veins, and wrinkled skin like light pine. Those hands were quick when she taught me, at six, simple tricks of juggling, learned when she was a village girl in Southern Canton; a troupe of actors had stayed on her father's farm. One of them, "tall and pale as the whiteness of petals," fell in love with her, promising to return. In her last years his image came back like a third being in our two lives. He had been magician, acrobat, juggler, and some of the things he taught her she had absorbed and passed on to me through her stories and games. But above all, without realizing it then, her hands conveyed to me the quality of their love.

Most marvellous for me was the quick-witted skill her hands revealed in making wind chimes for our birthdays: wind chimes in the likeness of her lost friend's only present to her, made of bits of string and scraps, in the centre of which once hung a precious jade peony. This wondrous gift to her



broke apart years ago, in China, but Grandmama kept the jade pendant in a tiny red silk envelope, and kept it always in her pocket, until her death.

These were not ordinary, carelessly made chimes, such as those you now find in our Chinatown stores, whose rattling noises drive you mad. But making her special ones caused dissension in our family, and some shame. Each one that she made was created from a treasure trove of glass fragments and castaway costume jewellery, in the same way that her first wind chime had been made. The problem for the rest of the family was in the fact that Grandmama looked for these treasures wandering the back alleys of Keefer and Pender Streets, peering into our neighbours' garbage cans, chasing away hungry, nervous cats and shouting curses at them.

"All our friends are laughing at us!" Older Brother Jung said at last to my father, when Grandmama was away having tea at Mrs. Lim's.

"We are not poor," Oldest Brother Kiam declared, "yet she and Sek-Lung poke through those awful things as if—" he shoved me in frustration and I stumbled against my sister, "—they were beggars!"

"She will make Little Brother crazy!" Sister Liang said. Without warning, she punched me sharply in the back; I jumped. "You see, look how *nervous* he is!"

I lifted my foot slightly, enough to swing it back and kick Liang in the shin. She yelled and pulled back her fist to punch me again. Jung made a menacing move toward me.

"Stop this, all of you!" My father shook his head in exasperation. How could he dare tell the Grand Old One, his ageing mother, that what was somehow appropriate in a poor village in China, was an abomination here? How could he prevent me, his youngest, from accompanying her? If she went walking into those alley-ways alone she could well be attacked by hoodlums. "She is not a beggar looking for food. She is searching for— for ..."

My stepmother attempted to speak, then fell silent. She, too, seemed perplexed and somewhat ashamed. They all loved Grandmama, but she was *inconvenient*, unsettling.

As for our neighbours, most understood Grandmama to be harmlessly crazy, others that she did indeed make lovely toys but for what purpose? Why? they asked, and the stories she told me, of the juggler who smiled at her, flashed in my head.

Finally, by their cutting remarks, the family did exert enough pressure so that Grandmama and I no longer openly announced our expeditions. Instead, she took me with her on "shopping trips," ostensibly for clothes or groceries, while in fact we spent most of our time exploring stranger and more distant neighbourhoods, searching for splendid junk: jangling pieces of a vase, cranberry glass fragments embossed with leaves, discarded glass

beads from Woolworth necklaces .... We would sneak them all home in brown rice sacks, folded into small parcels, and put them under her bed. During the day when the family was away at school or work, we brought them out and washed every item in a large black pot of boiling lye and water, dried them quickly, carefully, and returned them, sparkling, under her bed.

Our greatest excitement occurred when a fire gutted the large Chinese Presbyterian Church, three blocks from our house. Over the still-smoking ruins the next day, Grandmama and I rushed precariously over the blackened beams to pick out the stained glass that glittered in the sunlight. Small figure bent over, wrapped against the autumn cold in a dark blue quilted coat, happily gathering each piece like gold, she became my spiritual playmate: "There's a good one! *There!*"

Hours later, soot-covered and smelling of smoke, we came home with a Safeway carton full of delicate fragments, still early enough to steal them all into the house and put the small box under her bed. "These are special pieces," she said, giving the box a last push, "because they come from a sacred place." She slowly got up and I saw, for the first time, her hand begin to shake. But then, in her joy, she embraced me. Both of our hearts were racing, as if we were two dreamers. I buried my face in her blue quilt, and for a moment, the whole world seemed silent.

"My juggler," she said, "he never came back to me from Honan ... perhaps the famine ...." Her voice began to quake. "But I shall have my sacred wind chime ... I shall have it again."

One evening, when the family was gathered in their usual places in the parlour, Grandmama gave me her secret nod: a slight wink of her eye and a flaring of her nostrils. There was *trouble* in the air. Supper had gone badly, school examinations were due, father had failed to meet an editorial deadline at the *Vancouver Chinese Times*. A huge sigh came from Sister Liang.

"But it is useless this Chinese they teach you!" she lamented, turning to Stepmother for support. Silence. Liang frowned, dejected, and went back to her Chinese book, bending the covers back.

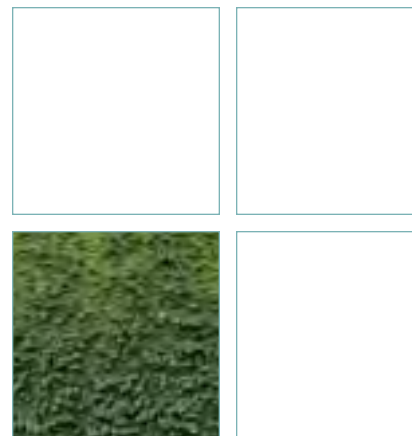
"Father," Oldest Brother Kiam began, waving his bamboo brush in the air, "you must realize that this Mandarin only confuses us. We are Cantonese speakers ..."

"And you do not complain about Latin, French, or German in your English school?" Father rattled his newspaper, signal that his patience was ending.

"But, Father, those languages are *scientific*," Kiam jabbed his brush in the air. "We are now in a scientific, logical world."

Father was silent. We could all hear Grandmama's rocker.

"What about Sek-Lung?" Older Brother Jung pointed angrily at me. "He



was sick last year, but this year he should have at least started Chinese school, instead of picking over garbage cans!”

“He starts next year,” Father said, in a hard tone that immediately warned everyone to be silent. Liang slammed her book.

Grandmama went on rocking quietly in her chair. She complimented my mother on her knitting, made a remark about the “strong beauty” of Kiam’s brushstrokes which, in spite of himself, immensely pleased him. All this babbling noise was her family torn and confused in a strange land: everything here was so very foreign and scientific.

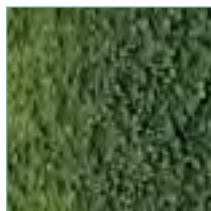
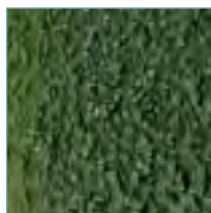
The truth was, I was sorry not to have started school the year before. In my innocence I had imagined going to school meant certain privileges worthy of all my brothers’ and sister’s complaints. The fact that my lung infection in my fifth and sixth years, mistakenly diagnosed as TB, earned me some reprieve, only made me long for school the more. Each member of the family took turns on Sunday, teaching me or annoying me. But it was the countless hours I spent with Grandmama that were my real education. Tapping me on my head she would say, “Come, Sek-Lung, we have *our* work,” and we would walk up the stairs to her small crowded room. There, in the midst of her antique shawls, the old ancestral calligraphy, and multi-coloured embroidered hangings, beneath the mysterious shelves of sweet herbs and bitter potions, we would continue doing what we had started that morning: the elaborate wind chime for her death.

“I can’t last forever,” she declared, when she let me in on the secret of this one. “It will sing and dance and glitter,” her long fingers stretched into the air, pantomiming the waving motion of her ghost chimes; “My spirit will hear its sounds and see its light and return to this house and say goodbye to you.”

Deftly she reached into the Safeway carton she had placed on the chair beside me. She picked out a fish-shape amber piece, and with a long needle-like tool and a steel ruler, she scored it. Pressing the blade of a cleaver against the line, with the fingers of her other hand, she lifted up the glass until it cleanly snapped into the exact shape she required. Her hand began to tremble, the tips of her fingers to shiver, like rippling water.

“You see that, Little One?” She held her hand up. “That is my body fighting with Death. He is in this room now.”

My eyes darted in panic, but Grandmama remained calm, undisturbed, and went on with her work. Then I remembered the glue and uncorked the jar for her. Soon the graceful ritual movements of her hand returned to her, and I became lost in the magic of her task: she dabbed a cabalistic mixture of glue on one end and skillfully dropped the braided end of a silk thread into it. This part always amazed me: the braiding would slowly, *very* slowly, *unknot*, fanning out like a prized fishtail. In a few seconds the clear, home-



made glue began to harden as I blew lightly over it, welding to itself each separate silk strand.

Each jam-sized pot of glue was precious; each large cork had been wrapped with a fragment of pink silk. I remember this part vividly, because each cork was treated to a special rite. First we went shopping in the best silk stores in Chinatown for the perfect square of silk she required. It had to be a deep pink, a shade of colour blushing toward red. And the tone had to match—as closely as possible—her precious jade carving, the small peony of white and light-red jade, her most lucky possession. In the centre of this semi-translucent carving, no more than an inch wide, was a pool of pink light, its veins swirling out into the petals of the flower.

“This colour is the colour of my spirit,” she said, holding it up to the window so I could see the delicate pastel against the broad strokes of sunlight. She dropped her voice, and I held my breath at the wonder of the colour. “This was given to me by the young actor who taught me how to juggle. He had four of them, and each one had a centre of this rare colour, the colour of Good Fortune.” The pendant seemed to pulse as she turned it: “Oh, Sek-Lung! He had white hair and white skin to *his toes!* *It’s true,* I saw him bathing.” She laughed and blushed, her eyes softened at the memory. The silk had to match the pink heart of her pendant: the colour was magical for her, to hold the unravelling strands of her memory ...

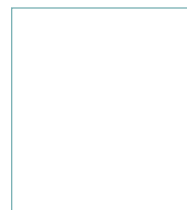
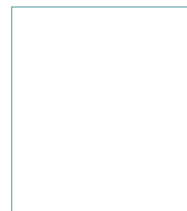
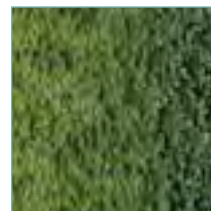
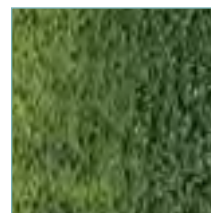
It was just six months before she died that we really began to work on her wind chime. Three thin bamboo sticks were steamed and bent into circles; thirty exact lengths of silk thread, the strongest kind, were cut and braided at both ends and glued to stained glass. Her hands worked on their own command, each hand racing with a life of its own: cutting, snapping, braiding, knotting .... Sometimes she breathed heavily and her small body, growing thinner, sagged against me. *Death,* I thought, *He is in this room,* and I would work harder alongside her. For months Grandmama and I did this every other evening, a half-dozen pieces each time. The shaking in her hand grew worse, but we said nothing. Finally, after discarding hundreds, she told me she had the necessary thirty pieces.

But this time, because it was a sacred chime, I would not be permitted to help her tie it up or have the joy of raising it. “Once tied,” she said, holding me against my disappointment, “not even I can raise it. Not a sound must it make until I have died.”

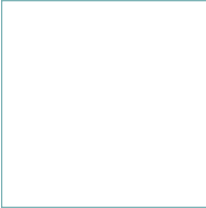
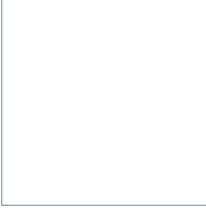
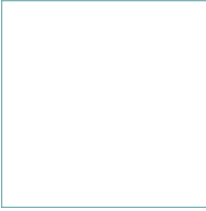
“What will happen?”

“Your father will then take the centre braided strand and raise it. He will hang it against my bedroom window so that my ghost may see it, and hear it, and return. I must say goodbye to this world properly or wander in this foreign devil’s land forever.”

“You can take the streetcar!” I blurted, suddenly shocked that she actually







meant to leave me. I thought I could hear the clear chromatic chimes, see the shimmering colours on the wall: I fell against her and cried, and there in my crying I knew that she would die. I can still remember the touch of her hand on my head, and the smell of her thick woollen sweater pressed against my face. "I will always be with you, Little Sek-Lung, but in a different way ... you'll see."

Months went by, and nothing happened. Then one late September evening, when I had just come home from Chinese School, Grandmama was preparing supper when she looked out our kitchen window and saw a cat—a long, lean, white cat—jump into our garbage pail and knock it over. She ran out to chase it away, shouting curses at it. She did not have her thick sweater on and when she came back into the house, a chill gripped her. She leaned against the door: "That was not a cat," she said, and the odd tone of her voice caused my father to look with alarm at her. "I cannot take back my curses. It is too late." She took hold of my father's arm: "It was all white and had pink eyes like sacred fire."

My father started at this, and they both looked pale. My brothers and sister, clearing the table, froze in their gestures.

"The fog has confused you," Stepmother said. "It was just a cat."

But Grandmama shook her head, for she knew it was a sign. "I will not live forever," she said. "I am prepared."

The next morning she was confined to her bed with a severe cold. Sitting by her, playing with some of my toys, I asked her about the cat.

"Why did father jump at the cat with the pink eyes? He didn't see it, you did."

"But he and your mother know what it means."

"What?"

"My friend, the juggler, the magician, was as pale as white jade, and he had pink eyes." I thought she would begin to tell me one of her stories, a tale of enchantment or of a wondrous adventure, but she only paused to swallow; her eyes glittered, lost in memory. She took my hand, gently opening and closing her fingers over it. "Sek-Lung," she sighed, "he has come back to me."

Then Grandmama sank back into her pillow and the embroidered flowers lifted to frame her wrinkled face. I saw her hand over my own, and my own began to tremble. I fell fitfully asleep by her side. When I woke up it was dark and her bed was empty. She had been taken to the hospital and I was not permitted to visit.

A few days after that she died of the complications of pneumonia. Immediately after her death my father came home and said nothing to us, but walked up the stairs to her room, pulled aside the drawn lace curtains of her window, and lifted the wind chimes to the sky.

I began to cry and quickly put my hand in my pocket for a handkerchief. Instead, caught between my fingers, was the small, round firmness of the jade peony. In my mind's eye I saw Grandmama smile and heard, softly, the pink centre beat like a beautiful, cramped heart. ■

## Activities

1. Assign a character in the family to each member in a small group. After each person has reviewed his or her character's role in the story, and is clear on his or her point of view, role-play a conversation the family might have had after the grandmother's death. (Don't forget that only the young child/narrator knows how his grandmother felt about the wind chimes.)
2. Pretend you are the father in the story. Write an obituary for your mother that will be published in the *Vancouver Chinese Times*. Make sure you use details from the story to summarize the main points of her life, her achievements, her dreams, and why she will be missed. You might want to look at some obituaries in your local newspaper for format.
3. What do the wind chimes symbolize for the grandmother, the parents, the young child? In an expository essay, explain how the wind chimes represent different things to different characters in the story. Develop an effective introduction and conclusion for your essay. Work on incorporating transition words and sentences to create unity.
4. Use details from the story to write the instructions for making a wind chime. If possible, try to make your own version of the wind chime.

# Equal Opportunity

JIM WONG-CHU

in early Canada  
when railways were highways  
each stop brought new opportunities  
there was a rule

the chinese could only ride  
the last two cars  
of the trains

that is

until a train derailed  
killing all those  
in front

(the chinese erected an altar and thanked buddha)  
a new rule was made

the chinese must ride  
the front two cars  
of the trains

that is

until another accident  
claimed everyone  
in the back

(the chinese erected an altar and thanked buddha)  
after much debate  
common sense prevailed

the chinese are now allowed  
to sit anywhere  
on any train

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

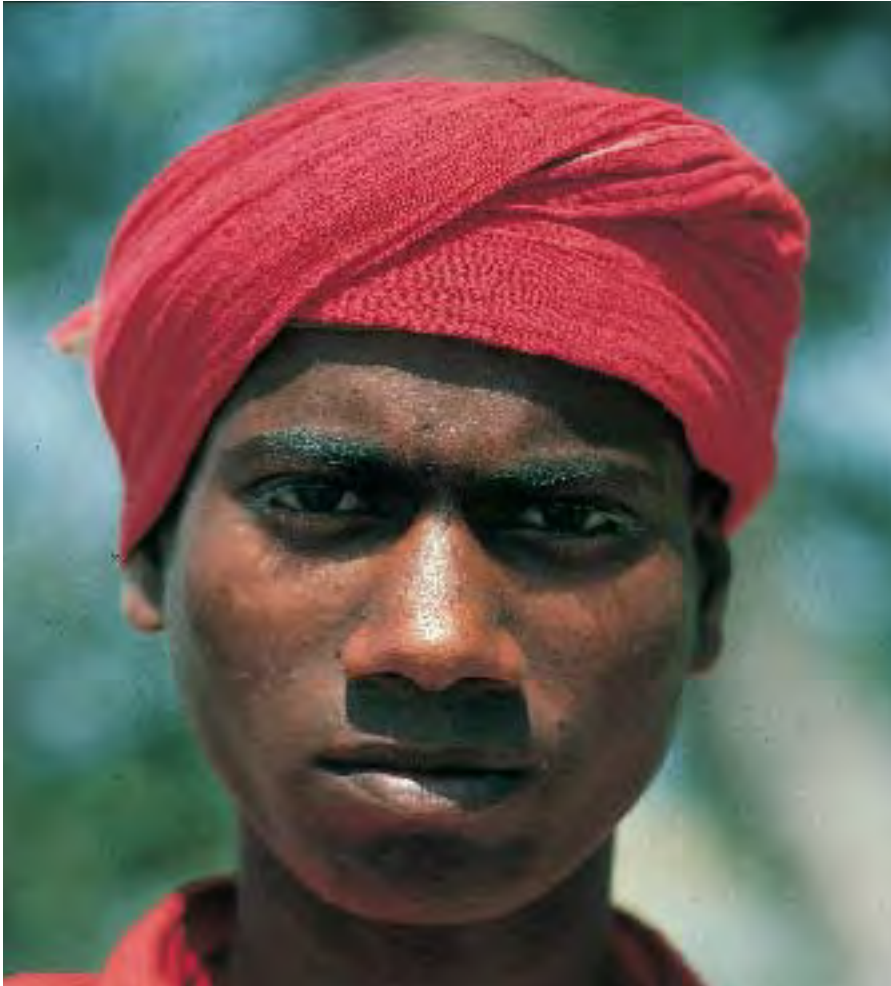
- understand irony
- develop an argument from a particular point of view
- write a newspaper article

## Activities

1. Work with a partner and review the term irony. Discuss the following questions and be prepared to present your responses to the class: What superstition develops in the poem? Why does it develop? Explain the irony of these lines: "after much debate/ common sense prevailed." How is the title ironic?
2. Develop a speech to present, as a Chinese-Canadian, explaining to the City Council your concerns about bus-seating policy. Consider what you find frustrating about the rules. What changes would you like to see? Present the speech to the class.
3. Using information from the poem, write a newspaper article explaining the new rule allowing Chinese people to sit anywhere on a train. Make sure you follow the conventions of a newspaper article: include who, what, where, when, why, and how; write a headline, and subheadings; use columns; include a picture; etc.

# Montreal 1962

SHAUNA SINGH BALDWIN



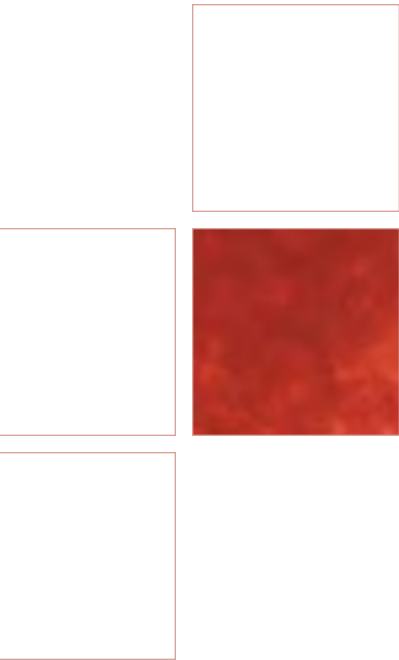
In the dark at night you came close and your voice was a whisper though there is no one here to wake. “They said I could have the job if I take off my turban and cut my hair short.” You did not have to say it. I saw it in your face as you took off your new coat and galoshes. I heard their voices in my head as I looked at the small white envelopes I have left in the drawer, each full of one more day’s precious dollars—the last of your savings and my dowry. Mentally, I converted dollars to rupees and thought how many people in India each envelope could feed for a month.

This was not how they described emigrating to Canada. I still remember them saying to you, “You’re a well-qualified man. We need professional people.” And they talked about freedom and opportunity for those lucky

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this narrative will help you:

- consider descriptive contrast
- create a visual representation of symbolism
- write in the first person
- explain the meaning of a passage
- write a found poem



enough to already speak English. No one said then, “You must be reborn white-skinned—and clean-shaven to show it—to survive.” Just a few months ago, they called us exotic new Canadians, new blood to build a new country.

Today I took one of my wedding saris to the neighbourhood dry cleaner and a woman with no eyebrows held it like a dishrag as she asked me, “Is it a bed sheet?”

“No,” I said.

“Curtains?”

“No.”

I took the silk back to our basement apartment, tied my hair in a tight bun, washed the heavy folds in the metal bathtub, and hung it, gold threads glinting, on a drip-dry hanger.

When I had finished, I spread a bed sheet on the floor of the bathroom, filled my arms with the turbans you’d worn last week, and knelt there surrounded by the empty soft hollows of scarlet, navy, earth brown, copper, saffron, mauve, and bright parrot green. As I waited for the bathtub to fill with warm soapy water I unravelled each turban, each precise spiral you had wound around your head, and soon the room was full of soft streams of muslin that had protected your long black hair.

I placed each turban in turn on the bubbly surface and watched them grow dark and heavy, sinking slowly, softly into the warmth. When there were no more left beside me, I leaned close and reached in, working each one in a rhythm bone-deep, as my mother and hers must have done before me, that their men might face the world proud. I drained the tub and new colours swelled—deep red, dark black mud, rust, orange, soft purple, and jade green.

I filled the enamel sink with clean water and starch and lifted them as someday I will lift children. When the milky bowl had fed them, my hands massaged them free of alien red-blue water. I placed them carefully in a basin and took them out into our grey two rooms to dry.

I placed a chair by the window and climbed on it to tie the four corners of each turban length to the heavy curtain rod. Each one in turn, I drew out three yards till it was folded completely in two. I grasped it firmly at its sides and swung my hands inward. The turban furrowed before me. I arced my hands outward and it became a canopy. Again inward, again outward, hands close, hands apart, as though I was back in Delhi on a flat roof under a hot sun or perhaps near a green field of wheat stretching far to the banks of the Beas.

As the water left the turbans, I began to see the room through muslin screens. The pallid walls, the radiator you try every day to turn up hotter for me, the small windows, unnaturally high. When the turbans were lighter, I



set the dining chairs with their half-moon backs in a row in the middle of the well-worn carpet and I draped the turbans over their tops the way Gidda dancers wear their chunnis pinned tight in the centre parting of their hair. Then I sat on the carpet before them, willing them: dance for me—dance for us. The chairs stood as stiff and wooden as ignorant Canadians, though I know maple is softer than chinar.

Soon the bands of cloth regained all their colour, filling the room with sheer lightness. Their splendour arched upwards, insisting upon notice, refusing the drabness, refusing obscurity, wielding the curtain rod like the strut of a defending champion.

From the windows over my head came the sounds of a Montreal afternoon, and the sure step of purposeful feet on the sidewalk. Somewhere on a street named in English where the workers speak joul I imagined your turban making its way in the crowds bringing you home to me.

Once again I climbed on a chair and I let your turbans loose. One by one, I held them to me, folding in their defiance, hushing their unruly indignation, gentling them into temporary submission. Finally, I faced them as they sat before me.

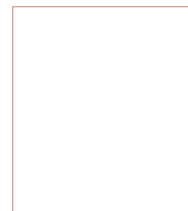
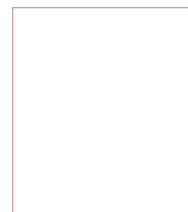
Then I chose my favourite, the red one you wear less and less, and I took it to the bedroom. I unfurled the gauzy scarlet on our bed and it seemed as though I'd poured a pool of the sainted blood of all the Sikh martyrs there. So I took a corner and tied it to the doorknob just as you do in the mornings instead of waking me to help you. I took the diagonal corner to the very far end of the room just as you do, and rolled the scarlet inward as best I could within the cramped four walls. I had to untie it from the doorknob again to roll the other half, as I used to every day for my father, then my brother, and now you. Soon the scarlet rope lay ready.

I placed it before the mirror and began to tie it as a Sardar would, one end clenched between my teeth to anchor it, arms raised to sweep it up to the forehead, down to the nape of the neck, around again, this time higher. I wound it swiftly, deftly, till it jutted haughtily forward, adding four inches to my stature. Only when I had pinned the free end to the peak did I let the end clenched between my teeth fall. I took the saliva-darkened cord, pulled it back where my hair bun rested low, and tucked it up over the turban, just as you do.

In the mirror I saw my father as he must have looked as a boy, my teenage brother as I remember him, you as you face Canada, myself as I need to be.

The face beneath the jaunty turban began to smile.

I raised my hands to my turban's roundness, eased it from my head and brought it before me, setting it down lightly before the mirror. It asked nothing now but that I be worthy of it.



And so, my love, I will not let you cut your strong rope of hair and go without a turban into this land of strangers. The knot my father tied between my chunni and your turban is still strong between us, and it shall not fail you now. My hands will tie a turban every day upon your head and work so we can keep it there. One day our children will say, "My father came to this country with very little but his turban and my mother learned to work because no one would hire him."

Then we will have taught Canadians what it takes to wear a turban. ■

## Activities

1. Use a visual organizer, such as a Venn diagram, to compare the narrator's description of the turbans with the description of the apartment. What is the author trying to achieve through the contrast?
2. What does the turban symbolize for the narrator? For her husband? Represent the symbolism visually, with images appropriate to each character.
3. As the narrator, write a letter to your mother explaining your feelings about living in Montreal. Explain how your lives have been affected by the move to Canada. Detail the frustrations you are experiencing and how you are coping with them.
4. The author writes "Then we will have taught Canadians what it takes to wear a turban." What does this mean? In your own words, describe the qualities of the narrator that demonstrate what this means.
5. Reread the story and jot down words and phrases that seem particularly striking or moving for you. Arrange these with your own ideas into a found poem that encapsulates the main themes of this narrative.

# Granny Glover's Dream

AL PITTMAN



Used by permission of David Blackwood

A long thin line  
thinner and thinner as it goes  
becomes a dot  
disappears where there is nothing  
these are the villagers  
they are leaving their village  
huddled into the wind  
they are going away  
out where there is nothing  
they have gone away to nothing  
the long thin line dissolves itself  
into the emptiness of snow  
at the end of the line  
turned to the wind  
she stands looking back

*poem continues on page 232 ►*

if she had been farther up the line  
she could have been spared this instant  
but where she is  
at the end of it  
  
she is forced to confront  
face to face  
the final moment of their going  
in a second  
when this scene unfreezes itself  
she will turn  
become again the last of the line  
will turn and walk away  
will become nothing in the windy distance  
  
in this instant however  
she is frozen where she is  
solidified against the wind  
turned back toward the house  
  
on the window a flower pot  
and in it a flower bloomed open  
to the day's bright light  
outside everything is frozen still  
everything except the wind  
and the wind's white howling

# Looking Back

ENOS D. WATTS

Even when he knew  
they had all decided to leave the island  
the old man  
sat, with his face to the sea,  
and was not heard to make a sound.  
  
For days now  
he had been silent auditor  
to the sounds people made  
in preparation for moving away.  
He heard many sounds  
but the one that grieved him most  
was the ring of the hammer  
boarding up the church;  
and with each irrevokable stroke  
one could see his hands  
tighten into a claw,  
but the agony that lined his face  
spoke poignantly  
of something that pained him more  
than the mere ripping of nails  
into rotted pine.

On the final day  
in the yard behind the church  
he moved like an outcast  
among the half-sunken, tilting stones  
until his sensitive fingers read  
the time-shallowed symbols  
shrieking out at him  
their cruel, eloquent truth:  
he was certain now  
that the gulf between them  
would always be widest  
at his rock.

And as the boat took him away  
from his home  
he, for the first time, was glad  
that he was blind  
knowing there'd be no purpose served  
in looking back.

### Focus Your Learning

Reading these poems and viewing this visual will help you:

- Use a visual organizer
- Develop and explain your opinion
- Compare a visual and a written way of telling the same story

## Activities

1. In Newfoundland, many people have moved from small outports to larger centres, leaving some outport communities almost ghost towns. Use a *visual* organizer to compare and contrast the way that the visual artist, David Blackwood, and poet, Al Pittman, see this change.
2. **a)** What specific items do the woman in *Granny Glover's Dream* and the man in *Looking Back* find difficult to leave? In a small group, discuss what these items represent. To what sense do they appeal?  
**b)** Draw one item you would be sorry to leave behind in a similar situation. In a paragraph or short poem, explain what this item means to you.





