

The Terror of Blue John Gap

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Pre-reading exercises

Key vocabulary

Verbs describing movement

- 1 Dr Hardcastle: crouch, flounder, grope, stagger, stoop
creature: lurch, rear up

Nouns used to refer to the underground caves and passages

- 2 1 chasm
2 burrow
3 shaft
4 chamber
5 labyrinth

Describing the entrance to Blue John Gap

- 3 1 thorns; 2 small, dry branches; 3 small bits of wool; 4 coat of wool; 5 marked, covered; 6 large rocks;
7 wet earth; 8 confused

Describing sounds

- 4 a lion – roar; a stream – gurgle; footsteps – muffled; a car horn – hoot; thunder – boom;
a falling rock – crash; a dog – whine

Main themes

5, 6, 7 Student's own answers

Post-reading exercises

Understanding the story

An anonymous narrator introduces the story as if it were a true story.

Because Hardcastle is dead and has left his version of the story in the hands of a friend.

April 17

- 1 Sheep had gone missing; a pool of blood and tufts of wool had been found; a hole had appeared in a wall; he had heard the creature roaring in the underground passages.
- 2 The sheep could have been stolen by a "common place sheep-stealer"; the hole in the wall could have been made by a person; the roaring sound could be the sound of water underground.
- 3 He heard a strange sound coming from the entrance to the Blue John Gap.

April 20

- 4 Because he doesn't want to scare or worry them.
- 5 He sees some blood on a tuft of wool and thinks that the bushes look as if a heavy animal had pushed its way through them.
- 6 Student's own answer

April 22

- 7 A large mark.
- 8 He thought it might have been made by a large rock or by an enormous animal.
- 9 For a long time – possibly several hours.
- 10 He heard heavy footsteps; the sound of an animal drinking from the stream and smelling the air; a splash and the footsteps moving away. He felt cold and fearful.
- 11 Three new marks in the mud.

April 25

- 12 Because he wanted to tell someone about his experience in the Blue John Gap, someone who was not influenced by the local superstitions and who could give him advice based on a rational, scientific explanation.
- 13 He listened carefully to the story and examined Hardcastle's eyes and reflexes. He referred him to another doctor because he suspected that Hardcastle was mad or suffering from hallucinations.
- 14 Yes, because he had had the same initial reaction when Armitage first told him about the monster.

April 27

- 15 Because he didn't want to create a panic or to be considered a madman.
- 16 Because he wanted to find the truth behind the legend of the monster.

May 3

- 17 Because he thought the monster had killed Armitage.
- 18 He laughed. Because he thought Hardcastle was mad.

June 10

- 19 At the mouth of the tunnel, because he thought the monster would come out to catch some sheep.
- 20 Excited and fearless.
- 21 Falling to the floor.
- 22 In the Allerton's farmhouse.
- 23 They found the note he had left on the table of his bedroom, then a group of farmers went to find him.
- 24 They closed the entrance with large rocks. They wanted to stop the creature getting out.
- 25 The newspaper suggests that Hardcastle may have been suffering from hallucinations, although it also explains the locals' side of the story.
- 26 Hardcastle thinks the creature may be some kind of mutant bear that had adapted to life underground.
- 27 Student's own answer

Language study**Grammar****Creating emphasis: inversion after negative and limiting adverbials**

- 2
- 1 I only realised my position then (at that moment).
 - 2 There was no way I could judge how far off it was.
 - 3 My nerve should not fail me a second time.
 - 4 He differed from the bear in one point (way).

- 3 The ones from the story.

He is emphasising: 1) how long it had taken him to realise his position; 2) the impossibility of judging the distance; 3) the determination not to be scared a second time; 4) the fact that there was only one thing that made the creature different from a bear.

- 4
- 1 Never had he heard such a terrible sound.
 - 2 Never before had he seen such a terrible sight.
 - 3 In no way were the locals going to risk the monster reappearing.
 - 4 Only then did he see the monster's eyes.
 - 5 Little did he know what he was going to find.
 - 6 Seldom had he felt so vulnerable and alone.

Prepositions in relative clauses

- 5
- 1 The black depths which I peered into.
 - 2 A curious rock formation which I could recognise the entrance by.

- 3 The sound died away in the direction which it had come from.
- 4 Dr Mark Johnson, who I had a note of recommendation from.

Use of the pronoun *one*

- 6
 - 1 It was not a boom, nor a crash, such as you would associate with falling water.
 - 2 In that black velvety darkness you lost all your bearings when your blood is up, and your quarry seems to be flying.
 - 3 It gave me the impression of enormous weight carried upon sponge-like feet.

Formal vocabulary

- 7 several – a lot of; expeditions – visits; penetrated – gone in; answerable – responsible; mishap – accident; occur – happen; dwells – lives; passed – gone; return – come back

Multiple-clause sentences

- 8 As I rose from the examination of that singular mark and then looked round into the black shadows which hemmed me in, I must confess that I felt for a moment a most unpleasant sinking of my heart, and that, do what I could, the candle trembled in my outstretched hand.
- 9 (Suggested answer)
I rose from the examination of that singular mark.
I looked round into the black shadows.
The shadows hemmed me in.
I confess that I felt a most unpleasant sinking of my heart.
The sinking feeling lasted a moment.
I held my hand out.
The candle trembled in my hand.
I tried to stop it from trembling.
I couldn't stop the trembling.

Literary analysis

Plot

- 1 Main events

(Suggested answer)

Hardcastle hears the story about the strange creature; he explores the Blue John Gap for the first time, loses his candle, and has his first encounter with the creature; he decides to go back again, this time he sees the creature, chases it, and is attacked by it; the locals close the entrance to the caves; the story is reported in the local newspaper; Hardcastle dies and leaves a diary telling his tale.

Summary

(Suggested answer)

Dr Hardcastle's claim to have found the truth behind the legend of a strange underground creature convinces the locals to close the entrance to Blue John Gap.

2 (Suggested answer)

The most important event is the second encounter with the monster. Armitage's story, Hardcastle's first experience in the tunnel, the stories of sheep disappearing and then the disappearance of Armitage himself, all lead up to this event. As a consequence, the local people decide to close the entrance to the caves and Hardcastle decides to leave his diary as a testimony to what happened.

3, 4 Student's own answers

Character

5 He is thirty-five. He's suffering from tuberculosis. He has been sent to the country to convalesce. He is educated and relatively wealthy. He is probably single and does not seem to have any immediate family.

Adjectives: student's own answer

6 Scepticism. The strange sound he heard coming from the mouth of the tunnel. Tufts of wool with blood on them; the footprints in the mud.

7 Superstition: the Allerton sisters, Armitage, the local farming people.

Science: Dr Johnson, the police, the newspaper reporters.

Hardcastle: Student's own answer

8, 9 Student's own answers

10 The local people have been talking about the existence of a monster for a few months. It lives underground and feeds off local sheep. It is enormous and looks very like a bear. It is blind and only comes out on dark nights when there is no moonlight.

What it represents: Student's own answer

Narration

11, 12, 13 Student's own answers

Atmosphere

(Suggested answers)

14 The lonely landscape, the darkness in the tunnel; the description of the underground tunnels; the fetid smell underground; the strange sounds that come from underground; the description of the moonless night.

15 The isolation of the scene, the farmhouses are only *scattered lights*, the church bell is heard dimly from the distance. The time: Hardcastle hears the church clock strike midnight, *the darkest hour of the night*. An owl hoots nearby and the wind is whispering. There is no moon and no stars, only clouds moving across the sky.

- 16 The monster is enormous. Its fur is like a sheep's fleece. It looks like an enormous bear with huge claws and fangs. Its eyes are totally white and blind.

What makes it so terrifying? Student's own answer

Are you convinced? Student's own answer

Style

17, 18 Student's own answers

- 19 He uses it five times: utter and absolute darkness, *the darkness was opaque and horrible, that black, velvety darkness, absolute darkness (x2), the darkness was as complete as ever.*

He feels as if a *cold hand* had closed around his heart. The darkness seems to be a physical presence, pressing against him (*one put one's hand up to one's face as if to press off something solid*). He is confused and disorientated, he can't find his way. Eventually the darkness helps him slip into sleep.

20 Student's own answer

21 Student's own answer

22 Student's own answer

Oh, Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad

by M R James

Pre-reading exercises

Key vocabulary

The archeological site

- 1 a 1 flints; 2 mounds; 3 broken ground; 4 turf; 5 depressions; 6 mortar
 b 1 scraping; 2 probe; 3 cavity; 4 masonry; 5 soil
- 2 1 He probed the pile of sand.
 2 He scraped the mud off his shoe with a sharp stick.
 3 He put his hand against the wall and discovered a cavity.
 4 The rescue team had to climb over masonry to get to the victims.
 5 As he kicked the ball, a piece of turf flew up into his face.
 6 In medieval times they used mortar to build walls.