# Desperate Measures

ALAN SHADRAKE

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- discuss the elements of romance
- write a ballad
- look at historical point of view
- use connotative language

The desperation which love can drive a person to knows no bounds, and the Berlin Wall acted on many ordinary people in the same way as the war had. They found they were capable of actions which before they could never have brought themselves to think about, let alone commit. Deep inside them, the Wall became more than just a man-made barrier: it was an object of defiance, and therefore they had to defy it. It had to be overcome, and produced in these people an outlet for aspects of their characters which they had never before accepted as existing.

Karin Kabofski was twenty-three, and the

war was to her no more than a childhood memory when the Berlin Wall took shape that August in 1961. To her it was no impersonal barricade but one which dramatically and instantly changed her way of life. For the Wall cut her off from the man whom she had known for five years, the man she loved and one day hoped to marry. His home had been within walking distance, just a few miles away, yet now she was in the East, he in the West, no further in distance but in practice now so very far.

Karin and twenty-eight-year-old Gunter Lutz found themselves suddenly separated, their

happiness and zest for life wrenched from them. They lived with the shadow of the Wall for as long as they were able, but they both knew that someday, somehow, they must at all costs attempt to rid themselves of it for good.

Karin, determined, desperate, and in love, had never given up hope, and when she finally decided how she would gain her freedom she knew it would mean perhaps jeopardizing her life if it was to succeed.

Karin gained her inspiration from a newspaper article. The article itself had not the slightest thing to do with an escape; it was because such thoughts were always in her mind that she was quick to realize the possibilities it offered.

The article told of the seagoing lives of East German merchant seamen, and mentioned that in some circumstances their wives were allowed to sail with them across the world. These were not voyages of a few days' duration which brought them quickly home, but long sea voyages which took them to the ports of many countries throughout the world, some of which had diplomatic relations with the East German Government but, most important, some which she knew would only have diplomatic relations with the West German Government and not recognize the Republic.

Those few words in the article fanned the flames of her desire for freedom, until now suppressed. She thought that perhaps as the wife of a seaman she would, on a long voyage, have the chance to take refuge in a West German embassy and so be free of the country she had come to despise. She knew that only she had the power to make what seemed at first such an unlikely plan come true. And so firmly was her mind made up, so certain was she that this was more than just an imaginatively fanciful thought, that she began to take the first steps towards its inception. She gave up her work, packed a few belongings, and

moved to Rostock on the Baltic coast, where she obtained an office job and started her strange quest for a man she could eventually make her husband despite her love for Gunter.

She became friendly with a seaman called Manfred Heyde who was twenty-eight. They drank together, spent pleasant evenings in each other's company, and Manfred talked for many hours about the different places throughout the world which he had visited. He talked of the other members of the crew and how they had taken their wives with them across the oceans. Knowing that this was the one way to freedom for her, Karin encouraged the relationship, and within a few months Manfred asked her to be his wife. She accepted. It was to be a marriage not of love, on Karin's part, but of necessity. Thinking of Gunter back in West Germany, she went through with the wedding ceremony, and looked forward to the only wedding present she had really wanted—a berth to freedom on the next voyage Manfred made.

Manfred made special application to his skipper to take his new wife on the next voyage, and on May 25th 1965, nearly four years after the erection of the Wall, Karin began her sea journey from a Baltic port.

She thought that the pretence would soon be over, for she understood that the ship, the *Leipzig*, was to dock at Hamburg before continuing its voyage. Once at the West German port she would immediately seek asylum. But the ship did not call at Hamburg, the pretence had to be kept up, and her false gaiety had to be used as a cover for her real feelings. The first port of call was London, but neither the crew, nor passengers like Karin were allowed to leave the ship, and her first opportunity to make a break for freedom had yet to come.

Nearly three weeks later, and a month after she had set out, they arrived in Havana, Cuba. It would for many have been a journey to

remember, but Karin was in no frame of mind to enjoy the sea and the sun, for again there was no possible hope of escape. Castro's government would certainly not have been sympathetic. The *Leipzig* sailed on with Karin. Four more days and the vessel docked at the Mexican port of Veracruz. It was to stay for two weeks, and this would be her first and perhaps her last chance of escape.

At the first opportunity she left the ship unobserved and tried to find the West German consulate. Speaking no Spanish, but with a dictionary and the help of a local taxi driver, she presented herself and her unusual and unlikely story. It was greeted with astonishment, so many miles was this determined East Berliner from her home. But arrangements were made to inform the ship's captain and her husband Manfred.

Manfred was thrown into a state of shock, and the captain did what he could to make Karin return to the ship. Her husband tried also, almost apologetically, feeling that it was he who had made her come to the decision.

But it was, of course, to no avail, although Karin, who had never loved Manfred, now felt sorry for the man on whom she had played a marital confidence trick. She could not tell him the truth, and said only

that she could not return to a life in East Germany, that it was the system, and not himself, which she could bear no longer.

It was twelve months before Karin could sort out the marital tangle in which, with open eyes, she had involved herself. The divorce was further complicated by the fact that the mar-

riage ceremony had been performed in East Germany, but when it was finally completed Karin Kabofski was at last free to marry the man she had really loved for many years. And it is in South America, where she was given her freedom, that she has settled down to a life with Gunter.

Karin's cold-blooded betrayal of an innocent man for the sake of another was perhaps a unique escape method. But for her it was a way, albeit dramatic, that she could rid herself forever of the shadow the Wall had cast on her life. She was free, and for her freedom—as it did for many thousands of others like her—meant a new meaning to life itself. Karin had devised and successfully completed a plan which, if circumstances had been different, she would never have thought she had in her nature to contemplate.

The end was freedom; the means, to Karin, were justified.

The happiness and gaiety of a wedding party, with its laughter and smiling faces, was to be the meeting place for one young couple who separately were enjoying the festivities and the pleasure of seeing the newly-weds at the outset of their life together. The wedding party was in East Berlin. Margit Tharau was a friend of the bride and the Austrian, Hans-Peter Meixner had joined the wedding celebration on behalf of a friend of the bridegroom who could not go himself.

Margit worked as a secretary in a local government office and lived with her widowed mother in a small but comfortable flat. She was content with her life, for East Berlin was her home.

Hans-Peter, then twenty-one, was a student living in West Berlin: after their initial meeting he paid several visits to Margit at her home.



Their relationship developed and the more they saw of each other the more they wanted to be together. But, as with many of those whose motive for escaping to the West was the powerful force of love, Margit had never considered leaving her place of birth. The thought of having to escape in order to enjoy a life of freedom together did not occur to the young couple.

Their first thought was to become engaged, and this was followed by an application for a marriage licence. But Hans and Margit knew within themselves that as with all such applications the chances of success were slim. They had put down their intended home after marriage as 'West Berlin', and given Hans' address. Because of this they were informed that Margit would have to have an exit visa.

She applied for this, and the couple waited. Weeks went by, then months, with their hopes dwindling with time itself. The matter was out of their hands, and while to them it was their whole future at stake, to the authorities it was just another application. When they finally asked if a decision had been made they were told the visa had been refused. This automatically ruled out the application for a marriage licence.

The couple were disillusioned but never gave up hope. They sent in further applications, again the months of waiting, and again the refusals. They were determined that their life together was not going to be ruined, yet the uncertainty, the seemingly impossible situation they had been put in, and the steadily fading hope of ever being together as man and wife, was putting an unbearable tension on their relationship.

Several evenings a week Hans-Peter would drive through Checkpoint Charlie into East Berlin and then home again to the West. His

documents were always minutely inspected, and his large Opel Saloon thoroughly checked for hidden compartments and the like by the border guards. He had considered this method of bringing Margit to the West, but each time the guards inspected his car they confirmed the stupidity and pointlessness of trying an escape which would have such a limited chance of success.

Each time he passed through the checkpoint he looked for inspiration, for something which would plant the germ of an idea in his mind as to how he could free Margit.

Hans had a vivid imagination, like many other young people. It was this imagination, coupled with his preoccupation with escape, which enabled him to notice the small incident which was to have such a major bearing on his life. He had stopped at Checkpoint Charlie on his return to West Berlin after an evening with Margit and her mother at their flat. He waited patiently in his car in a queue of traffic, as the travellers' documents were checked and their cars searched. The car immediately in front of him was a small white German sports car with a young girl at the wheel. Suddenly a guard started yelling and within seconds two of them stood, machine guns poised, one on each side of the hood.

The car had slid forward and jerked to a halt with the hood scraping the underneath of the heavy wooden barrier. The handbrake had not been properly secured, and the guards were soon satisfied.

There were two barriers, one at each end of the huge compound, and instinctively Hans found himself making a mental note of their approximate height, which he gauged at three feet when they were in the lowered, horizontal position. He was waved on through the barrier, and as he continued home through the dark-

ness and the drizzle that covered the city that night, he was already forming the idea of yet another way to beat the barrier that separated him from the woman he loved.

The next time he went into East Berlin it was with a plan already forming in his mind, and he carried an all-important tape measure with him. He drove slowly past the barrier, carefully gauging the height of the horizontal pole against the car, and once inside the compound he walked slowly around the car while the guards meticulously searched its inside. With his finger he traced a light line in the dust on the fender of the car corresponding to the height of the barrier. The check finished he moved on into East Berlin, and at the first opportunity stopped to measure the height of the mark on his car's fender. It was fractionally over one metre. He was going to take a car *under* the barrier, and that was the maximum height he could allow if the car he intended to use was not to be crushed by the defensive bar.

When he returned through the barrier he once again checked the height ... one metre; a couple of centimetres would mean the difference between life and death, capture and escape in his daring plan to take Margit to the West. He now started his search in earnest for the car which would ensure him enough clearance under the barrier. Used car dealers, advertisements, car-hire firms. Each day for four days he spent hour after hour looking for a car, whatever the make or condition, which had the one specification he needed ... a height of no more than one metre.

When he found the car, it was a British-made Austin Healey Sprite belonging to a car-hire firm. He signed the necessary papers, hired the car for a week, and checked it thoroughly to make sure it would not let him down at the crucial moment. He went back through

Checkpoint Charlie and knew then that with the detachable windshield taken away it could slide beneath the horizontal pole.

He told Margit and her mother about the plan that same night, and when it was dark took her out in the car and showed her where he was going to hide her to smuggle her through the checkpoint. In spite of the small size of the car, he knew it would not be too uncomfortable for Margit to lie behind the front seats; but he could not leave her widowed mother behind. He worked out a way in which she could crouch behind the seats, and told her that she too would be coming to the freedom of the West. Both Margit and her mother knew they would be risking their lives in the escape attempt; Margit felt there was no choice, that she could not live a life apart from Hans, and this was the only way they could be together. For her mother, Margit's happiness was all that mattered. Once her daughter had gone, she would have nothing left to live for. To spend her last years near Margit in the West was something she longed for, and for this she too would risk her own life.

Hans went to an old deserted bomb site in West Berlin and simulated the conditions of the compound at the checkpoint. It was about a hundred metres long, and across the road there were three steel-reinforced concrete walls over a metre high and built to withstand any emergency. The walls had been built in such a position that any car or other vehicles going either in or out had to slow down to no more than a few kilometres an hour around the Z-shaped route.

Hans knew that for his plan to succeed speed would be the main necessity. To build up a safe but effective speed could only be done by constant practice. Speed was to provide the element of surprise. If he could catch the



guards while they were unaware of what he was trying to do, then the plan had a chance of success. He knew they would draw their pistols, and the machine guns would be in evidence. He just hoped they would not have time to use them.

He relentlessly practised his freedom drive on the old bomb site, using garbage cans and bricks and rubble as obstacles around which to drive; each time a little faster, a little surer, until he knew every movement of the small car under his control. The speed rose until he could manoeuvre the car around the closely spaced obstacles at about twenty kilometres an hour without throwing it out of control.

On May 15th 1963 he drove into East Berlin in the car. He was ready. He arrived at Margit's house at about six o'clock that evening and planned the return journey for one a.m. the following morning. Between then and about 1.30 he hoped there would be very little traffic going through the checkpoint. He knew he could control his timing going into the checkpoint, so that there would be no vehicle going the same way to hamper his dash for freedom, but he could do nothing about what was coming the other way. This he had to leave to chance; that no other car would unintentionally block his way.

The two women dressed, put a few of their valuables in their pockets, and then squeezed themselves into their hiding places for the short but tense journey to the checkpoint. Hans slipped in behind the wheel, started the car, and began his drive along the Friedrichstrasse toward the checkpoint.

He stopped before the first barrier and waited for the guard to come from his hut to inspect his passport. His papers were in order: the guard nonchalantly turned and lifted the barrier so that the car, minus the windshield

that Hans had already taken down, could pass through.

The young Austrian drove slowly away, and then about twenty metres ahead of him

another guard appeared and signalled him to slow down and stop in the inspection bay.

He drove slowly, carefully toward the guard, giving no cause for suspicion: and then, when just a few metres from him, he put his foot down hard on the accelerator and swung the steering wheel. He pulled sharply to the left and could see the small opening in the concrete obstacles looming up in front of him. The silence was broken by the urgent shouting of the guards, as the car tires screamed and he pulled over to the right through the obstacles, then again, wrestling with the wheel, to the left to line the car up with the next gap.

The car, like a dog pulling at the leash, went on, staying steady under the strain of the weight and the violence of the movements.

The final gap, the horizontal barrier, was all that lay in the path of the car and its passengers, between them and freedom. The heavy pole lay barring the way to all traffic; on the other side of it the strong thickly set walls were just wide enough to allow a coach to squeeze through. There was no room for error, for hesitation. Hans gripped the steering wheel until his knuckles showed white through the flesh. His eyes fixed on the pole, the speedometer resting just past the forty kilometres an hour mark, he took one last look before ducking his head down for the vital seconds when he would pass under the barrier and drive blind.

The flash of timber was just centimetres above his head—and Hans knew that his judgment had been good. The car had squeezed under the barrier, and the element of surprise had given him enough time to get away with-



out being brought to a halt by the bullets of the guards.

It had all taken but a few seconds. Back at his home in West Berlin he held Margit close to him, happy in the knowledge that now they would be free to marry. And a few months

later, with Margit's mother holding back tears of happiness and relief, the young couple were married at the Schoeneberg Registry Office and settled down to life in their new home in West Germany. ■

## Activities

1. Work in a small group to discuss this piece. To what extent are these love stories? What elements of romance they contain? Using your group discussion as a starting point, write a ballad that tells the story of one of the escapes.
2. Pretend you are Hans-Peter Meixner. Write a list of pros and cons he might have considered as he created the plan. If you were his mother or father, what advice would you give him as he decides his course of action?
3. Work in small groups to prepare a news broadcast telling one of these stories. Choose to be either West Germans or East Germans. Consider how each side would view the escape and reflect that view in your newscast. Experiment with "loaded language" to demonstrate your understanding of how the connotation of words affects the message that is being given. Videotape your presentation for the class to view.

# Small Mercies: A Boy After War

ERNEST HILLEN



*This incident takes place at the end of the Second World War. Ernest Hillen and his family have just been released from a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp on the island of Java in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). Conditions in the camp were brutal, and among those who did not survive was Hubie, Ernest's best friend. Now the Hillens have emigrated to Canada, and Ernest must begin to adjust to life in peacetime.*

The first day of school, the third in Toronto, was amazing. My mother, but especially my father, had endlessly insisted—starting the first day out of camp!—on how important, how necessary school was. I'd have to work hard, yes, to “catch up,” but it would be so interesting, so enjoyable. It would be boring at best, I was certain, and probably awful; also, school was

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- develop an understanding of theme
- consider other perspectives
- interview a character
- write a free-verse poem
- write instructions

surely connected with “discipline,” one of my father’s favourite words. So I was nervous that morning, not happy. Find the Boys Entrance, my mother said, and then the Office: I was expected. Should she come along? Please *no*. A three-minute trot from Osborne Avenue, Kimberley Public School was a two-storey red-brick massive block of a building with tall wide windows and all around a fenced-in yard of crushed cinder—already filled with hundreds of running, shrieking children. I’d never seen so many together! Eyes down, I marched through them in the short-pants English-boy suit and Hubie’s extra-polished riding boots—my best outfit. A man holding a bell guarded the Boys Entrance. Up the stairs and to the right I’d see the Office sign, he said. Wide wooden stairs, worn to a slope in the centre, not so clean—and then the smell hit me. A strange wonderful smell. I sucked it in. I’d discover it was made up of many different smells: ink, glue, wood, carbolic soap, wood oils, wet wool, paint, dust, fresh sweat, stale sweat, soured milk, old food, running shoes. It was the smell of school.

A woman in a long-sleeved dark-brown dress waited in the Office—tall with a large high bosom, a head full of small brown curls, brown eyes swimming huge behind rimless glasses, and a tiny mouth. *She was Miss Tock, my teacher, she said smiling, and I was in grade six. She spoke very clearly in a soft voice; I would never hear her raise it. We should go to class before the bell and find me a good seat, all right?*

Yep, I said.

Not speaking, we climbed more stairs, walked down an empty hardwood-floor hall, footsteps clapping, and turned into a high-ceilinged room crowded with rows of one-piece wooden desk seats. In the back was an alcove where I had to hang up my coat. Miss Tock pointed to the second seat of the centre row that faced her desk. She turned to the blackboard behind her, wiped off other writing with her left hand, and in red chalk wrote ERNEST HILLEN with her right; her hands were as small as a girl’s. I looked around me. Thirty desks at least, and the walls, and also the lower halves of the windows, jammed with drawings, paintings, cut-outs, photographs of animals and flowers, mountains and waterfalls, the largest map I’d ever seen, of Canada, and in a corner on top of a cupboard a globe—I knew about globes!—and a large grey stuffed bird. A bell rang faintly outside and then a roaring wave of shrill voices and thumps and clatter surged up stairs and bowled down halls. I stared hard at the top of my desk; a lidded inkwell sat in a hole in the upper right-hand corner. Kids came stomping into the room, breathing hard, flopped down with groans; not speaking, though. In a moment it grew still. I felt the eyes on me, kept my head down. The desk’s surface was a blur of inked and carved doodles and of hearts, arrows, numbers, and initials.

In front of me I heard a light tapping, and I *had* to look up. Miss Tock

stood behind her desk holding a ruler. Kids were rising around me, stepping out of their desks to the right. I did, too. Roll-call? *Bowing?*

Miss Tock tapped her desk again.

"God save our gracious King," she began to sing and the class at once joined in. I knew that song. British soldiers bellowed it. The children sang as if they'd sung it many times before. I hummed along, eyes on Miss Tock. "God save the King!" it ended.

Miss Tock put the ruler on her desk, clasped her hands in front of her, lowered her head.

"Our Father who art in Heaven," she began and the class joined in. A prayer. I dropped my head, too. I was pretty sure I'd heard the prayer before, in Dutch. Was this done every day in school, singing and praying?

"Amen."

The children quietly slid into their seats. Me, too.

Miss Tock didn't sit down. She pointed to the blackboard and then, smiling at me, said my name. In her clear way, she said *Ernest* had just arrived in Canada, and he was *Dutch*.

I watched her little mouth.

*This was Ernest's first day in school, and lucky for them he'd be in their class! Welcome Ernest!*

Welcome Ernest, the class muttered.

*If you were Dutch, Miss Tock said, that usually meant you came from Holland. Did anyone know where Holland was?*

A hand was raised to my left.

Yes?

A girl stepped out of her desk.

Europe, Miss Tock.

*Correct.*

The girl sat down.

But *Ernest*, Miss Tock said, did *not* come to Canada from Holland. *He* came from a country that *belonged* to Holland—what was called a *colony*—and *that* country was named the *Dutch East Indies*. Had anyone heard of the *Dutch East Indies*?

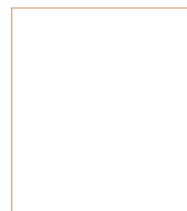
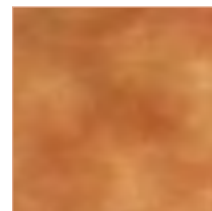
No hands.

It was a *country* made up of *thousands of islands*, and Ernest came from the *island of Java*. Who had heard of *Java*?

No hands.

I felt two light pats on my back, like a "hello." I didn't turn around.

Well, said Miss Tock, Java was *almost* on the *other side* of the *world* and they'd learn about it *later*. Because of the *war*, she said, Ernest had *missed* a *bit of schooling*, but *she* thought he would *fit just fine* in grade six. Didn't *Ernest* think so, *too*?







Yep, I said. I still felt all those eyes, but it was interesting, talking about me.

Ernest had been *speaking English* only for a *short while*, said Miss Tock, so *he* was still *learning* it. But then *none of you*, she said looking around the class, can speak *Dutch*, can you?

It was a little joke.

Was there *anything* she'd said *so far*, she asked me smiling, that I had *not understood*?

Nope, I said.

Learning a *new language* is *hard work*, said Miss Tock, *especially if everybody* around you knows *only that* language and you can't use *your* language. Does anyone *here* speak *another* language?

The hand of the boy in front of me flew up.

Miss Tock nodded at him.

The boy stepped out of his seat.

His father knew French, Miss Tock.

*Thank you.*

The boy sat down.

From *now on*, Miss Tock said looking at me, smiling again, I could *put up my hand*—as I'd *seen the others* do—and tell her at *any time* if I did *not* understand something. Would I *promise to do* that?

Yep, I said, smiling back at her. Clearly Miss Tock liked me. Well, I liked her, too.

The brown eyes rested on me, patiently swimming, the small mouth went on smiling. It was very still.

Holy cow! I suddenly understood—and shot out of my desk.

"Yes, Miss Tock," I said, standing straight.

"*Thank you, Ernest,*" she said.

Another friendly pat on my back.

Miss Tock said the class was going to read now, and I could just sit and listen; next time I'd have my own book. Kids rummaged in their desk drawers. Mine was empty.

Miss Tock called a child's name, and he or she would read out loud standing up until Miss Tock said thank you, said another name, and then that kid would read.

The bell rang. Books were tossed back inside the desks. Children rose. A hand on my shoulder turned me around: it was the patter. An open, friendly face, blue eyes, neatly combed shiny wavy blond hair the colour of Hubie's, golden.

C'mon! he said, and taking my elbow tugged me toward the door. I looked at Miss Tock, but she was talking to a girl.

It was OK, the boy said. Recess.



What, I wondered, was “recess?” Coat? I asked.

Nah, said the boy.

In the hallway we plunged into a river of hurrying kids, boys and girls, little ones, big ones, all talking, all making fast for the stairs; no running, though. The blond boy concentrated on slipping past those ahead, taking the stairs sometimes three at a time; I could do that.

Outside the Boys Entrance he stopped.

He was Ronald Glenesk, he said, squinting in the sudden bright daylight. What about baseball?

Yep. I said.

Had I played it?

Nope.

Had I *seen* it played?

Nope.

Never mind, he said, c’mon! and started running to the far side of the yard; I tried to keep up. Other boys our size were hurrying in the same direction. And then I lost Ronnie and I was alone in the middle of a loudly squabbling group of about twenty. One or two slapped me on the back, another on my arm. Friendly? Were they friendly slaps? They wore long pants, jackets with zippers, running shoes, and there was I in a pale-grey short-pants suit and riding boots. Oh God—I’d have to fight! No choice. No escape. I’d known it since I woke up: new boys always had to fight. All over the world—that’s how it was. I balled my fists. Leather boots at least, against running shoes. All the dim days in camp, new boys had to fight, dizzy or not dizzy, sores or no sores—the rule of the tough; my rule, too. You didn’t like fighting? Too bad. Scared? Too bad. Did I still know *how*? God, I hadn’t fought for six, seven months, not since before Hubie . . .

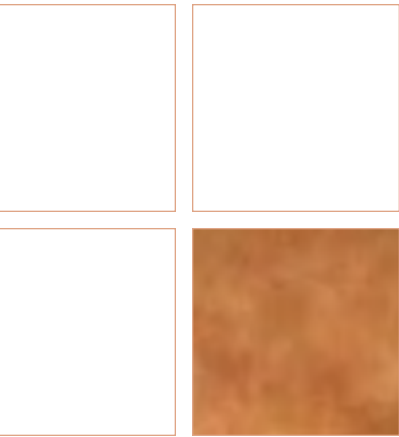
Same team, Ernie! said a smiling Ronnie, suddenly beside me again. C’mon! and he jogged over to the corner of the yard’s fence. Some boys quickly fanned out facing the corner; three of them busily scuffed up small mounds of cinders. Ronnie pointed to the mounds and, speaking fast, said that was First Base, that Second Base, that Third, and this was Home, where we were standing. His face was red, from running, from the cold. Someone handed him a bat. He passed it to me. I was First At Bat, he said, because I was the new guy. This was how I should grip it and swing it—and he showed me. The kid straight ahead holding the ball, he was the Pitcher. He’d throw the ball and I had to hit it and then run like hell to First Base. That was all for now. Three swings, OK?

OK.

Ronnie joined a bunch of boys to the side, leaving me alone clutching the bat, except for a kid squatting behind me. I could feel a lot of eyes.

Play ball! Play ball! voices yelled.





I watched the Pitcher. A tall boy, he first twisted his body oddly and then threw the ball—but much too fast. I swung anyway, and almost fell over.

The squatter caught it though, and tossed it back to the Pitcher.

Nice swing, Ernie! Ronnie shouted. And others did, too—Nice swing, Ernie!

The Pitcher swivelled and threw the ball. Too fast again. I swung hard, but stayed on my feet. On whose side was the Pitcher?

Way to go, Ernie!

Way to go!

Nice try!

The squatter returned the ball. Whose side was *he* on?

This time the Pitcher swung himself half around and threw the ball—like a bullet. Not a ball that could be hit.

Strike three! somebody called. I laid the bat down. There was then some disagreement in Ronnie's group. Strange game: so far the only people who'd played were the Pitcher and me, and the squatter, I supposed. Everybody else, the boys fanned out in front and the ones to the side, just stood around. And then a voice from the side yelled:

*"Give 'im another chance!"*

Yeah! came a second voice.

Another chance! from a third.

Some of the boys in front of me were then shouting it, too. Weren't they the enemy?

Another chance!

Another chance!

Give 'im another chance!

In the wintry sunshine it was like a chant.

Ronnie ambled over, grinning, and said I was still At Bat. I could try a few more hits.

The Pitcher then didn't do his body trick, he just lobbed the ball over, and I almost hit it.

Attaboy, Ernie!

Attaboy!

Attaboy!

Shouts and yells from all over. No question, I was getting the hang of it.

The Pitcher tossed again, and I felt sure the bat touched the ball, though the ball didn't change direction.

Close one, Ernie!

*Close, close, close!*

The next ball came at me like a kiss, in the sweetest, slowest way, just reaching for the bat—and I *whacked* it. It rolled in a fine straight line to the Pitcher.

And there was shouting! There was cheering. There was hand-clapping. The boy on First Base jumped up and down. I got the craziest feeling and clamped down my jaws. It was just as if I was going to cry.

Nice *hit*, Ernie!

Way to go!

Attaboy!

C'mon! *Another* one!

And I did. I hit that ball several more times. The Pitcher kept throwing, I kept swinging, the squatter kept catching, and then the bell rang.

Nice going! said Ronnie as we trotted back to the Boys Entrance. Inside the school I breathed in the smell.

When the lunch bell rang I ran home fast. There was a lot to tell; my mother would have questions. Over Campbell's tomato soup and a grilled cheese sandwich in the kitchen, I reported on the *thousands* of kids in the yard, the smell, the noise, Miss Tock, Grade Six, the gashed desk, Ronnie, and baseball. ■

## Activities

1. Ernest expects the worst on his first day of school. Reread the section in which he anticipates what will happen on his first day. Compare this with what actually happens. What do his expectations tell you about his past experiences? How has the author used the baseball game to help develop an understanding of the theme of the story?
2. As Ronnie, write a journal entry, retelling the story from your point of view. Include details and descriptions from the story, as well as your interpretation of the events of that day.
3. As an adult, Ernest becomes a famous writer. Work with a partner to role-play a TV interview with Ernest. One partner plays the interviewer, the other partner plays Ernest. Develop a list of questions an interviewer might ask Ernest about his childhood experience of immigration. Use examples from the story to create Ernest's responses.
4. Make sure you demonstrate his feelings and memories about that first day of school. Videotape your interview or perform it live for the class.
4. Pretend that you are from another culture. This is the only story you have ever read about Canadian children, so you assume that this is what they are all like. Write a free-verse poem about Canadian children, using only what you know from this story.
5. Ernest had never played baseball before. The students gave him clear directions on how to play the game. Pick your favourite sport or activity and write a set of instructions to help someone who has never experienced it before. Make sure your instructions are step by step and logical. Trade instructions with a partner and assess the instructions for clarity and completeness.

## End-of-unit Activities

1. Working with a group, choose one of the stories or poems in this unit and create a video adaptation. Read your choice carefully and divide it into scenes. Plan where each scene should be taped, who will play each character, what props will be needed. Consider using sound effects and music. Show your video to the class.
2. Pick one of the stories or poems in the section. Design a children's book using the story line as the basis for your book. Consider how the pictures contribute to details and development of your story. Share your story with a younger family member, or visit an elementary classroom and share your story there.
3. Work with a partner to research mythology and legends. Find a myth or legend that appeals to you and prepare an oral telling of the piece. Practise your storytelling. Develop a sense of voice, articulation, stresses, etc. Consider using sound effects and dialogue to help listeners follow the story. Present your story to the class.
4. Research one of the topics presented in this unit: mythological beings, environmental concerns, women's issues, legends, immigration experiences. Pick an area that is of interest to you. Do some preliminary research to help you gain an understanding of the breadth of your topic. Use strategies to narrow your topic to a manageable one. Prepare a learning station that includes visuals, writing, and perhaps hands-on activity. When everyone has completed their stations, spend some time discussing what you have learned. You might invite parents or members of other classes to share your learning.
5. Throughout this section you have read about some very strong and courageous women. Pick two of these women and write an essay in which you compare their personalities and achievements. Use details from the stories to help you explain your comparisons. Share your planning and drafts with a friend, who will help you to edit for clarity and organization. Look at some of your previous writing and make sure you are not making the same mistakes.
6. a) In your opinion, which is the best visual in this unit? Write a brief summary explaining your thoughts. Make sure you use examples to defend your opinion.  
b) Pick a visual you feel is not a good fit for the unit, and write a summary of your reasons. Find another visual or draw one yourself, and explain why you think your choice is better.
7. Throughout this unit you have learned and reviewed examples of figurative language and literary techniques. Review your notes and the activities you have completed. Prepare a booklet of terms and definitions, giving at least three examples. You might illustrate your booklet.
8. Pick your favourite piece in this unit and create a collage to represent its theme. Make it specific enough that other students can recognize the source, but add your own creative ideas.
9. Look back at "In the Silence," "The Time of the Wolves," "Black Hull," and others, and create a list of unfamiliar words you find. Try to determine the meaning of the words from the context, or the rest of the sentence around it. Then look up the word in the dictionary. Compare your meaning with the dictionary version. Adjust your definition as necessary. Write your own sentence using the word correctly, demonstrating you know what it means.
10. Pick one of the themes of this unit and create a poetry anthology expanding on it. Select poems from other books and/or write your own poems to create a booklet of poems. You might illustrate your poems to reflect your theme.



# 4 Look beyond

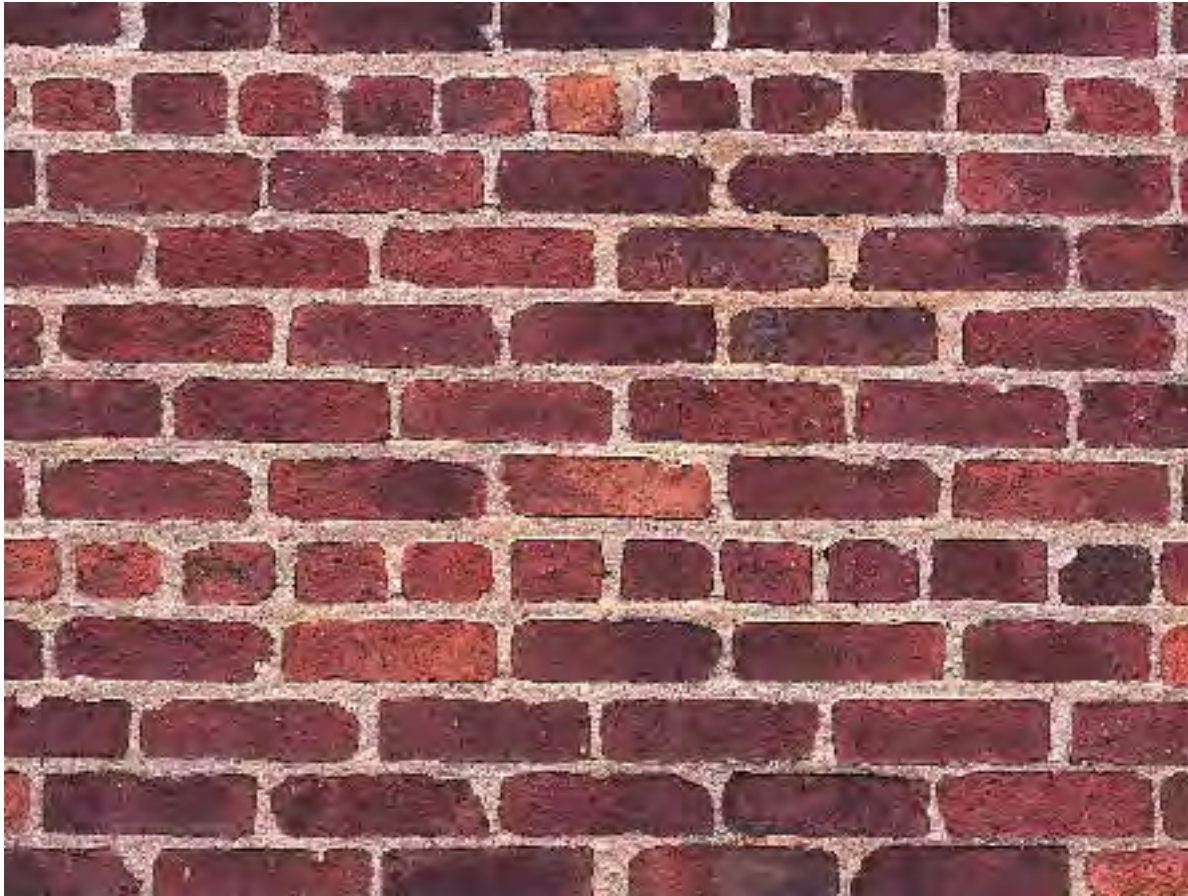


Where to from here?  
Explore the possibilities!  
Bring an open mind and a  
hungry imagination as you  
read these selections.  
This unit looks beyond the  
everyday to explore dreams,  
technology, science fiction,  
and the future of society as  
seen by both artists and  
scientists.



# Walking Through a Wall

LOUIS JENKINS



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this description will help you:

- read for detail
- listen and respond to others' interpretations
- argue for or against a statement
- write a letter

Unlike flying or astral projection, walking through walls is a totally earth-related craft, but a lot more interesting than pot-making or driftwood lamps. I got started at a picnic up in Bowstring in the northern part of the state. A fellow walked through a brick wall right there in the park. I said "Say, I want to try that." Stone walls are best, then brick and wood. Wooden walls with fibreglass insulation and steel doors aren't so good. They won't hurt you. If your wall walking is done properly, both you and the wall are left intact. It is just that they aren't pleasant somehow. The worst things are wire fences, maybe it's the molecular structure of the alloy or just the

amount of give in a fence, I don't know, but I've torn my jacket and lost my hat in a lot of fences. The best approach to a wall is, first, two hands placed flat against the surface; it's a matter of concentration and just the right pressure. You will feel the dry, cool inner wall with your fingers, then there is a moment of total darkness before you step through on the other side. ■

## Activities

1. At what point did you realize the fanciful nature of this story?
2. Identify which walls are best and which are worst for walking through according to the narrator. In a group of three, take turns explaining why you think Louis Jenkins has put the walls in this order. Discuss and clarify each other's opinions and arrive at an explanation satisfactory to the whole group.
3. The author claims that "walking through a wall" is different from "flying" or "astral projection" and is a "totally earth-related craft."

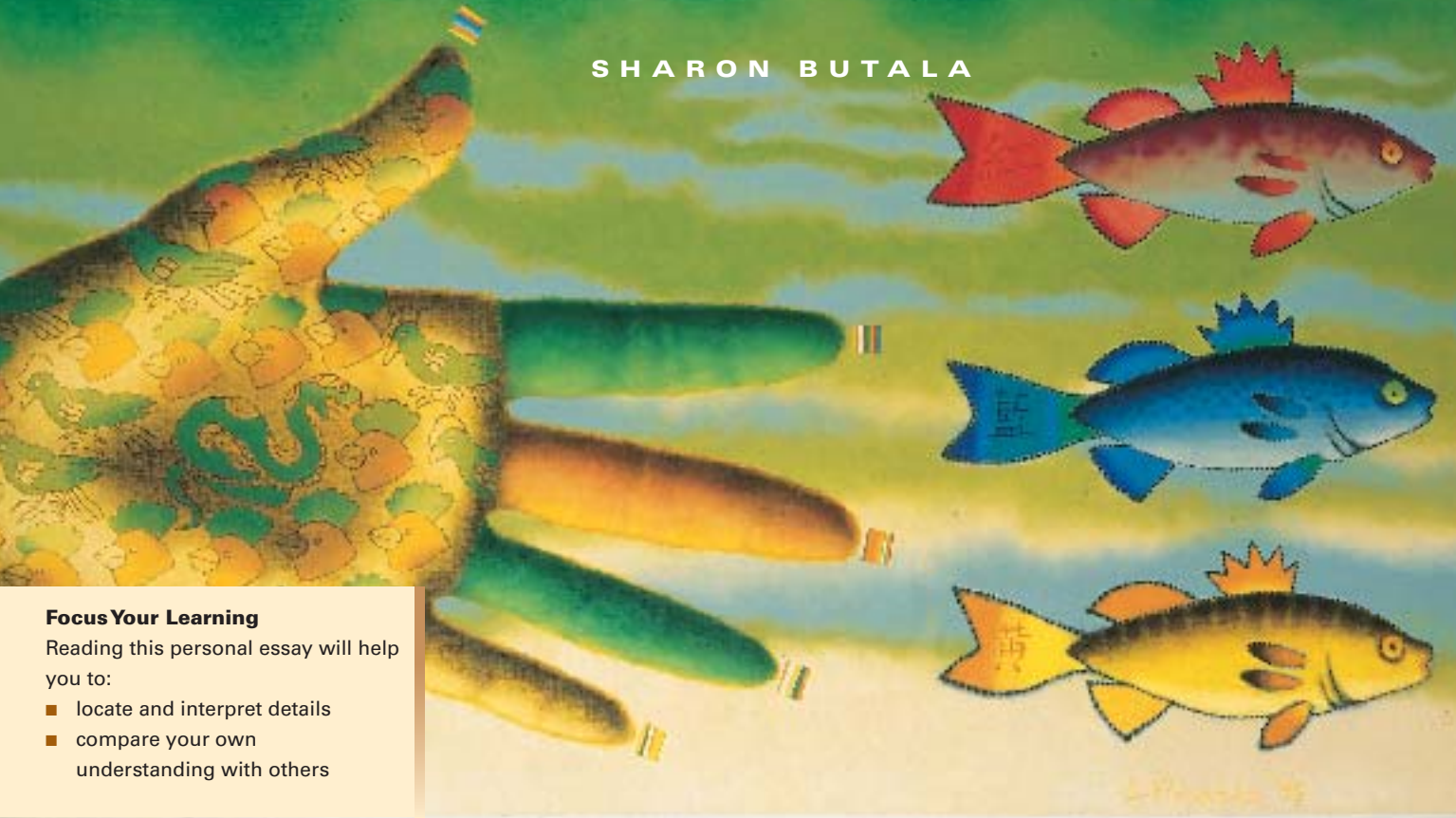
Work with a partner, one supporting and one refuting this argument. Refer to the text and to your own experiences to support your points. Summarize your arguments and discussion in a personal journal entry.

4. Imagine you are capable of performing a seemingly impossible feat. Write a letter to your best friend in which you describe the experience and recommend that he or she try it as a means of expanding consciousness.



# Dreamworld

SHARON BUTALA



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this personal essay will help you to:

- locate and interpret details
- compare your own understanding with others

I take my dreams very seriously; I believe I should live my life based on them, and I'm trying to, although practical matters keep intervening, not all of which are of my own making. If I am a writer of both non-fiction and fiction, I am now, because of my dreams, fully aware of what I'm doing, which is having to choose between my soul, which craves to pursue novel-writing, and my ego, which enjoys all too easily the recognition for my other writing. When I'm writing fiction, I feel myself dissolve into another world where things are both of and not of my own making, where if I can be absolutely still and wholly observant, I feel myself to be in touch with something I call the Creative Flow. I feel that, in moments of purity

and wonder, I meld, for a precious instant, with that flow. Then, in those few, yearned-for moments, novel-writing becomes a holy act. How could I wish to turn away from such joy?

On the other hand, it's very satisfying to be in demand, and it's wonderful to feel a success, even if it isn't for the thing at which I most want to be a success. Believing, as I do, that for each of us there is a way—the one right way—and struggling to find the one that is my own, I am confused, and I wonder if I am wrong in thinking that novels are what I should be writing. I wonder, too, if in turning to non-fiction I am merely being subverted by my greedy ego from working at the building of my own soul. My dreams and the work I put into sorting

them out have made clear to me what otherwise I might not have understood until it was too late, if indeed I ever did.

Dreams also work in other mysterious ways. Recently I had a visitor who was a stranger to me. I remarked that I'd had a beautiful dream the night before in which I was in the end room of a dormitory, with glass on three sides, which jutted out over the ocean. Enormous, brightly coloured yellow, orange, green, and cream birds came flying toward my room and gambolled and played with each other, swooping through the air. "They reminded me of whales, actually," I said. Smaller birds, "about the size of dolphins," I explained, a creamy beige in colour, came closest of all as they played, even dipping into the water and splashing me, since by that time the dream glass had disappeared. My visitor said, "That sounds like my house." She explained that she lived in an oceanside house on the Pacific. From her deck, whales and dolphins could regularly be seen,

and seabirds and even eagles often lit on it.

On another occasion I dreamed about a certain strange man, a dream character, I thought; the next morning I met him in person for the first time. He turned out to be the special guest at a meeting I attended, and I knew him, the minute I saw him, as the man. I am still trying to understand why a dream had signalled a meeting with each of these people.

Whether you choose to believe dreams come from indigestion or from God, or from the gods or the goddess or your wiser self, or some other mysterious source, the fact is, aboriginal people the world over are right: dreams do teach, dreams are a source of information about the world, a guide if you let them be, and a constant source of inspiration. I sometimes go so far as to think, with aboriginal people, that the dreamworld is simply another reality, another world I enter some nights when I fall asleep. There are times when I even prefer it to the waking world. ■

## Activities

1. Sharon Butala feels differently about her fiction and her non-fiction writing. In chart form, note the satisfactions and limitations of each. Compare your chart with a classmate's and discuss any discrepancies.
2. In a journal entry, speculate about why a "dream had signalled a meeting with each of these people." Continuing the entry, explore your own thoughts and feelings about the nature of dreams. Read another student's entry and respond in writing to his or her thoughts and ideas.
3. Recount one of your own dreams. Choose an appropriate format; narrative, storyboard, poem, etc. Add a brief explanation of why you may have had this dream and what, if anything, the dream means to you.





# The Bridge Builder

MARGARET MAHY



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this short story will help you:

- make a timeline
- analyse characters' choices and motives
- identify and discuss theme
- explore different ways to express ideas

My father was a bridge builder. That was his business—crossing chasms, joining one side of the river with the other.

When I was small, bridges brought us bread and books, Christmas crackers and coloured pencils—one-span bridges over creeks, two-span bridges over streams, three-span bridges over wide rivers. Bridges sprang from my father's dreams threading roads together—girder bridges, arched bridges, suspension bridges, bridges of wood, bridges of iron or concrete. Like a sort of hero, my father would drive piles and piers through sand and mud to the rocky bones of the world. His bridges became visible parts of the world's hidden skeleton. When we went out on picnics it was along roads held together by my father's works. As we crossed rivers and ravines we heard each bridge singing in its own private language. We could hear the melody, but my father was the only one who understood the words.

There were three of us when I was small: Philippa, the oldest, Simon in

the middle, and me, Merlin, the youngest, the one with the magician's name. We played where bridges were being born, running around piles of sand and shingle, bags of cement, and bars of reinforced steel. Concrete mixers would turn, winches would wind, piles would be driven, and decking cast. Slowly, as we watched and played, a bridge would appear and people could cross over.

For years my father built bridges where people said they wanted them, while his children stretched up and out in three different directions. Philippa became a doctor and Simon an electrical engineer, but I became a traveller, following the roads of the world and crossing the world's bridges as I came to them.

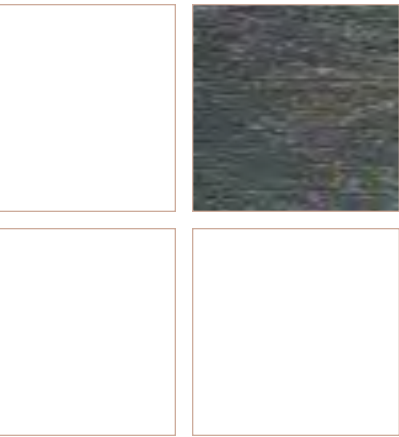
My father, however, remained a bridge builder. When my mother died and we children were grown up and gone, and there was no more need for balloons and books or Christmas crackers and coloured pencils, his stored powers were set free and he began to build the bridges he saw in his dreams.

The first of his new bridges had remarkable handrails of black iron lace. But this was not enough for my father. He collected a hundred orb-web spiders and set them loose in the crevices and curlicues of the iron. Within the lace of the bridge, these spiders spun their own lace, and after a night of rain or dew the whole bridge glittered black and silver, spirals within spirals, an intricate piece of jewellery arching over a wide, stony stream.

People were enchanted with the unexpectedness of it. Now, as they crossed over, they became part of a work of art. But the same people certainly thought my father strange when he built another bridge of horsehair and vines so that rabbits, and even mice, could cross the river with dry feet and tails. He's gone all funny, they said, turning their mouths down. However, my father had only just begun. He made two bridges with gardens built into them which soon became so overgrown with roses, wisteria, bougainvillea, and other beautiful climbing plants that they looked as if they had been made entirely of flowers.

Over a river that wound through a grove of silver birch trees he wove a bridge of golden wires, a great cage filled with brilliant, singing birds; and in a dull, tired town he made an aquarium bridge whose glass balustrades and parapets were streaked scarlet and gold by the fish that darted inside them. People began to go out of their way to cross my father's bridges.

Building surprising bridges was one thing, but soon my father took it into his head to build bridges in unexpected places. He gave up building them where people were known to be going and built them where people might happen to find themselves. Somewhere, far from any road, sliding through brush and ferns to reach a remote stretch of river, you might find one of my father's bridges: perhaps a strong one built to last a thousand



years, perhaps a frail one made of bamboo canes, peacock feathers, and violin strings. A bridge like this would soon fall to pieces sending its peacock feathers down the river like messages, sounding a single twangling note among the listening hills. Mystery became a part of crossing over my father's bridges.

In some ways it seemed as if his ideas about what a bridge should be were changing. His next bridge, made of silver thread and mother of pearl, was only to be crossed at midnight on a moonlight night. So, crossing over changed, too. Those who crossed over from one bank to another on this bridge crossed also from one day to another, crossing time as well as the spaces under the piers. It was his first time-bridge, but later there was to be another, a bridge set with clocks chiming perpetually the hours and half-hours in other parts of the world. And in all the world this was the only bridge that needed to be wound up with a master key every eight days.

Wherever my father saw a promising space he thought of ways in which it could be crossed, and yet for all that he loved spaces. In the city he climbed like a spider, stringing blue suspension bridges between skyscrapers and tower bridges—air bridges, he called them. Looking up at them from the street they became invisible. When crossing over on them, you felt you were suspended in nothing, or were maybe set in crystal, a true inhabitant of the sky. Lying down, looking through the blue web that held you, you could see the world turning below. But if you chose to lie on your back and look up as far as you could look, and then a bit farther still, on and on, higher and higher, your eyes would travel through the troposphere and the tropopause, the stratosphere and the stratopause, the mesosphere and the mesopause, the Heaviside layer, the ionosphere, and the Appleton layer, not to mention the Van Allen belts. From my father's blue suspension bridges all the architecture of the air would open up to you.

However, not many people bothered to stare upward like that. Only the true travellers were fascinated to realize that the space they carelessly passed through was not empty but crowded with its own invisible constructions.

"Who wants a bridge like that, anyway?" some people asked sourly.

"Anyone. Someone!" my father answered. "There are no rules for crossing over."

But a lot of people disagreed with this idea of my father's. Such people thought bridges were designed specially for cars, mere pieces of road stuck up on legs of iron or concrete, whereas my father thought bridges were the connections that would hold everything together. Bridges gone, perhaps the whole world would fall apart, like a quartered orange. The journey on the left bank of the river (according to my father) was quite different from the journey on the right. The man on the right bank of the ravine—was he truly the same man when he crossed onto the left? My father thought he might

not be, and his bridges seemed like the steps of a dance which would enable the man with a bit of left-hand spin on him to spin in the opposite direction. This world (my father thought) was playing a great game called “Change,” and his part in the game was called “crossing over.”

It was upsetting for those people who wanted to stick to the road to know that some people used my father’s hidden bridges. They wanted everyone to cross by exactly the same bridges that *they* used, and they hated the thought that, somewhere over the river they were crossing, there might be another strange and lovely bridge they were unaware of.

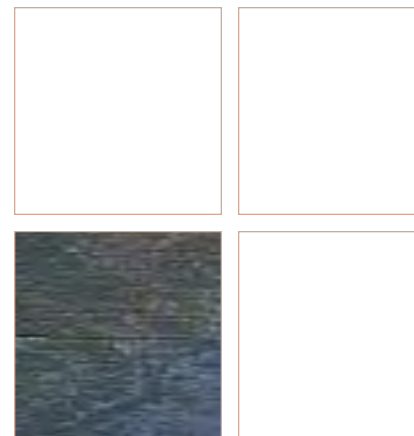
However, no one could cross all my father’s bridges. No one can cross over in every way. Some people became angry when they realized this and, because they could not cross over on every bridge there was, they started insisting that there should be no more bridge building. Some of these people were very powerful—so powerful, indeed, that they passed laws forbidding my father to build any bridge unless ordered to do so by a government or by some county council. They might as well have passed a law saying that the tide was only allowed to come in and out by government decree, because by now my father’s bridge building had become a force beyond the rule of law. He built another bridge, a secret one, which was not discovered until he had finished it, this time over a volcano. Its abutments were carved out of old lava and, along its side, great harps, instead of handrails, cast strange, striped shadows on the decking. Men, women, and children who crossed over could look down into the glowing heart of the volcano, could watch it simmer and seethe and smoulder. And when the wind blew, or when the great fumes of hot air billowed up like dragon’s breath, the harps played fiery music with no regard to harmony. This bridge gave the volcano a voice. It spoke an incandescent language, making the night echo with inexplicable songs and poetry.

“The bridge will melt when the volcano erupts,” people said to each other, alarmed and fascinated by these anthems of fire.

“But none of my bridges are intended to last *forever*,” my father muttered to himself, loading his derrick and winch onto the back of his truck and driving off in another direction. It was just as well he kept on the move. Powerful enemies pursued him.

“Bridges are merely bits of the road with special problems,” they told one another, and sent soldiers out to trap my father, to arrest him, to put an end to his bridge building. Of course, they couldn’t catch him. They would think they had him cornered and, behold, he would build a bridge and escape—a bridge that collapsed behind him as if it had been made of playing cards, or a bridge that unexpectedly turned into a boat, carrying his astonished pursuers away down some swift river.

Just about then, as it happened, my travelling took me on my first circle





around the world, and I wound up back where I had started from. My brother, the electrical engineer, and my sister, the doctor, came to see me camping under a bridge that my father had built when I was only three years old.

"Perhaps you can do something about him," Philippa cried. "He won't listen to us."

"Don't you care?" asked Simon. "It's a real embarrassment. It's time he was stopped before he brings terrible trouble upon himself."

They looked at me—shaggy and silent, with almost nothing to say to them—in amazement. I gave them the only answer I could.

"What is there for a bridge builder to build, if he isn't allowed to build bridges?" I asked them. Dust from the world's roads made my voice husky, even in my own ears.

"He can be a retired bridge builder," Simon replied. "But I can see that you're going to waste time asking riddles. You don't care that your old father is involved in illegal bridge building." And he went away. He had forgotten the weekend picnics in the sunshine, and the derrick, high as a ladder, leading to the stars.

"And what have you become, Merlin?" Philippa asked me. "What are you now, after all your journeys?"

"I'm a traveller as I always have been," I replied.

"You are a vagabond," she answered scornfully. "A vagabond with a magician's name, but no magic!"

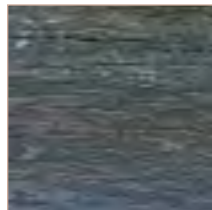
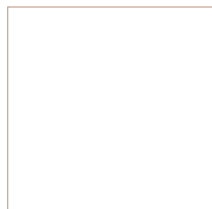
Then she went away, too, in her expensive car. I did not tell her, but I did have a little bit of magic—a single magical word, half-learned, half-invented. I could see that my father might need help, even a vagabond's help, even the help of a single magic word. I set off to find him.

It was easy for me, a seasoned traveller, to fall in with my father. I just walked along, until I came to a river that sang his name, and then I followed that river up over slippery stones and waterfalls, through bright green tangles of cress and monkey musk. Sure enough, there was my father building a bridge by bending two tall trees over the water and plaiting the branches into steps. This bridge would, in time, grow leafy handrails filled with birds' nests, a crossing-place for deer and possums.

"Hello!" said my father. "Hello, Merlin. I've just boiled the billy. Care for a cup of tea?"

"Love one!" I said. There's nothing quite like a cup of billy-tea." So we sat down in a patch of sunlight and drank our tea.

"They're catching up with me, you know," my father said sadly. "There are police and soldiers looking all the time. Helicopters, too! I can go on escaping, of course, but I'm not sure if I can be bothered. I'm getting pretty bored with it all. Besides," he went on, lowering his voice as if the green





shadows might overhear him, "I'm not sure that building bridges is enough any longer. I feel I must become more involved, to cross over myself in some way. But how does a bridge builder learn to cross over when he's on both sides of the river to begin with?"

"I might be able to help," I said.

My father looked up from under the brim of his working hat. He was a weatherbeaten man, fingernails cracked by many years of bridge building. Sitting there, a cup of billy-tea between his hands, he looked like a tree, he looked like a rock. There was no moss on him, but he looked mossy for all that. He was as lined and wrinkled as if a map of all his journeys, backward and forward, were inscribed on his face, with crosses for all the bridges he had built.

"I'm not sure you can," he answered. "I must be *more* of a bridge builder not *less* of one, if you understand me."

"Choosy, aren't you?" I said, smiling, and he smiled back.

"I suppose you think you know what I'd like most," he went on.

"I think I do!" I replied. "I've crossed a lot of bridges myself one way and another, because I'm a travelling man, and I've learned a lot on the banks of many rivers."

"And you've a magical name," my father reminded me eagerly. "I said, when you were born, this one is going to be the magician of the family!"

"I'm not a magician," I replied, "but there *is* one word I know ... a word of release and remaking. It allows things to become their true selves." My father was silent for a moment, nodding slowly, eyes gleaming under wrinkled lids.

"Don't you think things are really what they seem to be?" he asked me.

"I think people are all, more or less, creatures of two sides with a chasm in between, so to speak. My magic word merely closes the chasm."

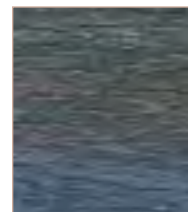
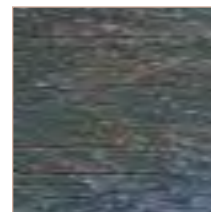
"A big job for one word," said my father.

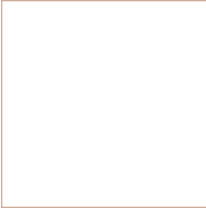
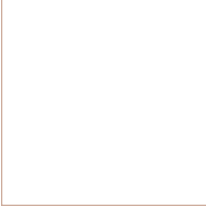
"Well, it's a very good word," I said. I didn't tell him I had invented half of it myself. "It's a sort of bridge," I told him.

All the time we talked, we had felt the movement of men, not very close, not very far, as the forest carried news of my father's pursuers. Now we heard a sudden sharp cry—and another—and another. Men shouted in desperate voices.

"It's the soldiers," my father said, leaping to his feet. "They've been hunting me all day, though the forest is on my side and hides me away. But something's happened. We'd better go and check what's going on. I don't want them to come to harm because of me and my bridge-building habits."

We scrambled upstream until the river suddenly started to run more swiftly, narrow and deep. The opposite bank rose up sharply, red with crumbling, rotten rock, green with mosses and pockets of fern. My father





struggled to keep up with me. He was old, and besides, he was a bridge builder, not a traveller. Closing my eyes for a moment against the distractions around me, I brought the magic word out of my mind and onto the tip of my tongue—and then I left it unspoken.

The soldiers were on the opposite bank. They had tried to climb down the cliff on rotten rock but it had broken away at their very toes and there they were, marooned on a crumbling ledge—three of them—weighted down with guns, ammunition belts, and other military paraphernalia. Two of the soldiers were very young, and all three of them were afraid, faces pale, reflecting the green leaves greenly.

Below them the rocks rose out of the water. Just at this point the river became a dragon's mouth, full of black teeth, hissing and roaring, sending up a faint smoke of silver spray.

It was obvious that the soldiers needed a bridge.

My father stared at them, and they stared at him like men confounded. But he was a bridge builder before he was anybody's friend or enemy, before he was anybody's father.

"That word?" he asked me. "You have it there?"

I nodded. I dared not speak, or the word would be said too soon.

"When I step into the water, say it then, Merlin!"

I waited and my father smiled at me, shy and proud and mischievous all at once. He looked up once at the sky, pale blue and far, and then he stepped, one foot on land, one in the water, toward the opposite bank. I spoke the word.

My father changed before my eyes. He became a bridge as he had known he would. As for the word—it whispered over the restless surface of the river and rang lightly on the red, rotten rock. But my father had taken its magic out of it. No one else was altered.