Spoken language

Accent and pronunciation

- 3 1 something; 2 them, them; 3 wave, window; 4 window, hotel; 5 second, ones; 6 kept

Non-standard English

- 4 1 I beg your pardon, sir, but as I was brushing your coat just now something fell out of the pocket.
 2 I beg your pardon, sir, but you seemed to have tried both of them (the beds); at least, we had to make them up this morning.
 3 Oh, I saw it wave at me out of the window
 4 It was out of the front window, at the hotel.
 5 It was the second one – the big window which has two little ones at the sides.
 6 Mr Simpson kept the keys.
- 5 She didn't have another key.
- 6 It wasn't a right thing – not to say not a right person.
- 7 a He happened to look up at the front window and see it waving at him;
 b but as I was brushing your coat just now (there was) something fell out of the pocket.
- 8 The big window which has two little ones at the sides.

Main themes

Haunted objects

Student's own answer

Science versus superstition

- 9 (Suggested answers)
- a He is a man of science, someone who does not believe in ghosts but offers a rational explanation for what he considers to be so-called supernatural phenomena.
 - b Because it is all the more convincing when he finally believes that the ghost is real.

Post-reading exercises

Understanding the story

Before leaving for Burnstow ...

- 1 In the staff dining room of St James's College.
- 2 He is young, formal and takes both himself and his work very seriously. He has no sense of humour and doesn't believe in ghosts.
- 3 Working, playing golf and exploring the site of the preceptory.

In Burnstow ...

- 4 He laid out his work materials.
- 5 Student's own answer
- 6 Because he was tired of the company of the Colonel who had got increasingly angry during their game of golf.
- 7 He was looking for the site of the preceptory. A metal object (the whistle).
- 8 A dark figure which seemed to be following him in the distance.
- 9 It made him think of a story about the devil.
- 10 A man servant at the hotel. It had fallen out of Parkins's coat pocket when the servant had been brushing it.
- 11 A figure standing on the beach.
- 12 There was a sudden gust of wind which blew the window open and a strange image came to Parkins's mind of a lonely figure. He also thought he saw the wings of a sea-bird.
- 13 The wind, the excitement of playing golf, thinking about what he'd found on the site of the preceptory. When he did close his eyes, he saw the image of a man being chased across a beach by a dark figure.

- 14 The sound of what Parkins took to be a rat running across the floor, away from Parkins's bed.
- 15 It looked like someone had slept in it.
Why? Student's own answer
- 16 Because of the wind the night before and a superstition the Colonel knew of about winds and whistles.
- 17 He tells the Colonel that he does not believe in superstitions or in the supernatural.
- 18 The Colonel thought he shouldn't have blown the whistle.
- 19 He'd seen a figure waving at him from the window of Parkins's room.
- 20 How the figure had managed to get into the room as it was locked and Parkins had the key in his pocket.
- 21 He was thinking about the incident with the boy and was worried about Parkins spending the night in the same room. He thought there was a connection with the whistle, and that Parkins should throw it back into the sea.
- 22 Because there was going to be a full moon that night, there were no curtains on the window of this room, and he didn't want the light to shine on his bed and wake him.
- 23 Shortly after the screen fell and woke him up, he saw a movement in the bed next to him. Then a figure sat up in the bed.
- 24 He jumped out of bed towards the window and grabbed the stick he had used to make the screen.
- 25 The ghost positioned itself between Parkins and the door.
- 26 The expression on the figure's face.
- 27 Parkins would either have fallen out through the window or gone mad.
- 28 He threw it into the sea; to get rid of the ghost.
- 29 The sheets from the empty bed.
- 30 He changed his views about the existence of ghosts.

Language study

Fronting

- 2 1 b the adjectives *bleak* and *solemn*; c) the preposition *on*
 2 b) a description; c) an event
 3 b) a melodramatic atmosphere; c) an emphasis of the unstoppable nature of the figure's progress
- 3 1 His foot caught and he went over.
 2 And now another little discovery followed.
 3 It went on, moaning and rushing past the house.
 4 He remained awake.
 5 He could not or would not tell what expression he read upon it.
 6 I must confess I do not recollect exactly what explanation was patched up for the staff and visitors at the hotel.
- 4 1 The suddenness of falling.
 2 The second discovery.
 3 The continuing presence of the ghost.
 4 The fact that he couldn't sleep.
 5 The expression on the ghost's face.
 6 That he doesn't remember the precise details of the explanation.

Understatement and circumlocution

- 5 1 *'I was considering ... whether (mind, I shouldn't have said this if you hadn't pressed me) you would not constitute something in the nature of a hindrance to my work.'*
 (Suggested answer) I think your presence would disturb my work.
- 2 *He felt that he had spent his evening in quite a satisfactory way, and that, even for so long as a fortnight or three weeks, life at the Globe would be supportable under similar conditions.*
 (Suggested answer) He had enjoyed the evening and was looking forward to the next two or three weeks.
- 3 *It might have made fanciful people feel quite uncomfortable; even the unimaginative, he thought after a quarter of an hour, might be happier without it.*
 (Suggested answer) It would frighten nervous people and even unimaginative people would probably feel nervous.