The curious thing was that my father, who had made so many strange and beautiful bridges, was a very ordinary-looking bridge himself—a single-span bridge built of stone over an arch of stone, springing upward at an odd angle, vanishing into the cliff at the very feet of the terrified soldiers. He looked as if he had always been there, as if he would be there *forever*, silver moss on his handrails, on his abutments, even on his deck. Certainly he was the quietest bridge I had ever crossed as I went over to help the soldiers down. There was no way forward through the cliff. Still, perhaps the job of some rare bridges is to cross over only briefly and then bring us back to the place we started from.

We came back together, the three soldiers and I, and I'm sure we were all different men on the right bank from the men we had been on the left.

Our feet made no sound on the silver moss.

"They can say what they like about that old man," cried the older soldier

all of a sudden, “but I was never so pleased to see a bridge in all my life. It just shows there are good reasons for having bridges in unexpected places.”

Together we scrambled downstream, and at last, back onto the road.

“But who’s going to build the bridges now, then?” asked one of the young soldiers. “Look! You were with him. Are you a bridge builder, too?”

They knew now. They knew that unexpected bridges would be needed.

But someone else will have to build them. I am not a bridge builder. I am a traveller. I set out travelling, after that, crossing, one by one, all the bridges my father had built ... the picnic bridges of childhood, the wooden ones, the steel ones, the stone, and the concrete. I crossed the blue bridges of the air and those that seemed to be woven of vines and flowers. I crossed the silver-thread and mother-of-pearl bridge one moonlit midnight. I looked down into the melting heart of the world and saw my reflection in a bubble of fire while the harps sang and sighed and snarled around me with the very voice of the volcano.

Some day someone, perhaps my own child, may say that word of mine back to me—that word I said to my father—but I won’t turn into a bridge. I shall become a journey winding over hills, across cities, along seashores, and through shrouded forests, crossing my father’s bridges and the bridges of other men, as well as all the infinitely divided roads and splintered pathways that lie between them. ■

## Activities

1. Working in a small group, make an illustrated timeline of the father’s career, showing the development of the kinds of bridges he made. Label the important changes in the father himself. Post your timeline in the classroom.
2. Work in a group of four. Have each person assume the voice of one of the following characters: father, Philippa, Simon, Merlin. In a short speech or dramatic monologue, tell the others your philosophy of life, explaining what it is that you value in life and why. Comment on each other’s speeches, indicating two things that you liked and one way in which the speech could be improved.
3. In a small group consider what the author is saying about dreams, individuality, tolerance, beauty, family relationships, and social pressure. Decide as a group whether the writer’s views are valid or not.
4. Create your own bridge. Produce a hand-drawn or computer-generated illustration or model, a written explanation of the materials involved, and a description of the location and intended traffic for your bridge.

# *The Child, The Future*





## GEORGE LITTLECHILD



Courtesy of the Artist.

### Focus Your Learning

Analysing this image will help you:

- respond to a work of art
- examine the relationship between the artist and his work
- experiment with principles of design

## Activities

1. With a partner, discuss your reaction to the three figures in the painting, paying particular attention to the following:

their position in the picture  
their facial expressions  
their clothing

Summarize your impression in writing, and suggest how these details relate to the artist's message.

2. **a)** George Littlechild was born of a Scottish father and a Cree mother; note down any evidence of his cultural background that appears in this image.  
**b)** Create a mixed medium image—collage, found objects, photographs, news clippings—to make a statement about your own culture. Arrange your material for maximum impact. Share your artwork with the class, and be prepared to answer questions about the choices you made.



# The Dream

S A N D R A B E Z I C



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this memoir will help you:

- compare and contrast your own life with the theme
- understand the forms of memoir and newspaper story
- identify and discuss narrative voice
- role-play an interview

The dream begins the first time you feel your blades cutting across the hard, cold surface and discover the effortless motion of gliding. The first time you find yourself believing, if only for a few moments, that you are the most graceful or the most powerful person in the world. It grows inside you with a surprise discovery: on the ice you are free to express your joy or sadness in movement, jumping or spinning, or simply creating steps entirely your own. Now, in your mind's eye, you can see yourself performing at the Olympics, knowing that all eyes are on you.

You imagine yourself pushing away from the boards, your skates making a sharp, clean hiss like fabric ripping. The lights in the big arena are dazzling, and you hear the buzz of many thousands of spectators drop to sighs and whispers. You stop at centre ice, catch a glimpse of a honeycomb wall of camera lenses, and focus on a distant point, patiently waiting for the opening chords of your music. You feel your heart pounding, so you take a deep breath and clear your mind, just as you've practised doing so many times before. Your dream—no longer mere thoughts, long-

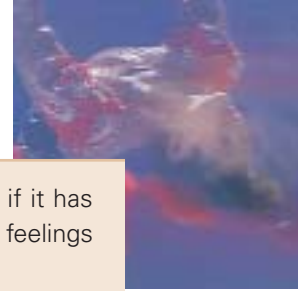
ings, aspirations, goals—comes alive...

Holding your final pose at centre ice as the crowd roars its approval, you know you've skated your best. You're out of breath as you glide toward the boards, flushed with exhaustion and emotionally spent. There are the tearful faces of your mom and dad cheering in the stands, and the open arms of your coach, as the

little flower girls hand you armloads of bouquets that rain from the sky like praise. Standing on the podium with a gold medal around your neck, you proudly watch your country's flag rise to the stirring sound of your national anthem. This is it, you think to yourself, I did it. ■

## Activities

1. Using this memoir as a model, describe your own dream as if it has come "alive" as Sandra Bezic's did. Remember to include your feelings as well as the events.
2. **a)** Imagine that you are a newspaper reporter for the Sports section, and write the story of Sandra Bezic's triumph. Combine your own imagination with the events she remembers. Keep in mind that a news story focusses on who, what, when, where, why, and how.  
**b)** Select several sports stories from newspapers or magazines, and rewrite them as the memoirs of participants. Collect several of these memoirs from a range of sports to create an anthology of sports writing. Share this with another class.
3. This memoir is unusual because it is written in the second person (you). In a small group, discuss the impact of the choice of person. Decide how the memoir would differ if it were written in the first (I, we) or third (he, she, it, they) person. Recreate a piece of this selection in either first or third person, and compare the effect of your version with that of a classmate written in the other person.
4. Role-play an interview with Sandra after her triumph. Present it live or videotape it.



# In Praise of Dreams

WISLAWA SZYMBORSKA



In my dreams  
I paint like Vermeer van Delft.

I speak fluent Greek  
and not just with the living.

I drive a car  
that does what I want it to.

I am gifted  
and write mighty epics.

I hear voices  
as clearly as any venerable saint.

My brilliance as a pianist  
would stun you.

I fly the way we ought to,  
i.e., on my own.

Falling from the roof,  
I tumble gently to the grass.

I've got no problem  
breathing under water.

I can't complain:  
I've been able to locate Atlantis.



It's gratifying that I can always  
wake up before dying.

As soon as war breaks out,  
I roll over on my other side.

I'm a child of my age,  
but I don't have to be.

A few years ago  
I saw two suns.

And the night before last a penguin,  
clear as day.

### Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- adapt the form of a piece of writing
- present a dramatic reading

## Activities

1. Write your own poem "In Praise of Dreams," in which you reveal your aspirations and hopes. Select appropriate fonts and styles to display your poem effectively on the page. Post your poem on a bulletin board that reflects the dreams of your class.
2. Working in a group of about ten, prepare and present a dramatic reading of this poem. Make use of the following:
  - different groupings of voices in terms of gender and number
  - different areas of the classroom for echoes, broken lines, chorus, etc.
  - props and costumes to complement the ideas in the poem

Rehearse so that you know your parts well and the presentation flows smoothly. There is no need to memorize the lines.

"The Art of Painting" by Jan Vermeer, Kunsthistorisches, Vienna, Austria.  
LERNER FINE ART COLLECTION/SUPERSTOCK.

# Sophie, 1990

M A R I A N   E N G E L



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- cite specific information from texts
- write collaboratively and independently
- read for clues to meaning
- integrate media in presentations

After Jethro left, Sophie set about doing her bit of housework, thanking her stars she hadn't as much to do as her mother had had once. It was her mother's birthday; she thought of her as she whisked the galley counter, vacuumed the parrots' cage and tended the hydroponic garden. What an easy life I have beside hers, she thought: a quarter of the space to clean, everything I want at arm's length, a man to support me.

And the light! And the sun! Really, Jethro was a genius, he deserved his success; it was he and his friend Bobby, who, working of course with other people's ideas, but working practically and imaginatively, had made it possible to live this way: comfortably and in so little space. Why, Sophie thought, if I just turned off the sound curtain, we'd be in the slums again ...

She thought back to the days when Jethro had been a gangling punk-rocker with a big Adam's apple, and she'd been his girl, leather jacket, green



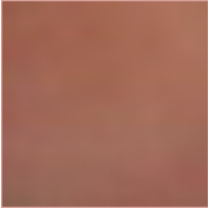
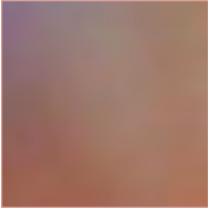
hair, I LOVE THE POLICE button and all. Annoyed by his bull sessions with Bobby, too, the way they took him away from her; infuriated by her mother's desire for her to have a career and horror at the green hair. Mother, she wanted to say, the boys were just figuring out how we should all live.

Yes, how to pack four million people into space for two, that's what their discovery had amounted to; twenty years before people had still been building as if the twentieth century had never come, they were living like little old china figures out of a Dickens novel, one room for every function—cooking, eating, sleeping; huge bathrooms; rec and TV rooms, pantries even. And they had eaten as if they lived in old books, too. Sophie's mother had kept cupboards full of raisins and sugar and rice and canned hams as if she were expecting a crew of hired men and a threshing machine; and there was the whole sick gourmet thing, people looking for more and more exotic things. Well, they'd found out that a few lentils, some greens, and a handful of The Mixture would do. They hadn't as much to talk about ... or as many heart attacks.

Funny that it was those sessions between Jethro and Bobby that had started the change. As far as Sophie was concerned it was a good one. If she was somehow past-haunted it was because it was here, in this very house, her mother's plain old semi-slum four-up four-down, where the two of them had once lived alone together with a room for every ashtray and a million books, that Jethro began. He'd put the first sound curtain behind the stairwell the year her mother died, and once he'd found out how to make it opaque, followed it with the famous underfloor storage units. The next year when refrigerators went out in the energy crisis, he'd figured out how to handle the four-foot galley unit. Most people had thrown their antiques into their potbellied stoves during the Freeze; there wasn't any real trauma about converting to built-ins after that. And now, of course, that the sound curtains enabled four families to live in this one little house, and the solar units were keeping them warm and well-lit, everything was beautifully comfortable. She had all the books and music she wanted on the computer that fed into the television set.

It took a while, she thought, but we're happier now. You don't need all that stuff we used to have: sewing machines, hair dryers, typewriters, blenders, and mixers. You can get anything you need at the Centre.

She was back in the sun on the bunk. It was February, but the sunstrainer allowed her to tan. Up in their high, gleaming cage, the parrots tumbled and squawked. She could almost hear the parsley and onions growing. Mother, she thought, would miss the morning paper. She turned on the news to see what was happening: as usual, nothing good. But it had always been like that.



She heard Bo stir and got a can of formula out of the cupboard for him, went and crouched beside his little cupboard bed while it was warming. Poor Bo: did he even know she loved him? Did he know she'd wanted him since she was fifteen, her own baby and Jethro's? They'd had to put him off during the Freeze when so many babies died it would have been cruel to have him; but this wasn't a good time for them either. Funny, she'd pictured monsters and freaks after the Accident but it wasn't like that at all, just a slow wasting. His poor little light going out before it was properly turned on.

He seemed to like flowers, so she grew them for him among the vegetables. She handed him a little, white-stemmed violet; he put it close to his pale eyes and smiled. She kissed him and went to get his bottle.

Every day she told herself fiercely, "You can't have everything."

At first she blamed Bo's disease on her smoking; but Gordie, the kid she'd beaten up in grade one at Huron Street school (he was always trying to kiss her) was the one who broke through the computer code at the medical bank and announced it: there were thousands of Bos. Jethro hadn't liked that, he'd grown up straight and though the Government was a hero. His mother had never made him sign a petition against the RCMP. Governments are just like people, Sophie thought, some good, some sly. I wish this one would let me go out to work again. Bo wouldn't know the difference between me and a housekeeper, if I got a nice one.

Well, it wouldn't be too long now, she thought, cradling the pale form in her arms. It's not that you don't love them, but you begin to accept parting with them; you have to, or you'd go crazy; you put your tears behind the sound curtain, really. She wrapped him carefully in the old wool shawl she had hidden away. Wool was valuable now. All the sheep had died in the Freeze; and the cattle. Now we dress in woodpulp, she thought, instead of writing on it. Funny world and why not?

Beyond the sound curtain, another woman was tending her garden, nursing her pallid son, retaining her ability to talk by whispering to her birds. If she and Sophie had gone out, they might have met each other. But there was no reason to go out. Her simple needs were taken care of; she went to the Exercise Centre on Thursday, not Friday as Sophie did.

Sophie turns on the television and wonders what book there will be today: *Northanger Abbey*, a golden oldie. That will keep me till Jethro comes home. She didn't like books until they were gone. She'd die without them now, waiting, always waiting.

The other woman mixes her baby's formula. She goes to add his medicine, and, looking over her shoulder, sure someone is watching, quickly appropriates some for herself. "We'll get through this day, Roo," she says. "We'll get through."

## Activities

1. Isolate, quote, and explain four references from the text that suggest the government exercises strict control over its citizens in the world of the story.
2. Sophie says, "You can't have everything." Working in pairs, list the things about her life that seem to make Sophie happy, and list the negative points about Sophie's world.
3. Write a paragraph describing Sophie's world. Refer specifically to the text and quote from it to support your points. Exchange paragraphs with a classmate and work together to ensure that the information in each paragraph is complete. Edit and proofread with each other before handing in a final copy.
4. **a)** In your own words explain the meaning of the following words in the context of the story: the Accident, the Mixture, the Freeze, the Centre, the sunstrainer  
**b)** Compare your ideas with those of another student and try to reach a consensus on the meanings. Write a dictionary definition of the words together. Post your definitions on the bulletin board; you may use illustrations if you wish.
5. Sophie "turned on the news to see what was happening: as usual, nothing good." Working with one or two partners, make a short newscast such as Sophie might see. Incorporate elements of the story into your presentation; perform the newscast live or make a video to show to the class.



# Digital Bullies

SIMONA CHIOSE

## Whose kids will win the game in the information super-playground?

### Focus Your Learning

Reading this essay will help you:

- distinguish between main and supporting information
- understand transition words
- consider both sides of an argument
- explore use of new words and phrases

Tom Williams is CEO of Desert Island Software in Victoria, B.C. Right now he is “in negotiations” with MCA and Electronic Arts for distribution rights to his “Virtual Walk Northwest” program, which allows kids to look at images of the Pacific Northwest through “electronic binoculars.” Tom Williams is well placed to design computer games—he’s fifteen years old.

His corporate headquarters is his parents’

house, where he started Desert Island Software at age eleven.

Williams is every computer teacher’s dream student—or would be, if he went to school. Williams could be Canada’s answer to Bill Gates, but no teachers will be able to say that they remember being there when Williams was still a kid. This year he’s taking correspondence courses, and his programming skills were self-taught.

Williams explains that he doesn't like to "regurgitate" lessons in the classroom, and considers himself more of a "visual learner." The company, he says, started after his father (a University of Victoria professor) purchased a home computer, but didn't buy any games. "So I thought, why don't I teach myself how to make my own games, and learn something?"

Williams is a living incarnation of the paradoxes of education in the high-tech age. Believers in the new electronic communications, the worldwide Internet system in particular, say that computers in the classroom need no longer sit in a corner gathering dust. Kids can be motivated to use them to talk with people their own age, anywhere in the country or even the world. For Tom Williams's generation, who learned "point and click" before the alphabet, "cruising the Net" could prove no more daunting than a drive to the library. Advocates also assure us that these fully trained and computer-literate children will become the entrepreneurs and technicians of the much anticipated high-tech future.

But a whiz-kid like Williams had a computer in his home, a civil-servant mother and professor father, and now he's even bailed out of the public school system. Can a computer and a modem in every classroom really improve the high-school drop-out rate, or make computer scientists out of kids who fall asleep in class because they didn't have breakfast? Unfortunately, we may be counting on a techno-fix for political and social problems we are simply unwilling to address.

With public schools facing record-level underfinancing, electronic communications seems to be the only educational area in which governments are willing to invest. At an initial cost of \$25 million, the School-Net, a federally initiated and funded network has connected

over three hundred schools across the country. Much is expected of the network, from familiarizing elementary school students with technology to providing high-schoolers with access to the best scientific minds in North America for help with their biology or chemistry projects.

Many of the promises made by School-Net mirror the larger myth of the information superhighway. Nothing short of a revolution in public education is being envisioned. Several educational groups sponsored a full-page *Globe and Mail* ad asserting that the info highway will pave the way for schools to enter the twenty-first century of education. Not only would electronic links allow students to develop computer skills and connect them with "information sources around the world," it would also "provide access to every school" for "learning resources they cannot now afford."

But not everyone is convinced by the Net's populist promises. Emina Vukovic, who works at New York's Playing to Win computer centre in Harlem, part of a network of computing centres located in low-income neighbourhoods, says that the fevered Internet hype sweeping the wealthy of the world is no surprise.

The phenomenon, she says, is similar to what happened when personal computers were first introduced. Everyone was supposed to be able to draft letters free of spelling mistakes, to present their ideas in an attractive desktop format, and to acquire basic accounting skills. But no one ever adequately addressed how people without the economic resources to buy or rent a computer, or with low basic literacy levels, were supposed to become Pagemaker wizards.

"PCs were going to bridge the gap between the wealthy and the poor," Vukovic recalls. "But that's not what happened. Instead, even high-school graduates cannot get a job now



unless they have basic computer skills." Similarly, for those who have not grown up surrounded by home video games, simulated environments, and word-processing spelling bees, the electronic highway could be just one more party they weren't invited to.

Preventing a new tier in a techno-hierarchy is the task facing educators who work with low-income students. Many are experimenting with ways of tailoring electronic communication to the realities of poor and disenfranchised youth.

Charles Carr, the principal of Leslieville Public School in east-end Toronto, says that teaching students technology is only a small part of preparing them for a world where many are starting out with unequal opportunities. The school has only nineteen computers for over five hundred students, half of them acquired through the efforts of parents and teachers. But those nineteen terminals are used a lot. "We are an inner-city school, so we don't necessarily have all the resources of other schools. But our kids have to be provided with an equal opportunity to succeed as affluent kids with home computers in Rosedale," Carr says.

Yet Leslieville is far from the image portrayed by magazines like *Wired* and *Mondo 2000*, a sound stage peopled with precocious computer coders fretting over how to maintain hacker ethics while working for

Microsoft. Eighty percent of students at Leslieville are East Asian, and their first language is mostly Cantonese or Vietnamese. Very few have home computers. But because many of the school's technology projects aim to give students new perspectives

on their own lives, Carr says they have been motivated to improve their language skills so they can participate.

Leslieville is also home to a Native as a Second Language program, with Ojibway taught in the afternoons. The language program is connected with a Canada-wide computer network linking First Nations youth with other students. Kids From Kanata, as the project is called, brings schools together in triads across the country, with one of the participating schools located in a First Nations community or in a school with a large population of First Nations students. It has given Leslieville students an understanding of the power of electronic communication beyond fighting the uphill battle for a job.

"The native kids we talked to told us about what they did and if they were having troubles too. We just talked about ourselves and then we sent packages with photos and writing and stuff. What we found out was that the kids we talked to were a lot like us," says Ngoc Phung, a grade six student who was involved in the project last year.

Seth Klein, a teacher at Kitsoo Community School, located on a 400-person island reserve in northern B.C., says his school's participation in the program has dispelled stereotypes on both sides. "The kids [on the reserve] want to teach others about who they are because they are conscious of the biases and the prejudices people have. At the same time, they are beginning to realize that kids down south are not just going shopping or going to parties, which is what they see on TV."

Projects like Kanata, however, are still few and far between in educational computing. All too often, being able to chat electronically with a student in Finland is being billed as the way to a high-paid job.

There's some truth to the idea that powers

projects like School-Net—that without computer skills, youth could be stuck waiting all their lives, or permanently unemployed. And being able to play the info highway game could determine how much people will actually be able to participate in a technocratic democracy. We can pretend that the “super-highway” is only going to be about ordering pizza by phone or buying J. Crew clothes in minutes, but the stakes may be a lot higher than in Mario Brothers. Much of the information we now look for in daily newspapers, libraries, or government offices could be available electronically in seconds. Already, U.S. Supreme Court documents, scientific data, and many magazines are available through the Internet. Those who get to the information fastest could win all the games.

Far from creating a more informed and democratic society, the Internet could just help consolidate a wealthy, healthy, secure, and knowledgeable elite. It’s what Peter Skillen, coordinator of computer services for one of the most technologically advanced boards of education, the North York board, calls a society of “information haves and have-nots.”

Good intentions alone won’t bridge this gap. Jane Wingate, a librarian at Toronto’s Harbord Collegiate, says students at her school still don’t use Blackboard, a network geared toward the needs of black students. “We don’t have enough computers so that the kids could just access Blackboard in the classroom, and without enough guidance you don’t know what to do once you have the computer and are hooked up to one of these networks.”

In other words, playing the info game requires more than a modem. Home computers and technological know-how make a big difference. Nevertheless, many students will get a glimpse of the vaunted superhighway only in

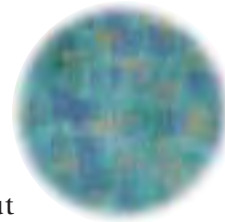
the classroom. The Vancouver school board encourages students with a home computer to connect to the board’s network from home, so that those without one, about two-thirds of all students, can have more class time.

Without conscious political thought like this, issues of economic and technological access could fall by the wayside. “A lot of money and resources are going into the School-Net, but with little political thought behind it. And if it doesn’t work, we are going to lose that money,” says Dick Holland, a teacher at Monarch Park Collegiate in Toronto.

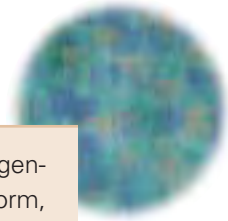
Since most people familiar enough with computer networks to use them for more than playing around are still academics, bureaucrats, or Bill Gates wannabees, maybe it shouldn’t be surprising that their concept of democracy does not encompass the people they step over on their way to the blinking terminals. Since the only barrier between them and the information highway is the traffic to the Apple store, they all too often assume that the same is true for everyone. As soon as we build our fibre-optic cables, they figure, a new age of democracy will dawn.

Meanwhile, the faster governments and school boards move ahead with systems like School-Net, the faster some young people may fall behind. To Emina Vukovic, this means that the people who currently use her Harlem centre, including young business people without computers and kids who come to type school assignments, will only have that much more catching up to do.

“Sure, white middle-class people in the suburbs will have the information,” she says, “but what about us?” ■



## Activities



- This article uses specific examples and information to support general ideas and concepts. Select two central ideas and, in point form, note the specific information used to develop them.
  - In one clear sentence state the thesis (dominant argument) of this essay. Share your sentence with a partner and together develop one that is acceptable to both of you.
- Examine the article carefully. Note how the argument develops and how the whole can be broken into sections that flow one into the other. Isolate and quote at least five words or phrases that serve to move the reader from one section or paragraph to the next. Keep these examples in your notes so that you can use them as models in your next piece of expository writing.
- In two opposing paragraphs, state what the Internet could do to better society and how it might harm society.
- New technologies, and computer technology in particular, have made it necessary for people to create new words, to use old words to convey new meanings, and to combine old words into new combinations. Working in a small group, isolate and note examples of words in the article that have undergone such changes. Display your information visually in a chart, poster, pamphlet, or illustrated glossary. Indicate both the current meanings of the words and the older meanings.

# Where's Sammy? The Cyber-stalker Dodges His Hi-tech Pursuers

ROBERT BREHL

## Focus Your Learning

Reading these articles will help you:

- understand the use of irony
- analyse structural features of a news story
- distinguish fact from opinion
- explore character and plot in news stories
- identify elements of myth in modern-day life

Sommy, can you hear me?

Who are you?

The computer hacker electronically stalking and harassing a Windsor-area family is fast developing rock-star-type status in the North American media and around the world via the Internet.

The latest twist occurred yesterday when a crack security team's high-tech gizmos couldn't locate a trace of the stalker, who calls himself

Sommy, after a two-day sweep of the home of Dwayne and Debbie T—.

Experts, including the former head of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, nonetheless warn the case shows a great deal of sophisticated electronic equipment is getting "into the wrong hands" and everyone should beware—especially business people with sensitive information.

Sommy has taunted police and others over



the T—s' phone line that he's smarter than they are and can't be caught.

"We're disappointed, but it just proves we've eliminated the house ... we just have to look in another direction," Debbie T— said in a telephone interview.

She said Sommy may have accessed Bell Canada computers and equipment to tap into their home phone lines. Sommy last menaced them March 31, she said.

"I don't know if he's gone or if he's just lying low. He's got the world looking for him [and] he thrives on the attention," she said.

## Police Visit

There have been at least two cases of less sophisticated Sommys doing major messing with phone lines.

A troublemaker in Ottawa ten years ago disconnected thousands of phone calls, including the prime minister's, in one swoop by messing with Bell's switching equipment.

The T—s' electronic intruder—police think there could be more than one—has tapped the family's phone lines, interrupting conversations with burps and babble.

Debbie T— said Sommy even uncovered the personal identification number for her bank card.

He has boasted that the police came to his house and talked to him without realizing who he was.

"I believe that," T— said. "He told me police asked him to ring his doorbell. How would he know that if they weren't there? [Police] said they asked everybody to ring their doorbell."

Sommy has overheard conversations in the house and seems to have access to its electrical

power. Some reports have said he could turn off individual appliances at will, but that isn't true.

The security team figures Sommy has bugged out, if he was there at all.

"Our position on this matter is that no further action by [our team] is warranted at this time," said Trevor Stewart, lead member of the Nepean Systems Inc. crew.

The company was brought in by the Canadian Discovery Channel, which planned to air its show on Sommy Monday, and *Dateline NBC*, which was to air its feature last night.

Stewart, 41, a former RCMP officer and Canadian Security Intelligence Service spy, said the team is composed of intelligence and security experts from "a wide variety of backgrounds," but their work is so secret that no further information is given out.

**"There is a great deal of sophistication in the hands of the wrong people."**

He would not reveal what equipment was used for the sweep.

Norman Inkster, a former RCMP commissioner now at KPMG, an accounting and consulting firm, said he'd never seen anything like this in his thirty-six years with the Mounties.

Foiling highly skilled specialists and police for three months must be giving Sommy "some kind of thrill," he said.

Inkster said it shows "there is a great deal of sophistication in the hands of the wrong people. We'll probably see more of this."

The case has drawn the attention of tabloid TV shows like *Hard Copy*, *Inside Edition* and



*Unsolved Mysteries*. There has been plenty of talk of a movie deal, too.

## Hired Agent

Some are wondering if it's all a hoax. Many are whispering the words "financial gain." Others point to the T—s' fifteen-year-old son.

T— says her son does not own a computer or know much about them.

And money is not worth what they have endured, she said, adding that they went public hoping someone would rat on Sammy.

The family has turned down free trips to New York and Hollywood for TV talk show appearances. The only money they've accepted is a nominal amount to pay for damage in the house, caused by the crew of *Unsolved Mysteries*.

"Between us we make \$90,000 a year," said T—, a blackjack dealer at the Windsor casino.

Her husband is a tool-and-die worker.

"We had a beautiful home and we saved up a lot of money. We had a comfortable living ... There's nothing possible to gain from this."

But they have hired a Detroit agent.

T— said Dan Dietz is working for them to keep the American media at bay. Dietz agrees.

He says many calls have come in for movie deals, but he has negotiated with no one.

"I wouldn't spend my time working with them if I thought they were some kind of scam people," said Dietz, a self-described "Michigan attorney media agent."

The family has put the house up for sale— for \$25,000 more than the \$160,000 they paid last fall.

"We have put in \$20,000. We just want to break even, T— said. ■

# Cyber-Trickster Caught

CANADIAN PRESS

A fifteen-year-old boy has admitted he is the "cyber stalker" who invaded his family's home in a teen prank that spiralled out of control.

His mother, Debbie T—, issued a statement yesterday apologizing for the actions of her son, who was able to elude investigators, Bell Canada, Ontario Hydro, and even an espionage team hired by two television networks.

He made a full confession Saturday after a four-hour interrogation by police.

"He's my son, I don't know how I didn't know," she said tearfully. "I must have been blind ... I feel so stupid. So sorry."

The electronic stalker, who called himself

Sommy, began haunting the custom-built home near Windsor, Ont., in December.

He tapped into the family's phone lines, interrupting conversations with burps and babble. Lights and appliances would randomly turn on and off.

The family recently put their house up for sale to escape him.

Several times throughout the investigation, Debbie T— had argued her son was not responsible.

Her brother emerged from the house yester-

day after a long chat with his nephew, whom he described as “a good kid.”

The teen was “very remorseful” and insists he acted alone, he said.

There was at least one time when the T—s received a call from someone calling himself *Sommy* while their son was in the room.

“If you look at all the evidence, it’s impossible for him to have worked by himself,” he said.