Literary analysis

Plot

- 1 Parkins agrees to look at the site of the preceptory; he finds the site and the whistle; he takes the whistle back to his room and cleans it; a strong wind starts to blow and keeps blowing all night; Parkins's sleep is disturbed by strange images; a boy is frightened by a strange figure at the window of Parkins's hotel room; the ghost appears to Parkins; peace is restored.

- 2 He first sees the ghost as he is walking home after his first day on the golf course, and after exploring the site of the preceptory where he finds the whistle. Other signs of the ghost's presence: the wind; a white shadow at the hotel window; the disturbed and disordered bed clothes; the sound of something moving around in his hotel room; the sounds of someone turning over restlessly in their bed. Parkins gives them all a rational explanation. The ghost's presence is also felt through the images and strange dreams that come to Parkins's mind.
- 3 It scared him and made him feel more nervous and less self-confident. It made him change his views on the existence of ghosts.

Character

- 4 Parkins, the colonel, the ghost. We know that Parkins is a young university professor and that the Colonel is a retired military officer who enjoys golf, good food and wine and good company. We know very little about the ghost except that it appears to haunt the whistle and when Parkins found the whistle he must have disturbed the spirit that haunted it.

Adjectives: Student's own answer

- 5 Parkins takes everything very seriously, he is always giving rational explanations and detailed descriptions. He is single and unattached, his work seems to be the most important thing to him. He is very ordered and organised. His refusal to see the signs and react to them sooner leads inevitably to the final confrontation. Someone who believed in ghosts would have reacted sooner, probably choosing to get rid of the whistle much earlier.
- 6 They are both wealthy, educated, single men who enjoy playing golf, eating good food, drinking, talking and playing bridge. Parkins is more restrained than the Colonel; he doesn't react emotionally. The colonel gets angry and impatient quite easily. The Colonel is superstitious, or at least he does not totally reject the possibility of the existence of the supernatural. Parkins is sceptical and believes that everything has a rational explanation.

Narration

- 7 Student's own answer
- 8 The first section of the story shows us what kind of person Parkins is and how strongly he believes that ghosts do not exist.

Why is it important? Student's own answer

- 9 The presence of the ghost is described and explained in rational terms. There is a lot of detailed description concerning what happens and what Parkins sees, hears and feels, but there is no consideration of what the ghost is or why it is haunting Parkins. If the Colonel had told the story, the ghost would have been named much sooner, each sign would have been given a different significance and the Colonel would have been quick to offer theories and explanations for the presence of the ghost.

Atmosphere

10 (Suggested answer)

The setting: It is bleak, offers no comfort, there is no shelter, nowhere to hide, only big, open spaces.

The weather: The weather adds to the bleakness; it is cold and windy, uncomfortable; weather to escape from.

The history of the site: The lives of the Christian knights would not have been easy; they would have suffered discomfort and hardship.

11 Student's own answer

Style

12 **Visual effect:** (Suggested answer) The image is very dark, almost black and white, with the suggestion of dark, grey shadows and a vast open space.

Other adjectives: *bleak, solemn, pale, dim, bitter*

Overall atmosphere: Student's own answer

13 *wide, dark expanse:* the beach; *a fresh wind blowing:* the bitter wind from the North; *a lonely figure:* the figures of the last golfers leaving the golf course.

14 **Verbs:** *stop, raise, bow, run, stoop, rise, continue*

Effect: (Suggested answer) The verbs create an effect of constant, changing, tortuous movement.

15 The figure in white, the raised arms.

Effect: Student's own answer

The Monkey's Paw

by W W Jacobs

Pre-reading exercises

Key vocabulary

Verbs of movement

- 1 1 fumbling for; 2 stumbling; 3 darted; 4 stooped; 5 groped; 6 scurried; 7 bowed; 8 struggling
a) 1; b) 5

Verbs to describe holding or handling an object

- 2 1 dangling; 2 grasped; 3 pitch; 4 snatched
3 1 pitched 2 grasped; 3 snatched; 4 dangled

Main themes

Fate

- 4 (Suggested answer) That we should not try to change our destinies or something terrible may happen to us.

Superstition versus scepticism

- 5 Student's own answer

Post-reading exercises

Understanding the story

Part I

- 1 The family were in their living room, the father and son were playing chess, the mother was knitting and watching them play.
2 Warm, relaxed and loving.
3 Cold and stormy. It was raining heavily.
4 Sergeant-Major Morris.
5 He told them stories about his travels, especially in India.
6 The sergeant – major had mentioned it to Mr White on a previous occasion. Mr White remembered it when they were talking about the fakirs in India.
7 He wanted to show that fate existed and that it was dangerous to try and change your destiny.