The uncle said it’s believed that the teen simply cut in on phone conversations using an extension in his bedroom. He could not say how the teen disguised his voice. There are four phones and two phone lines in the house, he added.

The uncle said the culprit is an average high-school student and has never been in serious trouble before.

Provincial police said no charges will be laid.

“After going through the evidence gathered and the interviews, we concluded that charges would revictimize the family,” said Sergeant Doug Babbitt.

“We felt it would be better for [the family] to settle this themselves than to charge them.”

In a rambling letter of apology, Debbie T— wrote:

“When I asked my son numerous times if he knew anything about what’s been happening around here and he replies: ‘No, Mom. I would never hurt you like this,’ a mother’s first instinct is to believe him.

“All the crying I heard from him at night I thought was because of the pain we were suffering caused by *Sommy*. We now realize it was him crying out for help because he wanted to end all this, but was afraid because of how many people were now involved.”

## **A two-day sweep last week by a team of intelligence and security experts loaded with high-tech gizmos failed to reveal *Sommy*’s methods.**

The investigation kept two officers busy since police were first called Jan. 20.

“It was important for us to systematically eliminate all the potential sources that could have been doing it and that takes time,” Sgt. Babbitt said.

“As well, it seemed every time we set up a piece of equipment to eliminate how something could be done, suddenly *Sommy* never called for eight or ten days.” A two-day sweep last week by a team of intelligence and security experts loaded with high-tech gizmos failed to reveal *Sommy*’s methods. The team was brought in by *Dateline NBC* and the Discovery Channel, which planned to broadcast its program today. ■

## Activities

1. Find five examples of opinions and comments in the first story that seem ironic in the light of later information in the second article. Explain the irony in each. Share your notes with a partner.
2. Analyse the structure and content of one of the articles, examining at least the following areas:
  - the location of the main information
  - the sequencing of the information
  - the relevance of the information
  - the appeal and interest of the information.

Present your findings in a short piece of expository writing.

3. In point form, summarize the “hard information” in each article as distinct from opinion, interpretation, and comment.
4. Working in pairs, create and present to the class in dramatic form the conversation in which Sommy confesses to his uncle that he is the cyber-stalker.
5.
  - a) Imagine that you are Sommy, and write a series of diary entries reflecting the initial excitement, the continuing pressure, and the eventual confession of cyber-stalking. Express your feelings as well as the actual activities involved.
  - b) Create an audiotape of a phone tap of the house during the reign of the cyber-stalker. You may record more than one phone call.
  - c) Recreate a portion of your audiotape as a first person narrative. In an accompanying note explain how the change of format has affected the content and the feeling of the information.
6. A myth is a story that attempts to explain some phenomenon or express a world view. With a partner, consider to what extent the Sommy story in the first article could be called a modern myth. What does this tell you about our “scientific” view of the world?

# *Welcome to Cyberspace*

MIRKO ILIĆ CORP.



### Focus Your Learning

Looking at this visual will help you:

- analyse the creative use of images
- express the theme of a work of art
- experiment with figurative language

## Activities

- a) Select four items from the picture and explain what each indicates about our society.
  - b) Compare your analysis with a classmate's. Work together to write an analysis of the image.
2. Describe three ways in which the artist has conveyed the concept of consumerism. In a written assessment agree or disagree with this depiction of society. In your opinion, is the artist too critical, not critical enough, or accurate?
3. a) Imagine that you are the blue figure adrift in cyberspace. Making references to the picture, describe what you see and feel as you drift. Be adventurous in your style and try to convey a sense of cyberspace: random links, gaudy colours, electronic sounds, etc. This is an experimental piece of writing and it may not work; the attempt is what is crucial here.
  - b) In a group of five, share your experiments. Comment on each others' stylistic techniques. What works? What doesn't?



# The Curio Shop

WILLIAM KOTZWINKLE



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- identify explicit and implicit ideas and information
- analyse creative use of language
- extend your understanding of the text
- design a book cover

“Now here, sir, is a lovely—and might I say, traditional—example.” The Seller pointed a finger at the decorative sphere, set against a velvet background cloth.

The Collector leaned on the edge of the counter and studied the bauble. Its workmanship might be good, but it was hard to tell, owing to large, sooty stains on its surface and, beneath that, what appeared to be rust or some fatal corrosion that had permanently marred the interior.

“I’ll let you have it cheap,” said the Seller, spying the critical look of the Collector. Business wasn’t good; the shop was seldom visited any more.

“Is it”—the Collector touched at it with his monocle, studying the piece more closely—“still enchanted?”

“The occasional wail, sir. You know the phenomenon, I’m sure.”

“The true spirit, or merely an echo?”

The Seller sighed. He couldn't misrepresent the piece. He'd like to, naturally. He needed the sale. But he couldn't afford to offend an important customer. "It no longer contains a true spirit, sir, I regret to say."

The Collector nodded, turning the trinket slightly with the edge of his monocle.

"But," the Seller continued, a trifle urgently, "the echo is authentic, sir."

"I'm sure," said the Collector, with a sideways glance, his eyes showing only a momentary flicker of contempt.

"Well, sir," said the Seller, defending himself against the glance, "there are clever copies in existence. The ordinary collector can be deceived. Not that you, sir"—he hastened to correct himself—"are an ordinary collector."

"Happy that you think so." The Collector turned the ball in his hands, examining the portions of the surface not corrupted by time and bad handling. It was shameful the way certain pieces deteriorated. But the work was authentic; he didn't need the Seller to tell him that. You could see the little original touches all over the object, though they were badly encrusted. Unfortunately, you couldn't clean the damn things, no matter how you worked at them; once the corrosion began, it couldn't be reversed. He wondered sometimes why he bothered with them at all. But then, it was always amusing when company came and one had a new piece to show. He could have it put in a gold mount; that'd show it off to better advantage. Or hang it from a chain in his study, where the lighting was usually muted and the defects of the sphere wouldn't show too badly.

"Let me ... please, sir ..." The Seller pulled out a cloth from his pocket, attempted to shine the tiny patch of transparency on the ball. But as the cloth touched it, the wailing came forth, long, low, and chilling. Echo or not, it went right through the Seller's soul.

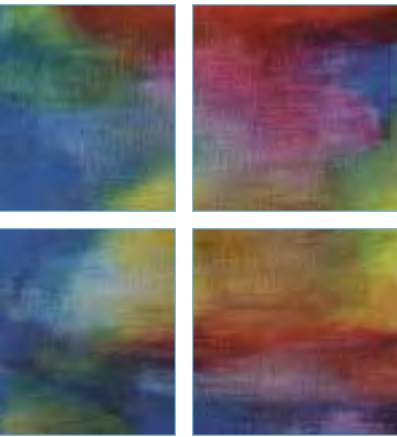
"The echo is fresh," said the Collector, smiling for the first time. "The spirit must have departed only recently."

"So I'm told, sir." The Seller resumed his bit of dusting on the surface, more confident now, for he'd seen the smile and knew he had a sale. "That's precisely what the Caravan Master said when I bought it from him, sir—the spirit has but recently departed."

The Collector squinted through his glass, savouring the moment, knowing the piece must be his, for the wail was strong. He could listen to it at his leisure and learn the story of the bauble, who had made it and when. All that would still be in the echo. Pity the true spirit had fled—that would have been a find!

"Well, I suppose I'll have to have this," he said. "My wife will hate it, of course."

"Because of the wailing, sir?"



"Puts her off. Gives her the creeps."

The Seller continued his dusting. "I must admit, it gives me the creeps, too."

"You don't know how to listen," the Collector said. "You must get past the superficial sound and hear the traces of its inner voice."

"You have the knack for it, sir, that's clear." The Seller masked his own contempt behind a cheerful smile. He'd be glad to have the cursed thing out of the shop and be done with its bloody wailing.

"Much to be learned, much," said the Collector, aware that he was revealing too great an excitement and knowing he'd suffer in the bargain, but he didn't care at this point. The wailing had thrilled him. These little ornaments were always filled with surprises, even when they were as old as this one and all that remained of their glory was a fading echo.

"Microbes," he said, inspecting the ball with his glass again. "They say that's what causes the deterioration."

"I've heard the same, sir. Tiny organisms that feed upon the workings."

"Once it was brand-new," the Collector said, holding the ball up to the light. "Can we ever conceive of the beauty it must have contained? How splendid its workmanship was? If the spirit that once inhabited this ball were still present, it could tell us more than just who made it and when—" He paused, his eyes shining with the intoxication of the connoisseur. "It would engage us in deep discussion, whisper to us of the wondrous workings of its mechanisms, give us the secret of its maker. It would grant us, in short, the favour of its enchanting company, but"—he placed the ball back on its dark velvet cloth—"this is a lifeless trinket now."

The Seller concealed a sneer behind his polishing cloth. These collectors were such pompous old bores. Listening to their twaddle made him sick. "You saw my sale sign, sir. Fifty percent off all items in the shop."

"Yes," said the Collector, disappointed at his failure to kindle true appreciation in the Seller. But what did these merchants know of subtlety? And in any case, once he was home and visitors came, then he could expand fully, then he'd have his fun in the comfort of his armchair in the study, with the fire crackling and the bauble suspended on a suitable chain, in the shadows by the window, perhaps. "All right, how much do you want for it?"

"As you can see, sir, through this bit of transparency, the centre is filled with jewels—"

"But surely that's not unusual—"

"The fakes, sir, are glass-filled—"

The Collector adjusted his top hat, turned up the collar on his cape. The bauble was in his pocket, and a thin smile played upon his lips. He'd driven a hard and cunning bargain.

The Seller graciously held the door, sly satisfaction in his eyes. He'd gotten twice what the trinket was worth. These foreign collectors often think they know it all.

"Do you remember, perchance," asked the Collector, drawing the sphere from his pocket as he stepped into the bright street, "what the Caravan Master called this thing when he sold it to you?"

"A peculiar name, sir," replied the Seller. "He called it Earth."

"Earth. I see. Very well then, my good man, I shall undoubtedly visit you again."

"My pleasure, sir, always."

The Seller closed his door and watched as the Collector walked on down the glittering, milky boulevard. ■

## Activities

1. In conference with a partner, identify the turning point of the story (the point at which the perspective of the story becomes clear). In point form, note how the new information affects your comprehension of the whole story. You could organize your material into a before-and-after chart.
2. In clear sentences, explain the implications of the following phrases in the context of the whole story:
  - "large sooty stains"
  - "once the corrosion began it couldn't be reversed"
  - "The spirit must have departed only recently."
  - "the glittering, milky boulevard"
3. Working in pairs, make up three questions about the story that you would like to have answered. Exchange your questions with another pair and try to answer each other's questions. In a group of four afterwards, share your answers and expand your understanding of the story.
4. Imagine that "The Curio Shop" is to be published as a separate work: a book, video, or CD. Design and produce a suitable cover for the story. Include the following elements: title, author, illustrations, and promotional blurbs.

# The Armies of the Moon

GWENDOLYN MACEWEN

now they begin to gather their forces  
in the Marsh of Decay and the Sea of Crises;  
their leaders stand motionless  
on the rims of the craters  
invisible and silver as swords turned sideways  
waiting for earthrise and the coming of man.

they have always been there increasing their numbers  
at the foot of dim rills, all around and under  
the ghostly edges where moonmaps surrender  
and hold out white flags to the night.  
when the earthmen came hunting with wagons and  
golf balls  
they were so eager for white rocks and sand  
that they did not see them, invisible and silver  
as swords turned sideways on the edge of the craters—  
so the leaders assumed they were blind.

in the Lake of Death there will be a showdown;  
men will be powder, they will go down under  
the swords of the unseen silver armies,  
become one with the gorgeous anonymous moon.

none of us will know what caused the crisis  
as the lunar soldiers reluctantly disband  
and return to their homes in the Lake of Dreams  
weeping quicksilver tears for the blindness of man.



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- write a character sketch
- present a dramatic reading

## Activities

- a)** In a few sentences explain the impression of the moon created by the poet's choice of place names.
  - b)** Using the place names and other information from the poem, write a character sketch of a typical inhabitant of the Moon. Compare your sketch with that of a classmate.
- 2.** Working in a group of eight to ten, prepare and present a dramatic reading of the poem. After your presentation, write an assessment of your group's reading in which you consider its effectiveness, impact, and interest; reflect on your own personal contribution to the whole.





# HELLO, Out There!

## The New Science of Astrobiology

TARA WEINGARTEN

### Focus Your Learning

Reading this essay will help you:

- paraphrase information
- explore use of new words and phrases
- experiment with a different persona
- present research in an appropriate format

On his shelf at work, Kenneth Nealson has a hunk of stratified rock from the Australian desert. The red and grey layered boulder looks to be nothing more than a pretty paperweight. But to Nealson, a microbiologist working for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the densely packed organic carbon in this rock represents proof positive that life existed 3.6 billion years ago on our planet. Nealson would give his soul, he says, to find a similar specimen on another world. “A rock like this would

prove unambiguously that life existed” somewhere else, he says.

Proof of life beyond Earth, of course, has so far been elusive. The meteorite touted a few years ago as evidence that life once flourished on Mars has since been largely dismissed as having been contaminated with Earth bacteria. But NASA is still looking. Nealson is one of dozens of scientists recruited by the agency to help find if not little green men, then at least a little green spore of some sort. The researchers are part of a new scientific discipline called

astrobiology, which blends astronomy, biology, chemistry, and physics in an effort to identify life in the universe. To expand the field, the space agency has founded the NASA Astrobiology Institute, which will fund programs at eleven institutions, including Harvard and UCLA. "If we can find one fossilized bacterium that wasn't formed on Earth, we'll be on our way," says NASA chief Daniel Goldin.

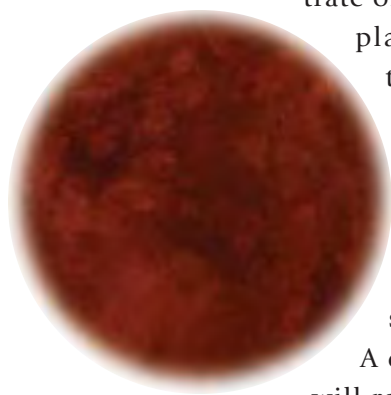
The agency's belief that something is out there is bolstered by recent discoveries of planets outside our solar system. So far astronomers have found evidence of eleven distant planets, each circling different stars, and new discoveries keep coming. "We know there are billions and billions and billions of stars, and so it makes sense that life exists not just on one planet but on many, many planets," says Swiss astronomer Didier Queloz, co-discoverer of the first planet outside the solar system and a visiting scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL). Ed Weiler, director of NASA's Origins program, puts it more bluntly. "If this universe is all ours, then someone really screwed up," he says.

While some of the astrobiologists concentrate on finding life on distant planets, most are turning their attention to closer places like Mars. Neelson and his team will work with JPL's engineers to figure out where on Mars to land a half-dozen spacecraft to search for life. A decade from now, a craft will return some Martian rock samples for Neelson and others to analyse. But there's a hitch. Just as the Mars meteorite recovered in Antarctica is thought to have been tainted by Earthly bacteria, samples from Mars,

too, may not be what they seem. Comets that collided with Earth during its infancy blasted billions of pounds of rock and soil into space, some of which landed on the Red Planet. "We think there's some seven million tons of Earth soil sitting on Mars," says Neelson. "You have to consider the possibility that if we find life on Mars, it could have come from Earth." Astrobiologists also must grapple with a fundamental question: what exactly *is* life? "When we went to school, life had legs and wings and was green or something," says NASA's director of astrobiology, Jerry Soffen. "Now we find life in 250-degree thermal vents under the sea and in glacial ice. We thought we knew what life was, and we really don't any more." Scientists worry that the criteria they use to identify life may not apply on other planets. "The real killer would be to run into life and not recognize it," says Neelson.

Indeed, the first sign of life elsewhere probably won't be anything as obvious—or as cuddly—as E.T. In fact, it's likely to be microscopic. So where to search? "Life needs energy of some kind, whether it be geothermal heat, tidal energy, or sunlight," says Neelson. Any planet with a hot interior is a candidate to host life."

So, too, is a planet with the proper atmosphere. "You can tell from space by looking at Earth's atmosphere that it's alive," says Neelson. "All of the signatures for life are there: water vapour, oxygen, and carbon dioxide." But as recent discoveries of life in extreme conditions on Earth have shown, oxygen doesn't have to be present for life to thrive. "Oxygen only appeared on Earth 500 million years ago," he says, "but there was a world of bacteria here that preceded us. It was metabolically and chemically as alive two billion years ago as it is today." The first step in the search for life on other planets is to shed a lot of Earthly preconceptions. ■



## Activities

1. In your own words, explain Neelson's job and exactly what he is searching for. You should not need any more than a few clear sentences.
2. Jerry Soffen says, "We thought we knew what life was, and we really don't anymore." Make notes from the section of the article that discusses the nature of life. In a short paragraph, referring to the article, explain why scientists like Jerry Soffen are unsure about what life is. Edit and proofread your piece with the help of a classmate and produce a good final copy.
3. Working in a small group, list the words from this article that you do not understand. Using clues from context and your knowledge of similar words or parts of words, try to define as many as you can. Using a print dictionary or an on-line source, check and correct your speculations, and note down correct definitions for new words.
4. Imagine that you are an astrobiologist engaged in a search for life on a distant planet. Write a log entry or a report to your commander in which you detail a triumph in your search. Use your imagination to describe a life form that is as alien as possible.
5. Working with a partner, research at least five different versions of extra-terrestrial life in stories, novels, and movies. Create a visual gallery of these life forms. For each you should provide an illustration with a brief written description of appearance, habits, habitat, food, etc. Decide on an appropriate presentation format; for example, computer database, posters, pamphlet, report from an exploration, or video.



# Sentry

FREDRIC BROWN



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- use appropriate language
- experiment with perspective in writing
- distinguish between narrative voice and point of view

He was wet and muddy and hungry and cold and he was fifty thousand light-years from home.

A strange blue sun gave light, and gravity, twice what he was used to, made every movement difficult.

But in tens of thousands of years this part of war hadn't changed. The flyboys were fine with their sleek spaceships and their fancy weapons. When the chips are down, though, it was still the foot soldier, the infantry, that had to take the ground and hold it, foot by bloody foot. Like this cursed planet of a star he'd never heard of until they'd landed him there. And now it was sacred ground because the aliens were there too. *The*

aliens, the only other intelligent race in the Galaxy ... cruel, hideous, and repulsive monsters.

Contact had been made with them near the centre of the Galaxy, after the slow, difficult colonization of a dozen thousand planets; and it had been war at sight; they'd shot without even trying to negotiate, or to make peace.

Now, planet by bitter planet, it was being fought out.

He was wet and muddy and hungry and cold, and the day was raw with a high wind that hurt his eyes. But the aliens were trying to infiltrate and every sentry post was vital.

He stayed alert, gun ready. Fifty thousand light-years from home, fighting on a strange world, and wondering if he'd ever live to see home again.

And then he saw one of them crawling toward him. He drew a bead and fired. The alien made that strange horrible sound they all make, then lay still.

He shuddered at the sound and sight of the alien lying there. One ought to be able to get used to them after a while, but he'd never been able to. Such repulsive creatures they were, with only two arms and two legs, ghastly white skins, and no scales. ■

## Activities

- Find and quote ten words or phrases that Fredric Brown uses to evoke sympathy for the sentry.
  - With a partner, decide if the words affect the reader in the same way following the revelation at the end of the story.
- Imagine you are the first sentry to capture an "alien" alive, and write a report of the encounter for your superior officer. Place particular emphasis on how you managed to capture the alien, its reactions to you, and the immediate apparent differences between the alien species and your own. Remember to use the voice of the sentry to create an alien perspective and personality.
- Discuss how point of view affects the reader's reaction to the events in the story.
  - Writing in the third person, tell the incident from the point of view of the human who is approaching the sentry.



# Voice Mail and the Mating Ritual

ANNELIES POOL

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this essay will help you:

- describe and provide examples of satire
- be aware of both sides of an argument

I dialled the phone.

“Hello,” said someone on the other end.

“Beep. I’m sorry, there must be some mistake. Beep.” I said. “Beep. I wanted to talk to your voice mail. Could you connect me please? Beep.”

Well, it didn’t happen quite like that. What happened was that I called somebody fully expecting to get voice mail. So certain was I that I had the message already composed. When a real, live person answered the phone, it was a scramble to remember who I had called and why. This was an old-fashioned individual, obviously unaware that nobody who is anybody actually answers their phone anymore.

Time was when I would slam the phone down in frustration rather than stoop to talk to a machine. Now I find myself at a loss when a real person answers the phone. When, I asked myself, did this happen? Was it about the same

time that a web of wrinkles snuck in under my eyes, without my knowledge or permission?

It was then I realized the future is upon us—the future that thirty years ago was the stuff of bad science fiction movies and novels, the premise of which was that machines were going to take over the world. What none of us expected was that it would creep up on us when we weren’t looking. And the way it would be done was by pretending that machines aren’t machines but desirable companions designed to make us feel important.

The master stroke was calling it voice mail. Back in the days when we had answering machines, it was beneath nearly everybody’s dignity to want to talk to one. But then it became voice mail—a sexy new thing, something you wouldn’t mind talking softly to or taking on your honeymoon.

Just compare the ring of these two statements:

"I have to check my answering machine." This staccato sentence calls to mind some little nervous guy wearing a green suit with pants too short and frayed cuffs who carries a plastic briefcase full of samples of the dishwashing detergent he sells door to door. (I know, I know. We're not supposed to say nasty things about short, nervous people but what the hey?)

"I have to check my voice mail." Said in honeyed tones, this comes from a person who has lovers, spends winters in Hawaii, has a cushy, powerful job, and many underlings.

Which would you want to be? It reminds me of when typing became keyboarding—and it became respectable for everybody to do it, from top executives on down.

It's no secret that voice mail, along with its first cousin e-mail, is revolutionizing society, here in the North as well as everywhere else. And one of the first institutions that is feeling the effects is the age-old ritual of courtship.

Already I know somebody who knows somebody who met somebody on the Internet whose physical presence was several thousand miles away (that includes nearly everybody for us Northerners). They spent about a year communicating by e-mail and then got married, whether in cyberspace or in the flesh, I don't know. While I don't personally know anybody who has conducted a courtship by voice mail, I'm sure it's either happened or happening as we speak.

After all, there are so many benefits to this kind of courtship. For one thing, it's almost completely risk-free. Those of us old enough to have done the great mating ritual in the flesh (there being no voice mail or e-mail at the time) will remember the knee-trembling anxiety that always accompanied the first words of love or marriage as we risked having to crawl

home on our bellies like snakes because we had been rejected. With voice mail rejection can be painless: "Beep. I love you. Beep." or "Beep. Will you marry me? Beep."

If you've had the foresight to put a handkerchief over the phone and muffle your voice, you can deny everything if the answer is: "Beep. No, you slob. Beep." However, if the answer is an ecstatic "Beep. Yes! Beep." you can blame the quality of the telephone line for your muffled voice and then proceed, in between beeps, to make plans.

In the twenty-first century, people will spend their lives in cubicles communicating with the outside world (which will consist only of cyberspace) by voice mail and e-mail. We will be married by cyberspace preachers to people who are figments on a screen which thankfully we can turn on and off, and get our thrills playing non-stop games of Nintendo.

Now doesn't that sound like fun?

Whoops, have to go check my voice mail.

Beep. ■

## Activities

1. With a partner, identify five serious points that the writer is making in her essay. Write a short paragraph for each point, explaining how she uses humour to present the argument. Evaluate the effectiveness of the satire; does the use of humour work? Or would the idea be more easily understood and more willingly accepted if it were presented in a more formal way?
2. **a)** From this article, briefly describe two ways, serious or not, in which voice mail is preferable to real-time contact.  
**b)** Working in a group of four, present a debate on the resolution that voice mail is helping to destroy real communication among people.



- Make a list of ten items that you wish had not been invented. Share your list with a partner. Work together to produce a list of the ten inventions society would be better without.

Make a list of ten items that you would like to see invented. Work with a partner to produce a list of the ten items the world needs. Make a poster listing and illustrating your items.

- This bumper sticker combines a piece of serious advice with a fantastic or whimsical reason for it. Create your own bumper sticker using this combination of elements.

### CHRONOLOGY OF 15 NOTABLE CANADIAN INNOVATIONS

1796	MCINTOSH APPLE	John McIntosh
1833	FIRST ATLANTIC STEAMSHIP	Samuel Cunard
1835	WASHING MACHINE	James Brown
1852	UNDERSEA TELEGRAPH CABLE	Frederick Newton Gisborne
1876	TELEPHONE	Alexander Graham Bell
1900	WIRELESS RADIO	Reginald A. Fessenden
1908	MARQUIS WHEAT	Sir Charles Saunder
1922	SNOWMOBILE	Joseph-Armand Bombardier
1925	SNOWBLOWER	Arthur Sicard
1925	ZIPPER	Gideon Sundback
1927	TELEVISION	Reginald A. Fessendon
1929	FROZEN FOOD	Dr. Archibald Huntstrom
1960	GOALIE MASK	Jacques Plante
1972	GEOSTATIONARY COMM. SATELLITE	Telesat Canada
1992	ADVANCED SPACE-VISION SYSTEM	NRC/Canadian Space Agency

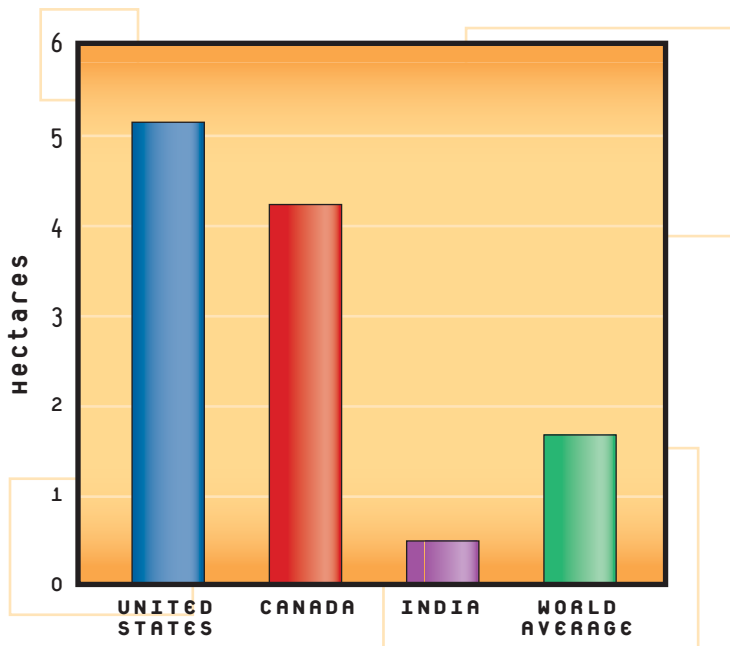
- In this cartoon, stereotypes are used to satirize the way that many people see Canada and Canadians. Analyse the cartoon. Who or what is being satirized?

It is common to hold stereotypes about individuals or groups. Examine several television sit-coms. What stereotypes are used? How do these contribute to humour?

Listen to a stand-up comic. How do such comics use stereotypes?



things I didn't see in Canada



AMOUNT OF LAND AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ONE PERSON'S LIFESTYLE

- This bar graph compares Canada's "ecological footprint" with that of some other countries and the world average. An ecological footprint measures the land and resources necessary to support the lifestyle of one person in a culture. How else might you present this information (pictographs, charts, comparisons, etc.) to make the message more relevant to students?



# New Terra

**NIGEL DARBASIE**

Aboard orbiting stations  
children study the home planet  
its swirling clouds  
tinged in orange  
its desiccated land forms  
in relief upon turquoise seas.

From data banks they learn  
about its plants and animals  
many of which exist only  
as computer-generated  
specimens that come to life  
in stories elders tell  
of things that used to be.



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this poem will help you:

- use note-taking and note-making strategies
- analyse how authors format text
- discuss poetry as a medium for communication

## Activities

1. In list form, note the problems that plague Earth in “New Terra.” Beside each item, identify a current trend that may eventually lead to the problem.
2. In a small group decide whether the poem would be as successful if it were written out as two prose sentences. Consider what is gained by the poem’s format on the page, and what would be lost by the change in format. In a short persuasive piece, defend the poet’s decisions in the presentation of the poem.
3. With two or three other students, evaluate the effectiveness of poetry as a medium for drawing attention to serious technological and scientific problems. Write a brief “Defence of Poetry” as a medium for airing current concerns.



# The Trouble with Tribbles

DAVID GERROLD



*This is a famous episode from the popular TV show Star Trek.*

## CHARACTERS

*KIRK, Captain of the spaceship, U.S.S. Enterprise*

*SPOCK, First Officer*

*MCCOY (BONES)*

*SCOTTY*

*CHEKOV*

*UHURA*

*ENSIGN FREEMAN*

*KOLOTH, a Klingon captain*

*KORAX, a Klingon aide*

## Focus Your Learning

Reading this script will help you:

- write a log entry
- discuss how word choice and details affect meaning
- experiment with scripting techniques
- examine and describe the characteristics of a television show, including audience and production practices

COMMANDER LURRY  
NILZ BARIS  
ARNE DARVIN  
CYRANO JONES  
TRADER  
ADMIRAL KOMACK  
HELMSMAN'S VOICE  
TWO GUARDS, *crewmen of the Enterprise*  
SECURITY GUARD  
KLINGONS  
CREWMEN (TECHNICIANS, AIDES, WAITRESS, etc.), *five or more*

*The program opens with a stock shot of the spaceship Enterprise flying through space. Fade out.*

*The Enterprise is passing near deep space station K-7, in a quadrant that is under dispute. Both the Klingons and the Federation claim rights to the territory, and especially to the nearby Sherman's Planet. Under the Organian Peace Treaty, the planet will be granted to the side that is deemed most able to run and develop it efficiently.*

#### ACT ONE

*FADE IN: Space station hangs against a backdrop of stars, slowly growing in size as the Enterprise approaches.*

**KIRK:** Captain's log; Stardate 4523.3. Deep space station K-7 has issued a priority one call. More than an emergency, it signals near or total disaster. We can only assume the Klingons have attacked the station. We are going in armed for battle.

#### SCENE 1: Bridge

*Everyone on the bridge stares tensely, watching the screen showing the space station.*

**CHEKOV:** Main phasers armed and ready. (*Looks up at KIRK*) There's nothing. Just the station, sir.

**KIRK:** (*Stepping down, peering over CHEKOV's shoulder*) A priority one distress call and they're sitting there absolutely peaceful? Lieutenant Uhura, break subspace silence.

**UHURA:** Aye aye, Captain.

**KIRK:** Space station K-7, this is Captain Kirk of the *Enterprise*. What is your emergency?

**LURRY:** Captain Kirk, this is Commander Lurry. I must apologize for the distress call.

**KIRK:** Commander Lurry, you have issued a priority-one distress signal! State the nature of your emergency!

**LURRY:** Uh, perhaps you had better beam over, I—uh—I'll try to explain ...

**KIRK:** You'll try to explain? You'd better be prepared to do more than that. Kirk out. (*Starting toward door*) Mr. Chekov, maintain battle readiness. Uhura, have the transporter room stand by. Mr. Spock, I'll need your help ... (*KIRK waits for SPOCK to join him at the elevator. They step into it.*)

*SCENE 2: Lurry's office on the space station*

LURRY, BARIS, and DARVIN; KIRK and SPOCK materialize. KIRK is furious as he begins talking to LURRY as soon as materialization is complete.

**KIRK:** Commander Lurry, if there is no emergency, why did you order a priority-one distress call?!

**BARIS:** I ordered it, Captain!

**LURRY:** Captain Kirk, this is Nilz Baris; he's out from Earth to take charge of the Development Project for Sherman's Planet.

**KIRK:** And that gives you the authority to put a whole quadrant on a defence alert?

**DARVIN:** (*Stiff and stuffy*) Mr. Baris is the Federation Under-Secretary in Charge of Agricultural Affairs in this quadrant!

**BARIS:** This is my assistant, Arne Darvin. Now, Captain, I want all available security guards. I want them posted around the storage compartments.

**KIRK:** (*Angry, puzzled*) Storage compartments? What storage compartments?

**DARVIN:** The storage compartments with the quadro-triticale.

**KIRK:** The what? What is ... (*Stumbling over the word [pronounced "quadro-triti-cay-lee"]*) ... quadro-triticale? (*DARVIN sniffs audibly at KIRK's ignorance. He pulls a sample of the grain out of a container. He hands it to BARIS, who hands it to KIRK. KIRK glances at it only briefly, then hands it to a curious SPOCK. SPOCK examines it.*)  
Wheat. So what?

**BARIS:** Quadro-triticale is not wheat, Captain! I wouldn't expect you or your First Officer to know about such things, but—

**SPOCK:** *(Quietly watching all this)* Quadro-triticale is a high-yield grain, a four-lobed hybrid of wheat and rye, a perennial, also, if I'm not mistaken. The root grain, triticale, can trace its ancestry all the way back to twentieth-century Canada, when—

**KIRK:** *(Making no effort to conceal his amusement)* I think you've made your point, Mr. Spock. *(SPOCK pauses and looks at KIRK. He gives KIRK the familiar SPOCK stare. He was just getting to the interesting part.)*

**LURRY:** *(interrupting)* Captain, quadro-triticale is the only Earth grain that will grow on Sherman's Planet. We have several tons of it here on the station, and it's very important that that grain reach Sherman's Planet safely. Mr. Baris thinks that Klingon agents may try to sabotage it.

**KIRK:** *(Irkcd—to BARIS)* You issued a priority-one distress call because of a couple of tons of—wheat?!

**DARVIN:** Quadro-triticale. *(KIRK starts to look at DARVIN, but decides he is not worth it.)*

**BARIS:** *(Coming in fast)* Of course, I—

**KIRK:** *(His patience exhausted)* Mr. Baris, you summoned the *Enterprise* here without an emergency! Now, you'll take responsibility for it! Misuse of the priority-one channel is a Federation offence!

**BARIS:** I did not misuse the priority-one channel! I want that grain protected!

**LURRY:** Captain Kirk, couldn't you at least post a couple of guards? We do get a large number of ships passing through.

**SPOCK:** It would be a logical precaution, Captain. The Sherman's Planet affair is of extreme importance to the Federation. *(KIRK looks at SPOCK as if to say "Blast your logic!" However, SPOCK is usually correct, so ...)*

**KIRK:** *(Chagrined; taking out his communicator)* Kirk to *Enterprise*.

**UHURA:** *Enterprise* here.

**KIRK:** Secure from general quarters. Beam over *two* and *only* two security guards. Have them report to Commander Lurry. Also, authorize shore leave for all off-duty personnel.

**UHURA:** Yes, Captain.

**KIRK:** Kirk out. *(He puts away the communicator. BARIS is upset, because KIRK has only authorized two guards.)*

**BARIS:** Kirk! Starfleet Command is going to hear about *this*. A mere two men!

**KIRK:** *(Looks at BARIS for a long moment)* I have never questioned either the orders or the intelligence of any representative of the Federation ... *(Pause, looking at BARIS)* ... until now. *(Leaving a speechless BARIS and DARVIN, KIRK exits, followed by SPOCK.)*

SCENE 3: Bar/store

*Like a Western general store, this is a combination of two or more functions. Primarily it is a bar with a few tables and a bar against one wall, but a few extra props behind the bar should suggest that TRADER also runs a general-store type of establishment.*

*KIRK and SPOCK are at the bar, just putting down empty glasses. KIRK is shaking his head as he puts down the glass, looks at the wheat he holds in his hand.*

**KIRK:** Summoned a starship on a priority A-1 channel to guard some storage compartments. Storage compartments of *wheat*!

**SPOCK:** Still, Captain, it is a logical precaution. The Klingons would not like to see us successfully develop Sherman's Planet. *(He and KIRK are crossing toward the door on his last line. UHURA and CHEKOV enter followed separately by CYRANO JONES. UHURA and CHEKOV wait to meet the Captain, but JONES crosses past them to the bar beyond where he will engage the TRADER.)*

**KIRK:** *(To UHURA and CHEKOV)* I see you didn't waste any time going off duty.

**UHURA:** How often do we get shore leave?

**CHEKOV:** She wanted to shop and I wanted to help her.

**KIRK:** Mister Chekov. *(Holds out wheat)* What do you make of this?

**CHEKOV:** *(Takes it eagerly)* Quadro-triticales! I've read about this, but I've never seen any of it till now!

**KIRK:** Mister Spock, does everyone know about this grain but me?

**CHEKOV:** Not everyone, Captain. It's a Russian invention. *(KIRK gives up, shot down in flames by nationalism again. As he and SPOCK start to exit, UHURA and CHEKOV move toward the bar. CYRANO JONES is*



*arguing with the TRADER. He has a great amount of merchandise on the counter. Obviously, he has been trying to sell it to the TRADER, and the TRADER has obviously been very stubborn.)*

**TRADER:** No! I don't want any. I told you before, and I'm telling you again. (*CHEKOV and UHURA approach and wait for the TRADER's attention.*) I don't want any Spican Flame Gems. I already have enough Spican Flame Gems to last me a lifetime. (*CYRANO shrugs. He starts to open his carry-all sack to put them away.*)

**CYRANO:** (*Pityingly*) How sad for you, my friend ... (*Hopefully*) You won't find a finer stone anywhere. Ah, but I have something better ... (*Picking a vial off the counter*) Surely you want some Antaran Glow Water.

**TRADER:** (*Deadly monotone*) I use it to polish the Flame Gems. (*By this time CHEKOV and UHURA are watching interestedly. CYRANO sweeps most of his other stuff back into his sack.*)

**CYRANO:** (*Sighing*) You are a most difficult man to reach. (*Picking up something off the counter. It is a green-gold ball of fluff, a tribble.*) Surely, you want ...

**TRADER:** (*Although he is interested*) ... not at that price.

**UHURA:** (*Catching sight of the tribble*) Oooooooh, what is it? Is it alive? (*Taking the tribble*) May I hold him? Ooooh, he's adorable! (*To CYRANO*) What is it?

**CYRANO:** What is it? Why, little darlin', it's a tribble.

**UHURA:** (*Softly*) A tribble?

**CYRANO:** It's only the sweetest little creature known to man, exceptin' of course, yourself.

**UHURA:** (*Laughing; she is not taken in by the flattery*) Oh! Oh! It's purring! (*The tribble in the lieutenant's hands purrs and throbs. It is a ball of green-gold fluff about the size of a large beanbag. Its purr is soft and high-pitched like a dove's cooing.*)

**CYRANO:** Ah, little lady, he's just sayin' that he likes you.

**UHURA:** He's adorable. Are you selling them?

**TRADER:** That's what we're trying to decide right now. (*He glares at CYRANO.*)

**CYRANO:** (*To TRADER*) My friend, ten credits apiece is a very reasonable price. You can see for yourself how much the lovely little lady

here appreciates fine things.

**TRADER:** A credit apiece.

**CHEKOV:** *(Asking CYRANO, as he takes the tribble from UHURA; he has put his grain on the counter; some spills out)* He won't bite, will he?

**CYRANO:** *(Making a great show of ignoring the Trader)* Sir! There is a law against transporting harmful animals from one planet to another, or weren't you aware of that? Besides, tribbles have no teeth.

**TRADER:** *(Trying to attract Cyrano's attention)* All right. I'll double my offer. Two credits.

**CYRANO:** *(Taking the tribble from CHEKOV and plopping it on the counter in front of the TRADER)* Twice nothing is still nothing.

**TRADER:** *(Eyeing the tribble)* Is he clean?

**CYRANO:** *(Eyeing the TRADER)* He's as clean as you are. I daresay a good deal cleaner ... *(While they have been talking, the tribble has been inching along on the counter, toward the grain. It now reaches it.)*

**UHURA:** If you don't want him, I'll take him. I think he's cute. *(CYRANO and TRADER both notice this. TRADER is annoyed. CYRANO beams.)*

**TRADER:** *(To CYRANO)* All right. Four.

**CYRANO:** Is that an offer or a joke? *(And meanwhile, the tribble begins munching on CHEKOV's grain.)*

**TRADER:** That's my offer.

**CYRANO:** *(Starting to leave)* Well, I can see that you're not interested. *(He reaches for the tribble. The TRADER stops him.)*


**TRADER:** All right ... five.

**CYRANO:** *(Returning quickly now that TRADER is talking money)* My friend, I'll tell you what I'll do for you. I can see that you're an honest man. I'll lower my price to eight and a half.

**TRADER:** You're talking yourself out of a deal. Six. Not a cent more.

**CYRANO:** Seven and a half. *(No response)* Seven. *(Still no response)* All right, you robber. Six. *(The tribble is happily munching on the grain; i.e., the grain is disappearing under it as the tribble throbs and croons contentedly.)*

**TRADER:** When can I have them?



**CYRANO:** Right away. *(He starts pulling tribbles out of his sack.)*

**UHURA:** *(To TRADER)* How much are you selling them for?

**TRADER:** *(Already counting his profits)* Well, let me see now ... six credits ... figure a reasonable markup for a reasonable profit ... ten per cent markup ... ten credits ...

**CYRANO:** *(Under his breath)* Thief!

**TRADER:** In fact, I'll sell you this one.

**CHEKOV:** Hey! He's eating my grain! *(Quickly moves to rescue what is left of the grain; fortunately tribbles are slow eaters.)*

**TRADER:** *(Picking up the tribble)* That will be ten credits.

**CYRANO:** *(Taking the tribble from the TRADER, indignantly)* Sir! That happens to be my sample. And it is mine to do with as I please, and I please to give it to the pretty little lady here.

**UHURA:** Oh, I couldn't.

**CYRANO:** I insist.

**TRADER:** That's right. Ruin the market.

**CYRANO:** Hah! Once the pretty little lady here starts to show this little precious around, you won't be able to keep up with 'em. *(He gallantly hands the tribble to UHURA.)*

#### SCENE 4: Briefing room

KIRK and SPOCK are having a cup of coffee when a wall panel or desk panel "bleeps."

**KIRK:** Kirk here.

**UHURA:** Message from Starfleet, Captain. Priority channel. Admiral Komack speaking.

**KIRK:** Transfer it in here, Lieutenant. *(The screen on the table lights. ADMIRAL KOMACK appears, seated at his desk.)*

**KOMACK:** Captain Kirk.

**KIRK:** Here, sir.

**KOMACK:** Captain, it is not necessary to remind you of the importance to the Federation of Sherman's Planet. The key to our winning of this planet is the grain, quadro-tritcale. The shipment of it must be protected. Effective immediately, you will render any aid and

assistance which Under-Secretary Baris may require. The safety of the grain and the project is your responsibility. Starfleet out.

**KIRK:** Now that's just lovely.

**SPOCK:** But not entirely unexpected.

**UHURA:** Captain Kirk! Captain Kirk!

**KIRK:** Kirk here. What's the matter, Lieutenant?

**UHURA:** Sensors are picking up a Klingon battle cruiser, rapidly closing on the station!

**KIRK:** Contact Commander Lurry. We're on our way. (*KIRK and SPOCK race for the door, not even waiting for UHURA's acknowledgement.*)

*SCENE 5: Enterprise—bridge*

*KIRK enters the bridge, followed by SPOCK.*

**KIRK:** (*To CHEKOV*) What's that Klingon ship doing now?

**CHEKOV:** Nothing, Captain. He's just sitting there, a hundred kilometres off K-7.

**UHURA:** I have Commander Lurry.

**KIRK:** Put him on visual, Lieutenant. (*Continuing*) Commander Lurry, there is a Klingon warship hanging one hundred kilometres off your station ...

**LURRY:** (*Appearing on viewscreen in his office*) I do not think that the Klingons are planning to attack us.

**KIRK:** Why not? (*Viewscreen reveals the Klingon Commander, KOLOTH, and his aide, KORAX, also in the office.*)

**LURRY:** Because at this moment, the captain of the Klingon ship is sitting here in my office.

**KIRK:** (*Covering his shock*) We're beaming over. (*He and SPOCK start to leave the bridge.*)

*ACT TWO*

*FADE IN: Exterior of space station*

**KIRK:** Captain's log; Stardate 4524.2. A Klingon warship is hovering only a hundred kilometres off deep space station K-7, while its Captain waits in the station commander's office. Their intentions are unknown.

FADE IN: Interior of space station—Lurry's office

KIRK, SPOCK, LURRY, KOLOTH, and two Klingon AIDES are present. KOLOTH is the Klingon commander and like the last Klingon commander that we saw, he is evil-looking.

**KOLOTH:** My dear Captain Kirk, let me assure you that my intentions are peaceful. As I have already told Commander Lurry, the purpose of my presence here is to invoke shore-leave rights. (KIRK and SPOCK exchange glances.)

**KIRK:** Shore leave?

**KOLOTH:** Captain, Klingons are not as luxury-minded as Earthers. We do not equip *our* ships with non-essentials. We have been in space for five months and what we choose as recreation is our own business. (Pause) Under the terms of the Organian Peace Treaty, you cannot refuse us.

**KIRK:** The decision is not mine to make. Commander Lurry is in charge of the station.

**LURRY:** (Aside to KIRK) Kirk, I don't want them here, but I have no authority to refuse.

**KIRK:** I have some authority to act, and I'm going to use it. (To KOLOTH) All right, you can give your men shore leave, but no more than twelve at a time. And I promise you this, Koloth, for every one of your men on this station, I'll have at least one security guard. There won't be any trouble.

**KOLOTH:** Captain Kirk, no formal declaration of hostility has been made between our respective governments. So, of course, the nature of our relationship *will* be a peaceful one.

**KIRK:** Let us *both* take steps to make sure that it stays that way. (The Klingon bows stiffly, politely; turns on his heel and exits. KORAX follows. KIRK, LURRY, and SPOCK exchange a worried glance.)

SCENE 2: Recreation room of the Enterprise.

KIRK and SPOCK enter. There are a few CREWMEN in the room. SCOTTY is at one table, reading. The other people in the room are in a knot around the other table. KIRK moves over to SCOTTY. SPOCK moves toward the knot of people. KIRK moves up and peers at the title of the tape that SCOTTY is reading. It is a page reflected on a screen.

**KIRK:** Another technical journal?



**SCOTT:** Aye, why shouldn't I?

**KIRK:** Mr. Scott, don't you ever relax?

**SCOTT:** (*Puzzled*) But I am relaxing. (*KIRK nods and moves over toward the group of people. MCCOY and UHURA are in the foreground of a knot of people. On the table is one larger tribble and at least ten smaller ones. They are playing with them.*)

**MCCOY:** How long have you had that thing, Lieutenant?

**UHURA:** Only since yesterday. This morning, I found that he—I mean *she* had had babies.

**MCCOY:** I'd say you got a bargain. (*He picks up one of the tribbles and examines it curiously. SPOCK does likewise.*) ... hmmm ...

**SPOCK:** Fascinating.

**KIRK:** Lieutenant Uhura, are you running a nursery?

**UHURA:** I hadn't intended to but the tribble had other plans. (*SPOCK absent-mindedly begins stroking his tribble.*)

**KIRK:** You got this at the space station? (*UHURA nods.*)

**SPOCK:** A most curious creature, Captain. Its trilling seems to have a tranquillizing effect on the human nervous system. Fortunately, I am, of course, immune to its effect. (*KIRK grins at him, turns to leave. SPOCK comes out of it, realizing he is petting the tribble almost hypnotically, puts it down. He follows KIRK out.*)

**MCCOY:** (*To UHURA*) Lieutenant, do you mind if I take one of these things down to the lab to find out what makes it tick?

**UHURA:** It's all right with me, but if you're planning to dissect it, I don't want to hear about it.

**MCCOY:** Lieutenant, I won't hurt a hair on his head. Wherever that is. (*Exits with a medium-sized tribble.*)

**ENSIGN FREEMAN:** Say, Lieutenant, if you're giving them away, could I have one too?

**UHURA:** Sure, why not? They seem to be old enough. (*The crewman takes one eagerly; others also help themselves.*)

SCENE 3: Corridor

KIRK and SPOCK round a bend.

**CHEKOV:** (*Filtered*) Bridge to Captain Kirk.

**KIRK:** (*Goes to button*) Kirk here.

**CHEKOV:** Mr. Baris is waiting on Channel E to speak to you.

**KIRK:** Pipe it down here, Mister Chekov.

**CHEKOV:** Aye, sir. Mr. Baris is coming on.

**KIRK:** Kirk here. What is it, Baris?

**BARIS:** Kirk! This station is swarming with Klingons!

**KIRK:** I was not aware that twelve Klingons were a "swarm," Mr. Baris.

**BARIS:** (*Quieter*) Captain Kirk. There are Klingon soldiers on this station. I want you to keep that grain safe.

**KIRK:** I have guards around your grain. I have guards on the Klingons! Those guards are there only because Starfleet wants them there! As for what *you* want ... (*Angry pause*) it has been noted and logged. Kirk out. (*KIRK savagely slams off the button. He turns and starts away down the corridor.*)

**SPOCK:** Captain, may I ask where you'll be?

**KIRK:** Sickbay. With a headache!

*SCENE 4: McCoy's lab*

**BONES:** (*DR. MCCOY is analysing a sample of something as KIRK enters. In the foreground is a box of tribbles.*)

**KIRK:** When you get a chance, Bones, I'd like something for a headache.

**MCCOY:** (*Looking at KIRK*) Let me guess ... the Klingons? Baris?

**KIRK:** Both. (*MCCOY nods as KIRK moves to look at the box of tribbles. Looking at tribbles*) How many did Uhura give you?

**MCCOY:** (*Taking pills from cabinet*) Just one.

**KIRK:** You've got eleven here.

**MCCOY:** Oh, you noticed that (*He returns to KIRK with a couple of pills. Continuing; handing KIRK tablets*) Here. This ought to take care of it.

**KIRK:** (*Holding the tablets but concerned with the tribbles*) Bones?

**MCCOY:** I'm still trying to figure it out myself. I can tell you this much: almost fifty percent of the creature's metabolism is geared to reproduction. Do you know what you get, if you feed a tribble too much?

**KIRK:** A fat tribble?

**McCoy:** (*Slightly irked at being a straight man*) No. You get a whole bunch of hungry little tribbles.

**KIRK:** (*Swallowing pills*) Well, Bones, I suggest you open a maternity ward. (*Exits. MCCOY looks at the tribbles and grimaces.*)

*[In the next few scenes, crew members from the Enterprise are goaded into a fight with Klingons while on shore leave. Kirk is forced to cancel shore leave for both ships.]*

### ACT THREE

#### SCENE 3: Bridge.

KIRK is stepping out of the bridge elevator. He is gently kicking some tribbles out of the way. He goes to his chair, still preoccupied with something. Almost without noticing it, he has to scoop three or four off his chair before he can sit down. He sits in the chair, absent-mindedly stroking a tribble that is perched on the chair arm. Suddenly he realizes there are tribbles all over the bridge. KIRK brushes the tribble away and activates his intercom.

**KIRK:** Dr. McCoy, get up here, right away. (*Gets out of his chair and makes a circuit of the bridge starting with LIEUTENANT UHURA and circling around counter-clockwise. He brushes tribbles off consoles, out of chairs, down from shelves, etc.*) Lieutenant Uhura, how did all of these tribbles get into the bridge?

**UHURA:** I don't know, Captain. They seem to be all over the ship. (*KIRK steps down into the centre of the bridge and moves over to the central console. He brushes a tribble off it. He crosses to the other side, as BONES enters.*)

**McCoy:** You wanted to see me, Jim?

**KIRK:** Yes, I did. (*He holds up a tribble.*)

**McCoy:** Don't look at *me*. It's the tribbles who are breeding. If we don't get them off the ship we'll be hip deep in them!

**KIRK:** Explain yourself, Doctor.

**McCoy:** The nearest thing I can figure out is that they're born pregnant. It seems to be a great timesaver.

**KIRK:** (*Sourly*) Really?

**McCoy:** From all I can find out, they seem to be bisexual, reproducing at will. And they have a lot of will.

**SPOCK:** (*Moving closer*) Captain, for once I am forced to agree with

Doctor McCoy, though his way of putting it is most imprecise. They are consuming our supplies and returning nothing. I am running computations on their rate of reproduction, and although all of the figures are not yet in, I must confess I am somewhat alarmed by the direction they are taking.

**UHURA:** They do give us something, Mr. Spock. Their love. (*On SPOCK 's raised eyebrows*) Cyrano Jones says that a tribble is the only love money can buy. (*SPOCK gives her the stare. KIRK, amused, steps in.*)

**KIRK:** Lieutenant, too much of anything, even love, is not necessarily a good thing. (*Pause*) Have a maintenance crew start clearing the whole ship. Then contact Commander Lurry. Tell him I'm beaming over. Ask him to find Cyrano Jones. (*UHURA nods and turns to her console. KIRK and SPOCK start for the elevator, but pause long enough to remove some of the tribbles that have crawled back up onto the consoles.*)

#### SCENE 4: Lurry's office

LURRY is standing. CYRANO JONES is sitting in a chair. KIRK is staring at him. SPOCK is standing thoughtfully.

**CYRANO:** Captain Kirk, I am mystified at your tone of voice. I have done nothing to warrant such severe treatment.

**KIRK:** Really?

**SPOCK:** Surely you realized what would happen if you transferred the tribbles from their predator-filled environment into an environment in which their natural multiplicative proclivities would have no restraining factors.

**CYRANO:** Yes, I ... would you mind trying that on me again?

**SPOCK:** By removing them from their natural habitat, you have, so to speak, removed the cork and let the genie escape.

**CYRANO:** If you mean do I know they breed fast, of course I do. That's how I maintain my stock. But breeding animals is not against regulations, only breeding dangerous ones. Tribbles are not dangerous.

**KIRK:** Just incredibly prolific.

**CYRANO:** Precisely. And at six credits a head, that is, a body, it mounts up. I'm a businessman, after all. Now, if you'll excuse me. (*He rises. Absent-mindedly he hands KIRK the tribble.*)

**KIRK:** You ought to sell a manual of instructions with these things.

**CYRANO:** If I did, Captain, what would happen to the search for knowledge? Pardon me. I must be tending to my ship. (*As he exits, BARIS and DARVIN enter.*)

**KIRK:** (*Under his breath*) Oh, fine.

**DARVIN:** Go ahead, sir. Tell him.

**BARIS:** Captain Kirk, I consider your security measures a disgrace. In my opinion, you have taken this entire, very important project far too lightly.

**KIRK:** I regard the project as extremely important, Mr. Baris. It is you I regard lightly.

**BARIS:** (*Dangerous*) I shall report fully to the proper authorities that you have given free and complete access to this station to a man who is quite probably a Klingon agent.

**KIRK:** (*Staring hard at him*) That is a very serious charge, Mr. Baris. To whom do you refer?

**BARIS:** That man who just walked out of here. Cyrano Jones!

**KIRK:** (*Amused*) A Klingon agent?

**BARIS:** You heard me.

**KIRK:** Oh, I heard you all right.

**SPOCK:** He just couldn't believe his ears.

**KIRK:** (*A pause, then to BARIS*) What evidence do you have against Cyrano Jones?

**BARIS:** (*Drawing himself up to his full height*) My assistant here spent some time keeping Mr. Jones under surveillance. His actions have been, ah, most suspicious. I believe he was involved in that little altercation between your men and the—

**KIRK:** Go on. What else do you have?

**DARVIN:** Captain, I checked his ship's log. He was within the Klingon sphere of influence less than four months ago.

**BARIS:** The man is an independent scout. It's quite possible that he's also a Klingon spy.

**SPOCK:** We have checked on the background of Mr. Jones. He is a licensed asteroid locator and prospector. He has never broken



the law ... at least not severely ... and he has, for the past seven years, obtained a marginal living by engaging in the buying and selling of rare merchandise, including, unfortunately, tribbles.

**BARIS:** He's after my grain! He's out to sabotage the entire project.

**KIRK:** You have no proof of that.

**DARVIN:** You can't deny he has disrupted this station!

**KIRK:** People have disrupted space stations before without being Klingons. (*Meaningful look at the two*) They need only have some influence. Unfortunately, disrupting a space station is not an offence. If you'll excuse me, I have a ship to take care of. Mister Spock? (*KIRK starts to leave, realizes that he is still holding CYRANO'S tribble. He shrugs, looks around and puts it in an ashtray. They exit.*)

#### SCENE 5: Recreation room

*KIRK goes to a wall panel. SPOCK and SCOTT are also there.*

**KIRK:** Chicken sandwich, coffee. (*Almost immediately, the wall panel "bleeps."* KIRK goes over to the wall. A panel slides open. He stares. KIRK'S sandwich is covered with tribbles, throbbing and purring.) Mister Spock.

**SPOCK:** (*Approaches—he peers at it curiously*) Most interesting.

**KIRK:** (*Reacting. Up till now, they have only been a nuisance, now they are definitely out of hand.*) Mister Spock, I want these creatures off my ship. I don't care if it takes every man we've got. I want them off!

**SCOTT:** (*Approaches, takes a look*) Aye, they've gotten into the machinery all right. They've probably gotten into all of the other food processors, too.

**KIRK:** How?

**SCOTT:** Probably through one of the air vents. (*Points to a duct*)

**SPOCK:** (*Alarmed*) Captain, there are vents like that in the space station.

**KIRK:** And the storage compartments. (*Stepping to a wall panel*) This is Kirk. Contact Commander Lurry and Nilz Baris. Have them meet us near the warehouse. We're beaming over. (*KIRK and SPOCK exchange a glance. They run out.*)

SCENE 6: Transporter room

KIRK and SPOCK enter, dash up to the platform, kicking tribbles out of the way.

**KIRK:** Energize. (The CREWMAN slides the lever upward.)

SCENE 7: Space-station corridor—storage compartment

KIRK and SPOCK and a half-dozen tribbles materialize. LURRY and BARIS, but not DARIN, come running to meet them.

**LURRY:** What's wrong?

**KIRK:** (Glancing around) Plenty, if what I think has happened, has happened. (KIRK turns to the storage-compartment door. There are TWO GUARDS standing by it. There are lots of tribbles in the corridor.)

**SPOCK:** Guard, is this door secure?

**GUARD:** Yes, sir. Nothing could get in.

**KIRK:** I hope so. Open the door. (The GUARD moves to the wall panel and touches a magnetic key to a panel. At first the door doesn't open. Continuing; impatient) Open it! (The GUARD fiddles with the key. KIRK watches, waits; finally he steps up and pushes the GUARD aside and pushes the door.)

**GUARD:** It's not working, sir. It seems to be—(What it seems to be, we will never know, because at that moment the door slides open with a WHOOSH!!! This is immediately followed by a silent FWOMP!! Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of tribbles come tumbling out of the door, cascading down around KIRK, tumbling and seething and mewling and writhing and throbbing and mewling and trilling and purring and ...)