- 8 He didn't say.
- 9 When the first man who had the paw died.
- 10 (Suggested answer) Because he wanted to destroy the spell.
- 11 Student's own answer
- 12 That he should wish for something sensible.
- 13 Because that was the amount of money they needed to pay off the mortgage on their house.
- 14 The paw moved in Mr White's hand.
- 15 He won't see the money because he'll be dead.
- 16 The harm has been done in making the wish.
- 17 A monkey's face.

Part II

- 18 The wish.
- 19 To work.
- 20 The two hundred pounds.
- 21 A tailor's bill.
- 22 A messenger from the company where Herbert worked, Maw and Meggins.
- 23 That Herbert had been killed in an accident at work.
- 24 Nervous and uncomfortable.
- 25 Two hundred pounds. As compensation for Herbert's death.

Part III

- 26 Ten days.
- 27 He was horrified by the suggestion.
- 28 Terrified that the wish might come true even before he made it.
- 29 To calm and please his wife.
- 30 Mr White felt relieved that it hadn't come true. Mrs White sat at the window hoping to see her son and then gave up hope. Neither could go back to sleep.
- 31 To get a candle.
- 32 A quiet knock at the door.
- 33 He did not want to see his dead son.

- 34 He did not want to open the door to his son or let his wife see him.
- 35 The distance from the graveyard where Herbert was buried to the house.
- 36 He wanted to protect her from the horror of the sight of her son.
- 37 For his son to be dead and back in his grave.

Language study

Adverbs of manner

Use

- 1 1 brightly; 2 placidly; 3 eagerly; 4 curiously; 5 anxiously; 6 nervously; 7 strangely; 8 badly
Adverbs which are not describing verbs: *strangely* – describes the adjective *silent*; *badly* – describes the past participle *hurt*.
a) brightly, badly; b) placidly, eagerly, curiously, anxiously, nervously, strangely
- 2 1 absent-mindedly; 2 doggedly; 3 shamefacedly; 4 off-handedly; 5 breathlessly; 6 tightly/hoarsely
a) breathlessly; b) hoarsely
- 3 a) doggedly; b) absent-mindedly; c) shamefacedly; d) off-handedly

Form and position

- 4 1 with hospitable haste
2 with eager interest
3 with a grimace
4 in an enthralled fashion
5 in amazement
- 5 1 Mr White looked up sharply just in time to intercept a knowing glance between mother and son.
2 She was watching the mysterious movements of a man outside, who, peering at the house in an undecided fashion, appeared to be trying to make up his mind to enter.
3 Mr. White dropped his wife's hand, and rising to his feet, gazed at his visitor with a look of horror.
4 He started up in alarm. 'Where? Where is it? What's the matter?'
5 Both lay silently listening to the ticking of the clock.
6 Then he turned and fled swiftly back to his room.

Adverbs of manner with direct speech

- 6 1 soothingly; 2 hastily; 3 curiously; 4 solemnly; 5 distinctly; 6 feverishly
- 7 1 'That's the worst of living so far out,' bawled Mr White with sudden and unlooked-for violence.
2 'He was caught in the machinery,' said the visitor in a low voice.

- 3 'Caught in the machinery,' repeated Mr White in a dazed fashion.
- 4 'Wish!' she cried in a strong voice.
- 8 1 He is angry that he made a silly mistake and let his son win the game of chess.
- 2 He is very sorry to be bringing such bad news.
- 3 He is shocked by the news and can hardly believe it.
- 4 She is determined to bring her son back.

Reporting direct speech

- 9 a3; b2; c6; d7; e8; f5; g4; h1

Multiple-clause sentences

- 11 It creates an idea of unity – of a happy family who are all close to each other.
- 12 (Suggested answer) He drank a third glass. His eyes got brighter. He began to talk. The family looked at their visitor. They looked at him with interest. He came from distant parts. He squared his broad shoulders in the chair. He spoke of strange scenes and doughty deeds. He spoke of wars and plagues and strange people.
- 13 His father, smiling shamefacedly at his own credulity, held up the talisman as his son, with a solemn face, somewhat marred by a wink at his mother, sat down at the piano and struck a few impressive chords.

Literary analysis

Plot

- 1 1 The sergeant-major inherited the monkey's paw.
- 2 The sergeant-major made three wishes.
- 3 The sergeant-major came back from India.
- 4 Mr White made his first wish.
- 5 Herbert was killed in an accident.
- 6 The first wish came true.
- 7 Mr White made his second wish.
- 8 The second wish came true.
- 9 Herbert came back from the dead.
- 10 There was a knocking at the front door.
- 11 Mr White made his third wish.
- 12 The third wish came true.
- 2 Events which took place before the story started: 1–3
- Events not directly described: 5, 8, 9, 11, 12
- Effect:** Student's own answer

- 3 The fakir: he cast the spell; the sergeant major: he told them the story, showed them the paw and let them keep it; Herbert himself: he suggested what to wish for; his father: he made the wish; his mother: she was a witness to the wish and had been curious about the story.

Questions: Student's own answer

- 4 Student's own answer
- 5 (Suggested answer) Don't try and change your destiny.

Character

- 6 Mr White: he is elderly, a loving father and husband; Mrs White: she is also elderly, a loving mother and wife; Herbert: their only remaining son: he is young, happy, lives at home with his parents, whom he respects and loves. Their relationship is very happy, easy, relaxed and loving. The wishes destroy a very happy home.
- 7 The ideal, happy family. He is an outsider. He represents exotic faraway countries and strange customs.
- 8 Student's own answer

Narration

- 9 The story is not told from any one particular point of view. The narrator is an anonymous, detached narrator.
- 10 If the story had been told by the sergeant-major there would be more details about the fakir, the first three wishes, the wishes the sergeant-major made and the guilt he felt at passing the paw on to the Whites. If the story were told by Mr White it would be full of guilt, sorrow and remorse.
- 11 The history of the paw is related by the sergeant-major, the death of Herbert is related by the messenger. We are left to imagine what exactly Herbert looked like when he rose from the dead, and what exactly the words of the third wish were.

Effect: Student's own answer

- 12 Student's own answer

Atmosphere

- 13 There is a contrast between the terrible weather outside and the warmth and comfort inside: the fire burning brightly, the curtains drawn to keep the weather out. The happy world inside the house is about to be attacked by a storm from outside.
- 14 Student's own answer

Style

- 15 Inside it is warm, light and welcoming, outside it is cold, dark and wet. A dark, stormy night is a typical setting for a horror story. Extreme weather reflects the extreme emotions created by the story.

- 16 (Suggested answer) The father and son are both involved in the game. The son believes in putting his pieces in danger, very much as he puts himself in danger when he suggests the conditions of the first wish. His father loses the game because he makes a *fatal mistake*, mirroring the fatal mistake of making the first wish.
- 17 It is a bright day. The storm has passed. The curtains are open and the sun is shining on the family as they eat breakfast. The house is full of happy, *wholesome* laughter.
- 18 The house is full of shadows, there is no laughter. The house is silent. The old couple don't talk to each other anymore. The loss is seen as a heavy weight they have to carry that makes them very tired.

Effective?: Student's own answer

- 19 Resignation, apathy, weariness. It is important in order to understand Mrs White's desperation when she asks her husband to make the second wish and his inability to say no to her.
- 20 Student's own answers
- 21 A cold wind.

(Suggested answer) The same cold wind that brought the sergeant-major to their door. The wind may represent death, or loneliness, or the destruction of the warmth and happiness of the family.

Smoke Ghost

by Fritz Leiber

Pre-reading exercises

Key vocabulary

Describing the city

- 1 a) a2, b3, c1; b) a3, b1, c2; c) a5, b4, c1, d3, e2

Dirt

- 2 a) smudges, smears, stains; b) inky; c) swab off; d) rag; e) murky

- 3 1 murky; 2 stain; 3 smudge; 4 inky

Nervous reactions

- 4 a) giggled; b) shiver/twitch; c) squirmed; d) blushed/all at sea; e) jumpy/on edge; f) gasping; g) stammered; h) twitch/shiver; i) worked up

Main themes

The nature of a modern, urban ghost

- 5 Student's own answer

The first half of the 20th century

- 6 (Suggested answer)
- a Unemployment, poverty, industrial pollution, urban violence, racism, the threat of war;
 - b It creates a general fear. War had started in Europe and other parts of the world. To many people it was inevitable that it would affect the USA sooner or later;
 - c Student's own answer

Post-reading exercises

Understanding the story

Section 1

- 1 Miss Millick is Mr Wran's secretary.
- 2 He is nervous and asks strange questions.
- 3 She feels uncomfortable and embarrassed.
- 4 Because he needs to talk to someone about what's happening to him.