ACT FOUR

SCENE 1: Space station—corridor outside storage compartment, including door

KIRK is standing in the middle of a mountain of tribbles. More and more keep tumbling out, fat and sassy and lethargic.

**SPOCK:** (Examining a tribble) It seems to be gorged.

**BARIS:** Gorged! On my grain! Kirk! I'll hold you responsible! (Looking despairingly at the grain) There must be thousands.

**KIRK:** Hundreds of thousands.

**SPOCK:** One million, seven hundred and seventy-one thousand, five

hundred and sixty-one. That's assuming one tribble multiplying with an average litter of ten, producing a new generation every twelve hours over a period of three days.

**KIRK:** That's assuming that one got in here three days ago.

**SPOCK:** *Also allowing for the amount of grain consumed and the volume of the storage compartment.*

**BARIS:** Kirk! You should have known! You're responsible for turning the Development Project into a total disaster!

**KIRK:** *(Slowly)* Mr. Baris—

**BARIS:** Kirk, I'm through being intimidated! You've insulted me, ignored me, walked all over me! You've abused your authority and rejected my requests! And this ... this ... *(Indicating the tribbles)* ... is the result!! I'm going to hold you responsible. *(KIRK, thoroughly angry, but thoroughly cool, reaches out, grabs BARIS by the coat front.)*

**KIRK:** Baris, shut up. Or I will hold *you* in irons. *(MCCOY approaches. KIRK releases BARIS, who hauls himself together.)*

**MCCOY:** Jim, I think I've got it. All we have to do is stop feeding them. Once they stop eating, they'll stop breeding.

**KIRK:** Now he tells me. *(MCCOY looks at the tribbles on the corridor floor and realizes that his advice is a little late. SPOCK is also looking at the tribbles on the floor. He is kneeling curiously.)*

**SPOCK:** Captain, this is most odd. This tribble is dead ... *(He begins examining others.)* So are these. *(MCCOY and the others begin examining the tribbles more carefully.)*

**MCCOY:** This one is alive—a lot of them are still alive, but they won't be for long.

**SPOCK:** A logical assumption is that there is something in the grain.

**KIRK:** Bones, I want a complete analysis of the tribbles, the grain, everything. I want to know what killed them.

**MCCOY:** I still haven't figured out what keeps them alive. *(KIRK just glares at him.)* I'll let you know as soon as I find anything. *(His arms laden with tribbles, he moves off.)*

**BARIS:** Kirk, that won't do you any good. The project is ruined. Starfleet will hear of this disaster. There'll be a board of inquiry, and they'll roast you alive, Kirk. I'm going to be there to enjoy every minute of it.

**KIRK:** All right. But until that board of inquiry convenes, I'm still a captain. We have two things to do. First, find Cyrano Jones. *(Pause, glance at door)* Second, close that door.

SCENE 2: *Lurry's office*

*The last few preparations are being made. Two CREWMEN escort CYRANO JONES into the room, then begin removing excess tribbles. KIRK and SPOCK and LURRY are discussing something. BARIS is waiting at the door, looking for DARVIN. KOLOTH enters, followed by KORAX.*

**KIRK:** What do you want?

**KOLOTH:** An official apology, Kirk, addressed to the High Klingon Command. I want you to take responsibility for your persecution of Klingon nationals in this quadrant.

**KIRK:** An apology?

**KOLOTH:** You have harassed my men, treated us like criminals. You have been most uncourteous, Kirk. And if you wish to avoid a diplomatic crisis ...

**BARIS:** You can't let him, Kirk! That'll give them the wedge they need to claim Sherman's Planet!

**SPOCK:** I believe more than the word of an aggrieved Klingon commander will be necessary for that, Mr. Baris.

**KOLOTH:** *(Glaring at SPOCK)* As far as Sherman's Planet is concerned, Captain Kirk has just given it to us.

**KIRK:** We'll see about that, Captain. But before any official action is taken, I want to find out just what happened here. Who put the tribbles in the quadro-triticale, and what was in the grain that killed them?

**KOLOTH:** *(Interrupting)* Captain Kirk, before you go on, I have a request. Can you get those things out of here? *(KOLOTH points uncomfortably at the tribbles that CYRANO is holding in his lap and stroking. KIRK gestures to a CREWMAN. The man takes the tribbles and moves to the door just as DARVIN enters. The tribbles hiss and spit at DARVIN. CYRANO looks surprised. KIRK and SPOCK react. SPOCK's eyebrows shoot up.)*

**SPOCK:** Remarkable.

**KIRK:** Jones, I thought tribbles liked everybody.

**CYRANO:** Why, they do, Captain. I can't understand it. Last time I saw

them act like that was in the bar.

**KIRK:** What was in the bar?

**CYRANO:** Klingons, sir. Him for one. *(He points at KORAX. KIRK steps over, picks up a nice big fat tribble. He moves to KORAX, extends the tribble. The tribble hisses and reacts.)*

**KIRK:** You're right, Jones. *(He repeats the act with KOLOTH, who shrinks away. They obviously hate the tribbles, and the tribble rears back and hisses. BONES enters with a tri-corder in time to hear.)* They don't like Klingons. *(He moves to SPOCK. The tribble purrs loudly.)* They do like Vulcans. I never thought you had it in you, Spock.

**SPOCK:** Obviously the tribble is an extremely perceptive creature.

**KIRK:** *(Takes the tribble to BARIS. The tribble purrs loudly.)* He even likes you, Baris. I guess there's no accounting for taste. *(He moves back to DARVIN, extends the tribble. DARVIN shrinks, the tribble rears back and hisses violently.)* But he doesn't like you, Darvin. I wonder why. Bones ... *(Gestures to MCCOY)*

**MCCOY:** *(Curious, unbuckles his medical tri-corder. He runs a sensor over DARVIN, looks at the reading, looks again, runs the sensor over DARVIN again. He is puzzled. He repeats the performance)* Jim ... *(Checking a reading)* His heartbeat is all wrong. His body temperature is ... Jim, this man is a Klingon!

**BARIS:** Klingon!?! *(KIRK looks at BARIS. Two CREWMEN move up on either side of DARVIN.)*

**KIRK:** What do you think Starfleet will have to say about this, Mr. Baris? *(To BONES)* What did you find out about the grain?

**MCCOY:** Oh. It was poisoned.

**BARIS:** Poisoned?!?

**MCCOY:** It's been impregnated with a virus. The virus turns into an inert material in the bloodstream. The more the organism eats, the more inert matter is built up. After two or three days, it would reach a point where they couldn't take in enough nourishment to survive.

**KIRK:** You mean they starved to death? A whole storage compartment full of grain and they starved to death?

**MCCOY:** That's essentially it.

**KIRK:** *(Looking at DARVIN)* You going to talk?



**DARVIN:** I have nothing to say. (KIRK picks up a couple of tribbles. He walks up to DARVIN about to shove them in his face. The tribbles hiss.) All right. I poisoned the grain. Take it away!

**KIRK:** Then the tribbles didn't have anything to do with it?

**DARVIN:** I don't know. I never saw one before in my life!! I hope I never see one of those horrible fuzzy things again! (KIRK gestures. Two CREWMEN drag DARVIN away. KIRK catches sight of KOLOTH, who has been standing rather quietly, for a Klingon.)

**KIRK:** Captain Koloth, about that apology. You have six hours to get your ship out of Federation territory! (KOLOTH says nothing, leaves stiffly. The tribbles hiss at him.) You know, I could almost learn to like tribbles.

**CYRANO:** Ah then, Captain Kirk, I suppose that I may be free to go.

**KIRK:** Not yet. First I've got something to show you.

*SCENE 3: Store/bar*

KIRK, SPOCK, and JONES enter. TRADER is sitting in the door in the middle of a pile of tribbles. There are tribbles galore. It looks like a snowfall of fur. He has been inundated. He is close to tears, because there are too many even to try sweeping them out of his store. He sits there with his head in his hands.

**CYRANO:** Uh ...

**KIRK:** Mr. Jones, do you know what the penalty is for transporting an animal that is proven harmful to human life?

**CYRANO:** But one little tribble isn't harmful. (KIRK stares at him.) Gentlemen, you wouldn't do a thing like that to me, now would you?

**SPOCK:** The penalty is twenty years in a rehabilitation colony.

**CYRANO:** Ah now, Captain Kirk, *Friend* Kirk. Surely we can come to some form of mutual understanding. After all, my little tribbles did put you wise to the poisoned grain and they did help you to find the Klingon agent. We must have saved a lot of lives that way.

**KIRK:** Perhaps, there is one thing.

**CYRANO:** (Eagerly) Yes?!

**KIRK:** If you can remove every tribble from the space station, I'll have Commander Lurry return your ship to you.

**CYRANO:** (*Gasping*) Remove every tribble? That'll take years.

**SPOCK:** Seventeen point nine, to be exact.

**CYRANO:** Seventeen point nine years?

**KIRK:** Think of it as job security.

**CYRANO:** Ahh, Captain, you are a hard man. (*Looks at a tribble*) I'll do it. (*Sighs and begins picking up tribbles*)

*SCENE 4: Bridge*

KIRK and SPOCK enter.

**KIRK:** I'm glad Starfleet was able to divert that freighter. Sherman's Planet will get their quadro-tritcale only a few weeks late. (*KIRK steps down and takes his place in his chair. He glances around. The bridge is strangely free of tribbles. SCOTT and MCCOY are on the bridge, and KIRK is speaking to them.*) I don't see any tribbles in here ...

**MCCOY:** You won't find a tribble on the whole ship.

**KIRK:** How did you do that, Bones?

**MCCOY:** (*Suddenly modest*) I can't take the credit for another man's work. Scotty did it.

**KIRK:** Where are they, Mr. Scott?

**SCOTT:** Oh, but Captain, it was Mr. Spock's recommendation.

**SPOCK:** Based on computer analysis, of course, taking into consideration the elements of ...

**KIRK:** Gentlemen, if I may be so bold as to interrupt this meeting of your mutual admiration society, I'd like to know just what you did with the tribbles.

**MCCOY:** Tell him, Spock.

**SPOCK:** It was Mr. Scott who did the actual engineering.

**KIRK:** (*Firmly*) Scott, how did you get rid of the tribbles?

**SCOTT:** I used the transporter, Captain.

**KIRK:** You used the transporter?

**SCOTT:** Aye.

**KIRK:** (*Curious*) Where did you transport them to, Scotty? (*SCOTT coughs into his hand. MCCOY looks off into the distance. SPOCK*

*blinks and manages a patently blank, innocent stare.*) Scotty, you didn't just transport them out into space, did you?

**SCOTT:** (*Slightly offended*) Sir! That'd be inhuman!

**KIRK:** Mr. Scott, what did you do with them?

**SCOTT:** (*Realizes he is going to have to tell it sooner or later*) I gave them a good home, sir.

**KIRK:** Where?

**SCOTT:** I gave them to the Klingons, sir.

**KIRK:** You gave them to the ...

**SCOTT:** Aye, sir. Just before they went into warp I transported the whole kit and kaboodle into their engine room where they'll be no tribble at all. (*All react as the joke sinks in. Curtain.*) ■

## Activities

1. Select a section of this script and describe the events in the form of a log entry by Captain Kirk. If a word processor is available, use it to create an effective format for your log. Compare your log with that of another student who selected the same passage to see whether you agree on what is essential to the story.
2. Using this script as a model, in a small group write a script that deals with the events on board the Klingon ship after Scotty has transported the tribbles there. Make an audiotape or a videotape of a portion of your script and present it to the class.
3. Watch an episode of *Star Trek* on TV or watch a *Star Trek* movie. Working in a small group, examine the visual version considering the following:
  - the relative importance of plot, character, and special effects
  - the extent to which the show depends on the audience's prior knowledge
  - the balance and importance of male and female characters
  - the quality and expense of production compared to other SF shows
  - the audience at which the show is aimed—look at content and language level.Share and compare your findings with those of another group.

# No Renewal

SPIDER ROBINSON



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this story will help you:

- read for details of place and setting
- analyse how diction contributes to theme
- use presentation skills
- consider historical context
- relate texts to culture by explaining and analysing

Douglas Bent, Jr. sits in his kitchen, waiting for his tea to heat. It is May 12, his birthday, and he has prepared wintergreen tea. Douglas allows himself this extravagance because he knows he will receive no birthday present from anyone but himself. By a trick of Time and timing, he has outlived all his friends, all his relatives. The concept of neighbourliness, too, has predeceased him; not because he has none, but because he has too many.

His may be, for all he knows, the last small farm in Nova Scotia, and it is bordered on three sides by vast mined-out clay pits, gaping concentric cavities whose insides were scraped out and eaten long ago, their husk thrown away to rot. On the remaining perimeter is an apartment-hive, packed with ant-like swarms of people. Douglas knows none of them as individuals; at times, he doubts the trick is possible.

Once Douglas's family owned hundreds of acres along what was then called simply The Shore Road; once the Bent spread ran from the Bay of

Fundy itself back over the peak of the great North Mountain, included a sawmill, rushing streams, hundreds of thousands of trees, and acre after acre of pasture and hay and rich farmland; once the Bents were one of the best-known families from Annapolis Royal to Bridgetown, their livestock the envy of the entire Annapolis Valley.

Then the petrochemical industry died of thirst. With it, of course, went the plastics industry. Clay suddenly became an essential substitute—and the Annapolis Valley is mostly clay.

Now the Shore Road is the Fundy Trail, six lanes of high-speed traffic; the Bent spread is fourteen acres on the most inaccessible part of the Mountain; the sawmill has been replaced by the industrial park that ate the clay; the pasture and the streams and the farmland have been disembowelled or paved over; all the Bents save Douglas Jr. are dead or moved to the cities; and no one now living in the Valley has ever seen a live cow, pig, duck, goat, or chicken, let alone envied them. Agribusiness has destroyed agriculture, and synthoprotein feeds (some of) the world. Douglas grows only what crops replenish themselves, feeds only himself.

He sits waiting for the water to boil, curses for the millionth time the solar-powered electric stove that supplanted the family's woodburner when firewood became impossible to obtain. Electric stoves take too long to heat, call for no tending, perform their task with impersonal callousness. They do not warm a room.

Douglas's gnarled fingers idly sort through the wintergreen he picked this morning, spurn the jar of sugar that stands nearby. All his life, Douglas has made wintergreen tea from fresh maple sap, which requires no sweetening. But this spring he journeyed with drill and hammer and tap and bucket to his only remaining maple tree, and found it dead. He has bought maple-flavoured sugar for this birthday tea, but he knows it will not be the same. Then again, next spring he may find no wintergreen.

So *many* old familiar friends have failed to reappear in their season lately—the deer moss has gone wherever the deer went to, crows no longer raid the compost heap, even the lupines have decreased in number and in brilliance. The soil, perhaps made self-conscious by its conspicuous isolation, no longer bursts with life.

Douglas realizes that his own sap no longer runs in the spring, that the walls of his house ring with no voice save his own. If a farm surrounded by wasteland cannot survive, how then shall a man? *It is my birthday*, he thinks, *how old am I today?*

He cannot remember.

He looks up at the electricclock (the family's two-hundred-year-old cuckoo clock, being wood, did not survive the Panic Winter of '94), reads





the date from its face (there are no longer trees to spare for fripperies like paper calendars), sits back with a grunt. *2049 like I thought, but when was I born?*

So many things have changed in Douglas's lifetime, so many of Life's familiar immutable aspects gone forever. The Danielses to the east died childless: their land now holds a sewage treatment plant. On the west the creeping border of Annapolis Royal has eaten the land up, excreting concrete and steel and far too many people as it went. Annapolis is now as choked as New York City was in Douglas's father's day. Economic helplessness has driven Douglas back up the North Mountain, step by inexorable step, and the profits (he winces at the word) that he reaped from selling off his land parcel by parcel (as, in his youth, he bought it from his ancestors) have been eaten away by the rising cost of living. Here, on his last fourteen acres, in the two-story house he built with his own hands and by Jesus *wood*, Douglas Bent Jr. has made his last stand.

He questions his body as his father taught him to do, is told in reply that he has at least ten or twenty more years of life left. *How old am I?* he wonders again, *forty-five? Fifty? More?* He has simply lost track, for the years do not mean what they did. It matters little; though he may have vitality for twenty years more, he has money for no more than five. Less, if the new tax laws penalizing old age are pushed through in Halifax.

The water has begun to boil. Douglas places wintergreen and sugar in the earthenware mug his mother made (back when clay was dug out of the backyard with a shovel), removes the pot from the stove, and pours. His nostrils test the aroma; to his dismay, the fake smells genuine. Sighing from his belly, he moves to the rocking chair by the kitchen window, places the mug on the sill, and sits down to watch another sunset. From here Douglas can see the Bay, when the wind is right and the smoke from the industrial park does not come between. Even then, he can no longer see the far shores of New Brunswick, for the air is thicker than when Douglas was a child.

The clock hums, the mug steams. The winds are from the north—a cold night is coming, and tomorrow may be one of the improbable "bay-steamer" days with which Nova Scotia salts its spring. It does not matter to Douglas: his solar heating is far too efficient. His gaze wanders down the access road which leads to the highway; it curves downhill and left and disappears behind the birch and alders and pine that line it for a half-mile from the house. If Douglas looks at the road right, he can sometimes convince himself that around the bend are not strip-mining shells and brick apartment-hives but arable land, waving grain, and the world he once knew. Fields and yaller dogs and grazing goats and spring mud and tractors and barns and goat-berries like stockpiles of B-B shot ...

Douglas's mind wanders a lot these days. It has been a long time since he enjoyed thinking, and so he has lost the habit. It has been a long time since he had anyone with whom to share his thoughts, and so he has lost the inclination. It has been a long time since he understood the world well enough to think about it, and so he has lost the ability.

Douglas sits and rocks and sips his tea, spilling it down the front of his beard and failing to notice. *How old am I?* he thinks for the third time, and summons enough will to try and find out. Rising from the rocker with an effort, he walks on weary wiry legs to the living room, climbs the stairs to the attic, pausing halfway to rest.

*My father was sixty-one* he recalls as he sits, wheezing, on the stair *when he accepted euthanasia. Surely I am not that old. What keeps me alive?*

He has no answer.

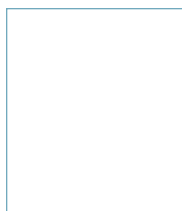
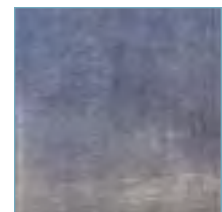
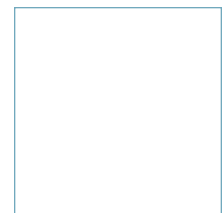
When he reaches the attic, Douglas spends fifteen minutes in locating the ancient trunk in which Bent family records are kept. They are minutes well spent: Douglas is cheered by many of the antiques he must shift to get at the trunk. Here is the potter's wheel his mother worked; there the head of the axe with which he once took off his right big toe; over in the corner a battered peavey from the long-gone sawmill days. They remind him of a childhood when life still made sense, and bring a smile to his grizzled features. It does not stay long.

Opening the trunk presents difficulties—it is locked, and Douglas cannot remember where he put the key. He has not seen it for many years, or the trunk for that matter. Finally he gives up, smashes the old lock with the peavey, and levers up the lid (the Bents have always learned leverage as they got old, working efficiently long after strength has gone). It opens with a shriek, hinges protesting their shattered sleep.

The past leaps out at him like the woes of the world from Pandora's Box. On top of the pile is a picture of Douglas's parents, Douglas Sr. and Sarah, smiling on their wedding day, Grandfather Lester behind them near an enormous barn, grazing cattle visible in the background.

Beneath the picture he finds a collection of receipts for paid grain-bills, remembers the days when food was cheap enough to feed animals, and there were animals to be fed. Digging deeper, he comes across cancelled cheques, insurance policies, tax records, a collection of report cards, and letters wrapped in ribbon. Douglas pulls up short at the handmade rosary he gave his mother for her fifteenth anniversary, and wonders if either of them still believed in God even then. Again, it is hard to remember.

At last he locates his birth certificate. He stands, groaning with the ache in his calves and knees, and threads his way through the crowded attic to the west window, where the light from the setting sun is sufficient to read



the fading document. He seats himself on the shell of a television that has not worked since he was a boy, holds the paper close to his face, and squints.

“May 12, 1999,” reads the date at the top.

*Why, I’m fifty years old* he tells himself in wonderment. *Fifty: I’ll be darned.*

There is something about that number that rings a bell in Douglas’s tired old mind, something he can’t quite recall about what it means to be fifty years old. He squints at the birth certificate again.

And there on the last line, he sees it, sees what he had almost forgotten, and realizes that he was wrong—he will be getting a birthday present today after all.

For the bottom line of his birth certificate says, simply and blessedly, “... expiry date: May 12, 2049.”

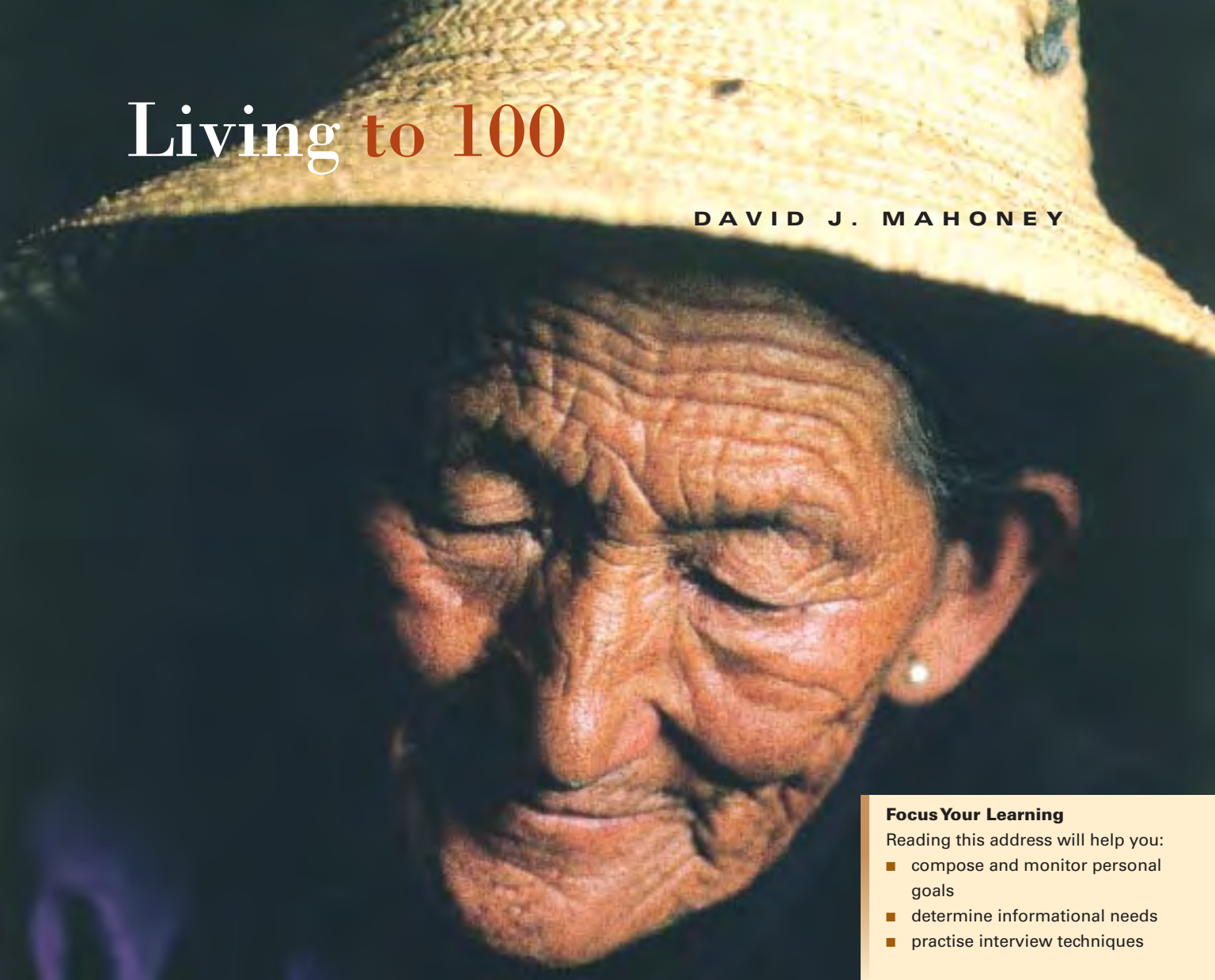
Downstairs, for the first time in years, there is a knock at the door. ■

## Activities

1. Work in pairs to produce two maps: a map of the area around the Bent farm as it was when Douglas was a boy, and a map of the area as it is in 2049. Use evidence from the text and label the important elements.
2. Explain the birthday present that Douglas is to receive. Discuss with a partner how the word “blessedly” reinforces the themes of the whole story.
3. Create an “ancient trunk.” You may make one that reflects your life or the life of someone in your family, or you may create one for a completely fictional character. Include mementos such as photographs, souvenirs, old letters, news clippings, and other items that people keep as reminders of the past. Present your trunk in a role play to a group of classmates. Ensure that the objects in the trunk and the opinions in the presentation are appropriate for the time period and cultural background from which your character comes.
4. Reread the story and list the items from our world that have disappeared from Douglas Bent’s. In discussion with a partner, rank the list in order of probability of disappearance. Justify your opinions by reference to your own experience and your knowledge of current trends.
5. Using complete sentences, explain the meaning of the following phrases in the context of the story:
  - Pandora’s Box
  - agribusiness has destroyed agriculture
  - the petrochemical industry died of thirst
  - excreting concrete and steel
  - tax laws penalizing old age

# Living to 100

DAVID J. MAHONEY



## Focus Your Learning

Reading this address will help you:

- compose and monitor personal goals
- determine informational needs
- practise interview techniques

This speech is going to make you roll your eyes and smile. You're going to wonder—what kind of super-optimist did they get to make this year's commencement address? OK, here comes a challenge you didn't know you had: Each one of you is going to have to start planning now to live to be one hundred.

No, I'm not planning to live to a hundred myself. Nor is my son, David Jr.—he'll consider himself lucky to get to ninety. But his son, now age six, at the tag end of your generation, has more than a good chance to break a hundred. And so do all of you in the class of '96.

I'm not alone in making this prediction. A strange thing happened on Air Force One recently: The president of the United States sat on the floor of the aircraft, up against a bulkhead, and spoke to the travelling press pool for three hours. Not a word was on the record. The rules were "psychological background"—that meant the press could report what President Clinton was thinking, but could not say he was the one who told them. They could attribute his ruminations only to a mysterious source called "the highest authority."

Some of us read that pool report with care

because we like to know what's going on in the head of the man who runs the country. And sure enough, there was a line in it that was, to me, a stunner. Quote: "He feels biology will be to the twenty-first century what physics was to the twentieth century, he believes people might routinely live beyond one hundred years."

That comes to us from "the highest authority"—not God, but from the CEO of the world's only superpower, who has access to the best scientific minds in the country. And he was not talking about one person in a thousand living to be a hundred, as happens today; he believes that people will "routinely" make it all the way to triple digits. Of course, the reporters were more interested in politics and scandal, and nobody followed up on the most intriguing notion of the day: an extra-long generation tacked on to the average human's life.

Of course, the actuaries at the insurance companies look back, not forward, to report past life expectancy. Based on past history, the tables say all of you here can expect to live to only seventy-seven years and nine months. Don't knock it—that's a ten percent longer

life than Americans born fifty years ago, and it beats the biblical "three score and ten." But the actuaries are careful to say they're only historians, and they're not making forecasts.

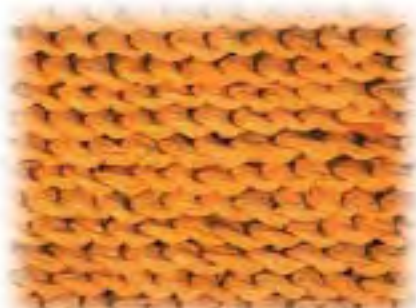
So don't be fooled by an "expectancy" age that presumes we won't get a cure for cancer—which we will. Don't accept a presumption that organ transplants won't become everyday operations, which they will. And then factor in the medical breakthroughs stemming from the Human Genome Project, which is going to use genetics to cure

hereditary diseases and bring down the death rate. And if we were able, in these past fifty years, to triumph over the microbe with antibiotics, isn't it logical to assume that in the coming generations we will be able to conquer viruses? Taken together, the medical advances in your lifetime are near certain to add a generation to your life. You will play in a whole new fourth quarter.

Let me tell you what opened my mind to these possibilities. I am chairman of the Charles A. Dana Foundation, which supports research in brain science. Five years ago, I put a challenge to a group of the brainiest neuroscientists in the world, many of them Nobel laureates, including James Watson, the co-discoverer of DNA. I said: "Name ten brain problems you can solve in the coming decade if you get the proper support." At first they were reluctant to go out on a limb, but they realized how important it was to offer realistic hope in order to get research support. They signed on to ten challenges—just ten—that together can beat dozens of neurological diseases in this decade.

We're halfway through this decade—how are we doing? Well, the latest Dana Alliance progress report shows that we have found the gene for Lou Gehrig's disease and the first drug for it is coming out this year. We've got not one but four genes involved in Alzheimer's disease and twenty-two new drugs for it are in trials. We have the first really good medication for schizophrenia and more in the pipeline, and just this year the FDA approved the first emergency drug that can protect against disability if someone having a stroke receives it quickly.

Next on the list: treatments that will block the action of cocaine. Brain tissue transplants—and not with human fetuses, either—that will cure Parkinson's disease. At least one and probably more genes that cause manic-depressive illness. And the first drugs that can induce





injured spinal cord cells to reconnect—so that people will have a better shot at recovering movement. These aren't my predictions: they are the estimates of the best minds in the field, who have a track record of delivering the cures they talk about.

That's why I agree with "the highest authority" in Air Force One about your generation living to a hundred. Get your minds around that: Most of you, now in your early twenties, might well have the chance to be centenarians. What does that mean to you right now?

You think of centenarians as toothless old geezers doddering around if they're lucky, confined to wheelchairs if they're not. You think of the line of George Burns when he reached one hundred: "At my age, you don't buy green bananas." Or you're thinking of the gag about Senator Strom Thurmond—that when he willed his body parts to a hospital, the doctors saw a list of parts that they weren't even using anymore.

You think of extreme old age—if you think of it at all—as a time of being a liability to society and a burden to the family. Of falling apart physically and losing your marbles mentally. Of making no contribution. And—worst of all—of having no fun. As Ira Gershwin wrote in *Porgy and Bess*: "Methuselah lived nine hundred years. But who calls that livin', when no gal will give in, to no one who's nine hundred years."

But what if brain scientists are able to keep pace with the scientists of the body? Let's assume that immunologists will be able to prevent or cure everything from cancer to AIDS, and organ transplants and blood-work and genetic engineering will cope with most other ailments and diseases. Without an active brain—without a working memory and the ability to learn—"who calls *that livin'*"?

I'm here to tell you that neuroscience is keeping pace with, even setting the pace for, all

other medical disciplines. This year, as you can learn from our heavily hit Web site on the Internet, we're expanding the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives on a global scale. Here's our guarantee: as body scientists keep you alive to a hundred, brain scientists will keep your life worth living.

What do you do with this information? I submit that you throw out all previous notions of one career followed by a lazy retirement. That was the strategy of your grandfathers and it's strictly wheelchair thinking. You need a new strategy for a lifetime of alertness that lasts a whole century.

The Centenarian Strategy delivers a swift kick in the head to the current idea of hitting the ground running, working your youth into a frazzle, taking every better offer as it comes, making a pile as early as you can, and then coasting on that momentum until your last downsizing company forces you into retirement.

The Centenarian Strategy also runs counter to the planning of idealistic young people who look to a life of public service, of social work, or environmental action, setting aside money for psychic income and expecting the government to care for them in old age.

Keeping that active fourth quarter in view—remembering that brain scientists have already found that you are much less likely to vegetate if you stay active and keep exercising your mind as well as your body—then here are the five fundamentals of the Centenarian Strategy:

1. *Diversify your career from the very beginning.*

Stop thinking of jobs in series, one after the other: instead, think of careers in parallel. That means planning your vocation along with your avocation, and keeping them as separate as possible. If you want to go into business, plan an avocation of music or art; if you are inclined toward the law or the media, diversify into education or landscaping. If you want to be a poet,

think about politics on the side, and study it seriously.

Don't confuse an avocation with recreation. Watching basketball on television or surfing the Internet for the latest interactive game can be a lively part of life, but it's not a creative avocation. And don't confuse a serious avocation with a hobby: do-it-yourselfing is fun, and so are clay modelling, and gardening and fiddling with old cars. Hobbies are ways to relax and to make friends, and everybody should have some: but a real avocation is a subtext to a career, and a part of your working week to pursue with a certain dedication. Why? Not only because it gives balance to your second quarter, but because it positions you for the time that will come, in the third or fourth quarter, to switch gears. And then switch them again—you'll have the time, and public policy will change to give you incentives to keep working or avocating.

The point is to not be single-minded about a career. Be double-minded, or triple-minded: keep a pot or two on your back-burners.

*2. Take advantage of your opportunity to wind up a millionaire.*

Financial independence will take a lot of pressure off that fourth quarter and make it something to look forward to. The Age of Entitlement is coming to an end. The baby boomers who count only on Social Security and Medicare will be disappointed. You in the post-boomer generation should not rely on society's safety net and think more about your own personal nest egg.

*3. Invest in your family dimension.*

As life gets longer, young people are getting married later. Fine; that deliberation about a big choice should ultimately reverse the divorce rate. But make a commitment early in your second quarter: the smartest thing you can do in diversifying your life is to stop playing the field.

The wave of the future, in the Centenarian

Strategy, is to frame your life in traditional family settings. Do your market research in singlehood, choose for the long term and then commit to marriage; have kids; avoid divorce; raise your likelihood of having grandchildren. Following this course, you can expect at least a couple of great-grandchildren to enjoy, to work with, and to help as you approach the century mark. If you plan properly now to protect your wallet and your intellect, you can be a family asset, not a liability, later; and your family, with all the headaches, will enrich your life.

*4. Pace yourself; it's a small world and a long life.*

The centenarian thinks about success differently, with a longer view. He or she measures success in getting to personal satisfaction, which does not always mean getting to the top of the heap. Making money is important, never derogate building an estate that you and your progeny can use. But developing long-term loyalties in all the strands of your career and avocation and hobbies and recreation pays off in that satisfaction. Those loyalties also make life easier later: you can get things done across the different strands, helping someone in your avocation who has helped you in your career.

Ask yourself along the way: Whose approval is important to you? Whose is not? The centenarians do not stop to smell the flowers; they carry the flowers along.

*5. Plan for at least one thoroughgoing discom-bobulation in your life.*

This can be a good shock, like meeting someone amazing, or developing a talent you never knew you had, or finding an opportunity that takes your career or avocation in a wholly new direction. Or you can find yourself, after years of success and loyal service, out on your ear in a merger or a downsizing or a hostile takeover.

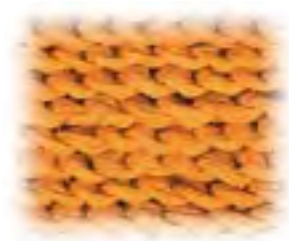
It happened to me. I was running a multi-

billion-dollar conglomerate, doing just fine, but when I tried to take it private, somebody beat me to the punch. I wound up with a big bunch of money, which meant I got no sympathy from my friends, but I was out of a job. No airplane, no executive support system, no daily calendar full of appointments with big shots—no place to go in the morning.

Did I let it bother me? You bet I did. I plunged into the deepest blue funk imaginable. But luckily—and this was not part of any life strategy—I had an avocation to turn to. It was a philanthropy, the Dana Foundation, and it had long been leading me into supporting the field of brain science. So I threw myself into that, applying what I had learned in marketing and finance to a field that needed an outsider with those credentials. And for the past ten years, I've gotten more sheer satisfaction out of marshalling the force of public opinion behind research into imaging, memory, and conquering depression than anything I ever did as a boy wonder or a boardroom biggie.

But it would not have happened if I did not

have that anchor to windward—the other, wholly unrelated activity to turn to. Success, or a resounding setback, in one career can lead to success, of another kind, in the parallel career.



That, in a nutshell, is how to cope with a challenge no graduating class has ever had—the challenge of a life with an active fourth quarter. Medical science will give most of you the body to blow out a hundred candles on your birthday cake, and the brain scientists will give you the life of your mind. That active memory will be their gift to you.

Unlike most of today's centenarians, you will be able to remember and use what you've learned in your century. You will be able, in the poet's words, to enjoy "the last of life, for which the first was made." It's up to you to make sure you have a varied life that's worth remembering.

Good luck. Happy commencement. And a happy hundredth birthday. ■

## Activities

- a)** In a personal journal, describe the career you would like to have in the future. If you are unsure, then describe a career dream. Add to the description the "avocation" that David J. Mahoney talks about.

**b)** Determine what information you will need about the career you've chosen. Research the steps you would need to take to qualify: university or college schooling; apprenticeship; skills, location, resources; etc. Lay out a brief career plan with a general timeline. In a journal entry, reflect on what you discovered in your research.
- Interview your grandparents or an older relative and ask them about their life. You might consider questions such as these:

  - what is your definition of a good life?
  - what advice would you give to someone of my age?
  - what things should be avoided?
  - what things are important to you? love? money?

Summarize your findings in a short essay and show the finished product to the interviewee.

## End-of-unit Activities

1. With a partner, compare the descriptions of the importance of dreams in “Dreamworld,” “In Praise of Dreams,” and “The Dream.” Which piece do you find most persuasive? Why? What strengths and weaknesses can you see in the form and tone of each writer’s work? Why do you think the authors chose to express themselves in the way they did? Summarize your discussion in a brief essay.
2. Dreams often reveal our inmost thoughts and feelings about what is happening in our lives, even when we don’t acknowledge those thoughts and feelings in our everyday life. Create a visual representation of a dream (or nightmare) that the main character in “Sophie, 1990” might have, using images and symbols to reveal how she really feels about her life.
3. Write a description of “bridge building” from the perspective of the father in “The Bridge Builder.” Model your description on the style of “Walking Through a Wall.” Present your work to the class as a monologue.
4. Write a modern-day trickster myth based on the news stories about Sommy, the Cyber Trickster. For a model of a trickster myth, see “How Rocks Were Born” in Unit 3.
5. “Sophie, 1990,” “The Curio Shop,” “Sentry,” and “No Renewal” are all examples of the science fiction genre. List common elements of these stories that characterize the genre. Use your list as the basis for writing a short definition of science fiction. Compare your definition with those of other classmates.
6. The western genre has often been compared with that of science fiction. Reread the story “The Time of the Wolves” from Unit 3, and consider how it might be adapted to a science fiction setting. Take as an example the setting and action of “Sentry” in planning your changes.
7. “Armies of the Moon” deals with an historical event (the moon landing) in an imaginative way. Prepare a radio news report based on the story described in the poem.
8. With a partner, describe the characteristics and level of expertise of the intended audience for each of the following pieces about technology: “Digital Bullies,” “Hello, Out There,” “Voice Mail and the Mating Ritual,” and “Living to 100.” Find specific examples from each text to back up your assessments.
9. “No Renewal” and “Living to 100” present opposing views of the issue of aging in the future. With a partner, role-play a debate between David J. Mahoney and Spider Robinson on this topic. Use ideas presented in the text as a starting point for the debate.
10. In a small group think about the possible directions in which society might go during the next few decades. Present your speculations in a visual format—poster, future guide book, video documentary, diagram of a city of the future, etc. Present your material to the class and ask for their feedback.
11. In groups of five, invent a simple board game based on one of the themes covered in this unit: dreams, the future, science fiction, or technology. You will need to make the board, the pieces, the cards, if needed, and a set of rules. Make up a title for your game. When you have finished, exchange your product with another group, and ask for suggestions from the players on how the game could be improved.

# BIOGRAPHIES OF CONTRIBUTORS

## Arrogant Worms

The Arrogant Worms are a Canadian folk trio best known for their comedic and satiric performances at folk festivals and on the fringe theatre circuit. The group's three members, Trevor Strong, Chris Patterson, and Mike McCormick, started out writing for university radio while attending Queen's University in Kingston. Their songs often deal with social protest on a broad range of Canadian themes.

## Baldwin, Shauna Singh

Born Montreal

Shauna Singh Baldwin was born in Montreal and raised in India. She is a short story writer and novelist whose works often explore the theme of cultural estrangement. Many of her stories describe the hardships and joys in the lives of women in India and Canada at various times during this century.

## Bezic, Sandra

A native of Toronto and former figure-skating champion, Sandra Bezic is now a world-famous figure-skating choreographer. She is known for her ability to create programs that reflect and highlight the particular personality of a skater.

## Braid, Kate

Born 1947

Kate Braid's poems draw from her experience as a carpenter working in a traditionally male trade. Her pride in her work, her sense of humour, and her vision are evident in her poetry. Her book *Covering Rough Ground* was published in 1991 and *To This Cedar Fountain* was published in 1995.

## Brown, Fredric

Born 1906, Cincinnati, Ohio; died 1972

Fredric Brown won the Edgar Allan Poe Award in 1948 for his mystery novel *The Fabulous Clipjoint*. Although Brown wrote in the era of "pulp fiction"—thrillers, science fiction, and crime novels mass-produced at low cost—his works were known for their depth and perception. Using the common conventions of science fiction, such as bug-eyed aliens and alternate worlds, he challenged the reader to look beyond the surface.

## Buckler, Ernest

Born 1908, Dalhousie, Nova Scotia; died 1984

Ernest Buckler's short stories have been included in several collections. In addition to short stories, he has written novels, a memoir, and scripts for radio plays. His series of stories *The Rebellion of Young David* provided the background for his first full-length novel.

## Butala, Sharon

Born 1940, Nipawin, Saskatchewan

A novelist and short story writer, Sharon Butala is also known for her creative works of non-fiction, notably *The Perfection of the Morning*. Born and raised in Saskatchewan, Butala finds her creative inspiration in the prairie landscape.

## Chan, Gillian

Born 1954, Cleethorpes, England

Born and educated in England and Germany, Gillian Chan taught English and ran a school library in Norfolk, England, until 1990 when she came to live in Canada. She then turned to writing and has produced two collections of connected short stories about teens at fictional Elmwood High. Chan probes familiar adolescent concerns about jealousy, awkwardness, and peer acceptance. She believes that the short story is the perfect vehicle for capturing the intense and episodic nature of teenage life.

## Chekhov, Anton

Born 1860, Taganrog, Russia; died 1904

Anton Chekhov, considered one of the most significant writers of the late nineteenth century, was educated as a medical doctor. He wrote only for personal pleasure until a friend encouraged him to develop his obvious gift. His acute insight into the human condition made him one of the most celebrated writers of the modern short story and modern drama.

## Choy, Wayson

Born 1939, Vancouver, British Columbia

A native of Vancouver, Wayson Choy teaches English literature at Humber College in Toronto. Choy wrote "The Jade Peony" first as a short story, and later expanded it into a novel. It won the City of Vancouver



Book Award in 1996 and shared Ontario's Trillium Book Award in 1995. Choy uses Vancouver's prewar Chinatown as his setting, and much of his writing is inspired by childhood memories of stories told around the kitchen tables of family, friends, and relatives.

### Curry, Peggy Simson

Born 1911, Dunure, Ayrshire, Scotland; died 1987

Novelist, short story writer, and poet Peggy Simson Curry was named Poet Laureate of Wyoming in 1981 for her lyrics about the state. The daughter of a rancher, Curry is known for her realistic portrayal of ranch life in the West.

### Dahl, Roald

Born 1916, Wales; died 1990

Dahl started out writing adult books and short stories but soon became known primarily for his quirky children's stories. Dahl claimed that he wrote to suit the taste of children, who appreciate a sense of humour puzzling to adults. He insisted that his main purpose was to amuse children and make them laugh. Dahl's works feature children who are empowered to gain a humorous revenge on the tyrannical adults in their lives.

### Darbasie, Nigel

Born Trinidad

In 1969 poet Nigel Darbasie moved from Trinidad to Canada and studied at the University of Alberta. His works have been broadcast on radio and television.

### Deal, Borden

Born 1922, Pontotoc, Mississippi; died 1985

Borden Deal, born into a Southern farming family, was a prolific writer. In addition to his novels, he wrote short stories, poems, and reviews, which have appeared in many magazines. Prominent in his stories is the theme of people's attachment to the land.

### DiFranco, Ani

Born 1970, Buffalo, New York

Ani DiFranco's first interests were dance and visual art, but her encounters with touring musicians and their frequent visits with her family inspired her to learn the acoustic guitar. She was performing by the age of 10 and songwriting and singing in coffeehouses at 15. She recorded her first album at 20. With money borrowed from friends, she started an artist-run, independent record label, Righteous Babe Records, in 1990.

### Dryden, Ken

Born 1947, Hamilton, Ontario

Ken Dryden was a goaltender for the Montreal

Canadiens of the National Hockey League (NHL). He led Montreal to six Stanley Cup titles and was a member of Team Canada in the 1972 Summit Series between Canada and Russia. Notably, he juggled his hockey career with his studies at law school and his work for consumer advocate Ralph Nader. In 1983, Dryden wrote *The Game*, an account of his last year in the NHL. He went on to become the president and general manager of the Toronto Maple Leafs.

### Ellis, Sarah

Born 1952, Vancouver, British Columbia

Children's author Sarah Ellis has published short stories and novels. As a children's librarian, storyteller, and book reviewer she read many children's books before trying her own hand at writing. She uses a simple and direct style of writing, and many of her themes concentrate on the subject of the family.

### Engel, Marian

Born 1933, Toronto, Ontario; died 1985

Winner of the Governor General's Award for her novel *Bear* in 1976, Marian Engel was made an officer of the Order of Canada in 1982. Although her publications range from children's books to adult non-fiction, Engel is known primarily as a novelist. She writes frequently of women and their struggle with complex issues.

### Gerrold, David

Born 1944

A science fiction novelist and short story writer, David Gerrold has also been the story editor for three popular television series. His works have received nominations for both the Hugo Award and the Nebula Award.

### Gibran, Kahlil

Born 1883, Bechari, Lebanon; died 1931

Kahlil Gibran, writer and artist, spent his early life in Lebanon and the United States, receiving much of his education in Beirut. He eventually settled in New York City, where he wrote poetry, short stories, and literary essays in English and Arabic. His most famous work is the inspirational classic, *The Prophet*.

### Gilfond, Henry

A writer and teacher in New York schools for many years, Henry Gilfond is a ghostwriter on numerous subjects. He has also written radio and television scripts and full-length plays. Ask him to write anything, he says, and he'll do it "for the love of writing."

## Gom, Leona

Born 1946, Fairview, Alberta

A poet, playwright, and novelist, Leona Gom has also been a college English instructor. Two of her plays have been broadcast, and her poems have appeared in many anthologies and magazines. Much of her writing describes the Peace River country of northern Alberta.

## Gordimer, Nadine

Born 1923, Springs, South Africa

Nadine Gordimer has written numerous novels, short stories, and essays. As a sign of the esteem in which the literary world holds her work, she was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1991. The South African writer has made the policy of apartheid an important theme in her work and has been called the “literary voice and conscience of her society.” Ironically, the year Gordimer won the Nobel Prize, Nelson Mandela had been released from prison but did not yet have the right to vote.

## Hastings, Selina

Born 1945

A literary biographer and journalist, Selina Hastings has written biographies of authors Nancy Mitford and Evelyn Waugh. She has also retold many traditional fables and legends for both children and adults.

## Heynen, Jim

Born 1940, Sioux County, Iowa

Jim Heynen is a poet and fiction writer whose works celebrate the joys and difficulties of rural life. He is best known for his story collections featuring “the boys,” an unnamed group of characters who experience adventures both comic and serious.

## Hillen, Ernest

Born 1934, Holland

Ernest Hillen was born in Holland and moved to Indonesia when he was three years old. During World War II, he and his family were imprisoned in internment camps after the invasion of the island of Java. Hillen’s book *The Way of a Boy* recounts his experiences during this time. He moved to Canada with his family after the war.

## Holeman, Linda

Born 1949, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Linda Holeman started her career as a teacher, even though she had been writing since she was a child. She left teaching to stay home with her young children, started writing in earnest, and joined a women’s writing group. Her short stories soon began winning competi-

tions and were eventually published in the collection *Saying Good-bye*. She writes for adults and children, but many of her stories have young adult voices.

## Hope, A. D.

Born 1907, Cooma, New South Wales, Australia

Alec Derwent Hope is considered Australia’s foremost poet. A prolific poet and essayist, Hope has been compared to W. H. Auden. His writing is both satiric and sensual and his skill is in reinterpretation. He has said that poetry, when expressing its subject, creates “an emotion which is the feeling of the poem and not the feeling of the poet.”

## Houston, James

Born 1933, San Francisco, California

A California novelist and non-fiction writer whose work has included cultural film documentaries, James Houston is praised by critics for his balanced and thorough treatment of his subjects. He and his wife Jeanne Wakatsuki wrote a book on the internment of the Japanese during World War II. Houston has said that he finds a spiritual dimension in the act of writing.

## Ito, Sally

Born 1964, Taber, Alberta

Sally Ito grew up in Alberta and the Northwest Territories. After studying at the University of British Columbia, she travelled to Japan on a scholarship and translated Japanese poetry. Her poems and short fiction reflect her Japanese-Canadian culture and her experience in diverse locations. Ito’s works experiment with a wide range of styles.

## Jenkins, Louis

Born 1942, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Poet and publisher Louis Jenkins won a Bush Foundation fellowship for poetry in 1979.

## Kotzwinkle, William

Born 1938, Scranton, Pennsylvania

A versatile writer whose works include children’s stories, science fiction novels, and novelizations of popular movies such as *E.T.*, *the Extra-Terrestrial*, William Kotzwinkle successfully combines the mundane and the magical. His books are often characterized by intricate plots and convincing characters.

## Lewis, Maud

Born 1903, South Ohio, Nova Scotia; died 1970

Folk artist Maud Lewis spent her entire life within one hour’s drive of her birthplace. Her naïve paintings, in

marine or house paints on pieces of board, are colourful and lively depictions of everyday rural life. Despite crippling arthritis, she painted scenes of farm and village life, animals, boats, and shorelines in a one-room cottage where she and her husband lived for over thirty-two years.

### Lill, Wendy

Born 1950, Vancouver, British Columbia

Both politician and playwright, Wendy Lill has been a social activist since her days as a political science student at Toronto's York University. Lill's plays often touch on the theme of what she calls "the growing divide between the elite and the street." Her works have received several awards and three nominations for the Governor General's Award for Drama. Currently she sits as the federal NDP member for Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and serves as the party's critic on culture and as spokesperson on issues affecting persons with disabilities.

### MacEwen, Gwendolyn

Born 1941, Toronto, Ontario; died 1987

Gwendolyn MacEwen wrote several documentaries, dramas, children's books, and short story collections in addition to poetry. Much of her verse has been translated into other languages, and in 1970 she won the Governor General's Award for Poetry for *The Shadow Maker*.

### Mahoney, David J.

Formerly the head of a multimillion-dollar corporation, David J. Mahoney turned his interest and energy to philanthropy. He is now head of the Charles A. Dana Foundation, which supports research in the field of brain science.

### Mahy, Margaret

Born 1936, Whakatane, New Zealand

Margaret Mahy has written over fifty separate works for children and young adults. She is a powerful storyteller whose skill as a poet gives her the ability to combine the fantastic with the real in what she calls an "imaginative truth." One of the recurring themes in her works is family relationships and their importance to young adults.

### Muller, Marcia

Born 1944, Detroit, Michigan

A mystery writer and editor of short story collections, Marcia Muller helped revolutionize the depiction of female private investigators when she introduced her popular character Sharon McCone. Unlike her male counterparts, Muller's character was more apt to use her wits than her gun to solve crimes.

### Munro, H. H. "Saki"

Born 1870, Akyab, Burma; died 1916

H. H. Munro was born in the Far East but grew up in a small village in England. He started his career as a police officer in Burma, but a bout of malaria sent him back to England. His collaboration on satiric cartoons under the pen name "Saki" earned him public recognition. He then turned his hand to short stories, characterized by humour and a fascination with the odd and eerie. Munro was killed in action during World War I.

### Nowlan, Alden

Born 1933, Stanley, Nova Scotia; died 1983

Whatever genre Alden Nowlan chose to write in—poetry, short story, novel, or drama—the setting of the piece was often of primary importance. It was usually a small town or village in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick. Nowlan's main characters were very responsive to their surroundings.

### Noyes, Alfred

Born 1880, Wolverhampton, England; died 1958

Alfred Noyes is among the most prolific and popular poets of the early twentieth century. He wrote traditional verse like ballads and romantic narrative poems. He was successful enough to be able to devote his time exclusively to writing, an unusual situation for poets of his day.

### Pittman, Al

Born 1940, St. Leonard's, Newfoundland

Al Pittman is a nationally recognized poet, children's writer, and playwright. In addition to writing, he has taught English at the high school and university levels.

### Porter, Helen Fogwill

Born 1930, St. John's, Newfoundland

Helen Fogwill Porter is a nationally recognized poet with many credits to her name. She has done poetry readings and workshops across the country.

### Pratt, Mary

Mary Pratt is one of Canada's most respected painters. Most of her works show realistic depictions of domestic objects or the female figure. Mary Pratt's perceptive use of light makes these pieces of art resemble photographs.

### Robinson, Spider

Born 1948, New York, New York

Born and educated in the United States, Spider Robinson now makes Nova Scotia his home. Robinson's science

fiction has won him both the Hugo Award and the Nebula Award. He claims that his particular formula for saving the world is to show in his writing that “shared pain is lessened, shared joy increased.”

### Rodriguez, Carmen

Born 1948, Valdivia, Chile

Carmen Rodriguez came to Canada as a political refugee following the military coup in Chile in 1973. In addition to her work as a poet, short story writer, translator, and editor, Rodriguez has been involved in adult literacy and popular education. Her works deal with revolution and exile and are characterized by quiet humour and a dignified sense of loss.

### Shadrake, Alan

Alan Shadrake was a reporter for a London daily newspaper before he went to live in Berlin. He became a freelance journalist, reporting on events in the former East Germany and West Germany.

### Souster, Raymond

Born 1921, Toronto, Ontario

Raymond Souster lives in, loves, and writes about Toronto. His poems tell of the people, the buildings, and even the birds and cats he discovers in the city. He won the Governor General’s Award in 1964 for *The Colour of the Times: The Collected Poems*.

### Szyborska, Wislawa

Born 1923, Prowent-Brin, Poland

Poet and critic Wislawa Szymborska received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1996. Her poems have been praised not only for their directness and distinct voice but also for their wit and humour.

### Thurston, Harry

Born 1950, Yarmouth, Nova Scotia

A poet and magazine writer, Harry Thurston’s works reflect both his East Coast farm background and his science training. Thurston believes that the oral tradition so prevalent in Nova Scotia has also informed much of his writing.

### Tynes, Maxine

Born 1949, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Maxine Tynes is a Maritime poet whose writing draws on her cultural heritage, the Black Loyalists of Nova Scotia. Her first poetry collection, *Borrowed Beauty*, was published in 1987 and won the Milton Acorn People’s Poet Award.

### Updike, John

Born 1932, Shillington, Pennsylvania

Prolific novelist, poet, essayist, short story writer, and critic, John Updike is hailed as one of the United States’ greatest writers. His works have received numerous awards including two Pulitzer prizes. Updike’s fluent rhetoric often takes as its theme the routines of home and family.

### Waddington, Miriam

Born 1917, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Miriam Waddington has published many volumes of poetry, essays, and stories. Her works have been translated into several languages and her songs have been set to music by Canadian and American composers. Waddington’s poems are noted for their structured use of repetition and sustained metaphor.

### Watts, Enos D.

Born 1939, Long Pond, Newfoundland

Enos Watts is a Newfoundland poet and educator.

### Webb, Boyd

Born 1947

New Zealand’s internationally successful artist working in the area of sculpture, photography, and film, Boyd Webb now lives and works in England. His works evoke a dream world and he creates scenarios specifically for them, often using large and puzzling objects. He says, “Artists are licensed to dream, to imagine the unimaginable.”

### Wynne-Jones, Tim

Born 1948, Cheshire, England

Canadian writer Tim Wynne-Jones has won many awards for his writing, including the Governor General’s Award in 1993 for his short story collection *Some of the Kinder Planets* and again in 1995 for his young adult novel *The Maestro*. Wynne-Jones’ ability to weave a fascinating tale with eccentric yet appealing characters makes his works as appealing to adult audiences as they are to teens. Wynne-Jones has said that he likes to tell stories “about ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances or extraordinary people in very ordinary circumstances.”

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mission of David Blackwood; p. 234 Reuters/David Brauchli/Archive Photo; p. 241 Ken Whitmore/Tony Stone Images; p. 249 © Paul Watson/Three-In-A-Box; p. 250 COMSTOCK; p. 252 ED PASCHKE/SUPERSTOCK; p. 254 "The Bridge Builder" by Margaret Mahy from *The Door In the Air and Other Stories*, copyright © 1976 Margaret Mahy, published by Orion Children's Books; p. 262 Courtesy of the artist, George Littlechild; p. 264 COMSTOCK; p. 266 "The Art of Painting" by Jan Vermeer, Kunsthistorisches, Vienna, Austria, LERNER FINE ART COLLECTION/SUPERSTOCK; p. 268 SUPERSTOCK; p. 272 FRANCISCO CRUZ/SUPERSTOCK; p. 277 Frank Orel/Tony Stone Images; p. 282 "Welcome to Cyberspace" Design Firm: Mirko Ilic Corp.; p. 284 "Parlor Scene" KONSTANTIN RODKO/SUPERSTOCK; p. 288 Mark Davison/Tony Stone Images; p. 289 Archive Photos/fotos international; p. 292 David Higgs/Tony Stone Images; p. 294 Peter Cade/Tony Stone Images; p. 296 Bumper sticker ©Northern Sun Merchandising; p. 297 Cartoon by Grimm Sport Collection Inc. Artist Ileana Grimm, ©Copyright 1995; p. 298 David Jeffrey/Image Bank; p. 299 "Star Trek" TV "The Trouble With Tribbles" William Shatner © 1968 Paramount/NBC/MPTV; p. 322 PABLO RIVIERA/SUPERSTOCK; p. 327 SUPERSTOCK

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