- 5 Miss Millick uses it to try and lighten the mood and change the subject. Mr Wran stiffens, stops talking about ghosts and gets back to work.
- 6 When Miss Millick leaves the room.
- 7 When he thinks about the elevated railway. The story jumps back to explain the origins of Mr Wran's fears and obsessions.
- 8 Because he travelled past them on the elevated railway every evening on the way home from work. He didn't notice it on the way in the morning because he was reading the newspaper.
- 9 The times he was living in.
- 10 A shapeless black sack.
- 11 Because it seemed to have moved nearer each time he saw it.
- 12 Dirt, and in particular, soot.
- 13 Because the image of the sack was starting to frighten him.
- 14 That he was experiencing a case of nerves and that maybe he should get his eyes checked; he was hoping for a normal, rational explanation for what he was experiencing.

Section 2

- 15 Because the psychiatrist asked him to, and because he had mentioned that there was something about his childhood that might be affecting him now.
- 16 He was a clairvoyant, he could do things like see through walls, and read people's thoughts. He could see things that other people couldn't.
- 17 She tried to make him communicate with the spirits of the dead.
- 18 At first the tests seemed to show that he was a clairvoyant , but when the psychologists tried to demonstrate his powers in public, Cates became nervous and the demonstration was a failure.
- 19 He feels happier and more confident.
- 20 Because he sees a black face staring in at he window.
- 21 The doctor is nervous and scared.
- 22 Smudges of soot.
- 23 Student's own answer
- 24 He had confirmed that the black figure really existed.

Section 3

- 25 Because he doesn't want the black figure to follow him home.
- 26 Because he doesn't want the thing that's following him to know he's in the office.
- 27 His conversation with Miss Millick.

- 28 Philosophical thoughts about how the world functions.
- 29 Student's own answer
- 30 Because his young son had seen a black face at the window of their home.
- 31 Because he's worried about his family.

Section 4

- 32 The face of the thing. The black figure.
- 33 He's terrified.
- 34 He thinks the thing is coming to attack him.
- 35 Very relieved.
- 36 Her shoes are leaving black prints on the floor. She bends back the metal with supernatural strength.
- 37 Because he has seen the blackness creeping into Miss Millick's body and taking over. When she moves towards him, he runs away.
- 38 Student's own answer
- 39 Calm and determined.
- 40 That the thing will come back.
- 41 Student's own answer

Language study

Speculating – modal verbs

Use

- 1 1e; 2b; 3c; 4g; 5a; 6d; 7f
- 2 must – completely sure that something is true; could/might – confident of an opinion about an imaginary situation; could/might – saying that something is a possibility, but not a certainty; couldn't – saying that something is completely impossible
- 3 1 'There must be something wrong,' she said.
2 He couldn't get there on time.
3 It could/might rain this afternoon.
4 He thought the party could/might be a disaster.

Common expressions of uncertainty

- 4 1 It seemed to; 2 it didn't seem to; 3 perhaps; 4 look

Form

- 5 1 Maybe Miss Millick was in love with Catesby.
 2 The psychiatrist looked like a good man.
 3 He seemed to be scared by the face in the window.
 4 Perhaps the ghost would leave him alone now.
 5 The rooftops looked normal and didn't frighten him anymore.

Ellipsis

- 6 It would reflect
- 7 2nd question: Would it want ... ? 3rd question: Would it want ... ? 4th question: Or would it just want ... ?
- 8 1 But it would begin to influence your actions. ~~It would~~ make you do this. ~~It would~~ stop you from doing that.
 2 It's a neurosis. It must be. ~~I must be suffering from~~ compulsions. ~~I must be experiencing~~ hallucinations.
 3 Do you notice any more definite physical symptoms? ~~Do you feel any pain? Do you have a~~ headache? ~~Do you suffer from~~ indigestion?
 4 He was reliving it now. ~~He could remember~~ the darkened rooms. ~~He could see~~ the earnest assemblages of gawking, prying adults. ~~He could picture~~ himself alone on a little platform, lost in a straight-backed wooden chair.
 5 He dared not look at the face as it came nearer, ~~it was~~ a focus for the worst in the world, it ~~constituted~~ a gathering point for poisons everywhere.

Literary analysis

Plot

- 1 1 Catesby sees a strange object on a rooftop.
 2 Catesby visits a psychiatrist.
 3 Catesby is visited by a team of university psychologists.
 4 The psychiatrist sees a prowler.
 5 Catesby's son is frightened by a face at his window
 6 Catesby's secretary faints on the rooftop of their office building.

Why is the order different?: Student's own answer

- 2 Student's own answer
- 3 The smudges of dirt. The psychiatrist and Catesby's son. Student's own answer
- 4 Student's own answer

Character

- 5 Catesby is in his thirties. He is married with a son. He works in advertising. He had special psychic powers as a child. Student's own answer
- 6 Student's own answer
- 7 Miss Millick is a secretary. She is single. We get the impression that she is not as well educated as Catesby. The opening section of the story is told from her point of view. She tells us that Catesby is acting in a way that is strange for him.
- 8 The ghost is black. It has a face. It can move quickly. We don't know if it's real or not. Not everybody can see it. Student's own answers

Narration

- 9 Miss Millick. So that we see Catesby from a different angle. She is an ordinary person, introducing us to this extraordinary story.
- 10 When Miss Millick leaves the room. The ghost appears to him, or is in his head. The internal action in Catesby's head is far more interesting than the external facts that Miss Millick sees and experiences.
- 11 Student's own answer
- 12
 - a When he was a young boy and he was thought to have psychic powers;
 - b When he first saw the black figure of the ghost.

The flashbacks place the past events in the context of the present events and shows how they are connected.

 - a Maybe Catesby can see the ghost because of his special powers;
 - b We see how the sightings of the ghost built up and have created Catesby's present state of mind.
- 13 Student's own answer

Atmosphere

- 14, 15 Student's own answers

Style

- 16 **Adjectives:** They are all negative. Dark, dirty, depressing.

Metaphors: Student's own answer

What the rooftop and the ghost represent: adjectives – *frustrated, frightened, jangled*. (Suggested answer) *Half darkness* is significant because Catesby may be imagining what he sees – he is tired and the light is fading.

- 17, 18 Student's own answers

A Spot of Gothic

by Jane Gardam

Pre-reading exercises

Key vocabulary

Local accent and dialect

- 1 1 They're growing out of my ears.
- 2 Come round the back but wear your wellies.
- 3 Coming over for your tea then?
- 4 You'd get a fair plateful there.
- 5 When they can spare the time.
- 6 Did you stop?
- 7 I hear you've been gallivanting at the Hall.

Describing the Dales

- 2 Student's own answer
- 3 1 almost; 2 year; 3 beautiful; 4 nothing; 5 good; 6 yes
- 4 1c; 2f; 3g; 4b; 5e; 6a; 7d; 8h

Describing the houses

- 5 1 flagged; 2 honeysuckle; 3 hedges; 4 yew; 5 mill; 6 ha-ha; 7 gravel; 8 dahlias

Main themes

Small communities

- 6 Much more friendly, open and welcoming.

Ghostly warnings

- 7 (Suggested answer) Her husband had left her and she had gone mad. It could be a warning to the storyteller that the same thing might happen to her. She decides to leave the countryside and join her husband.

Post-reading exercises

Understanding the story

Section 1

- 1 Mealbeck in the Yorkshire Dales.
- 2 Two months.
- 3 He thinks she will be lonely. The army base is not near her house, and in his opinion people aren't friendly in the North.
- 4 She does meet people, and makes friends easily.
- 5 No. She meets one neighbour the same day that she drops her husband at the station. She soon meets others at the post office and the iron mongers, and the vicar and doctor call at her house.
- 6 They are friendly, talkative and open.
- 7 No.
- 8 Yes. She says: *I thought of Alan in Hong Kong ... I wished he were here with me.*
- 9 It's an old country house owned by two elderly sisters.
- 10 It is built in an eccentric style and contains some interesting objects; the two sisters are good hosts, and provide excellent food and wine.
- 11 She felt *minute* (very small) on the long lonely road stretching in front of her in the car.
- 12 It made her feel lonely and a little frightened.
- 13 She wasn't sure whether she'd seen anyone or not because it seemed so strange.
- 14 She stopped to get some air and to think about what she had seen.
- 15 She was alone on a deserted road, and the woman waving appeared very strange to her. She also remembered stories which connect this road with murders and disappearances.

Section 2

- 16 That she'd had too much to drink.
- 17 (Suggested answer) Relieved, or possibly frustrated that he could not help identify the woman.

Section 3

- 18 She wanted to find out whether the woman she saw is real or not.
- 19 She couldn't think of a reason for going up the lane which lead to the house – and she says *it was not inviting*.
- 20 She looked very orderly and somewhat old-fashioned (she compares the woman's hairstyle to an *old Vogue photograph*).

- 21 Uncertainty and loss; misery.
- 22 Yes and no. No: she talks to her and she seems real. Yes: she compares her to a classical Greek shade, that belong to the Underworld (or world of the dead).
- 23 A large herd of sheep.
- 24 Yes – the sheep had surrounded her, and frightened her, especially since they arrived so suddenly.
- 25 That she was also married to an army man.
- 26 At a dinner party with the Millicent sisters and the doctor.

Section 4

- 27 Bemused – she wants to understand why the woman killed herself.
- 28 She split up with her husband, and had become very attached to her house, and had apparently gone mad due to the isolation of the fells (*She was quite gone.*)
- 29 Nearly three weeks before the narrator ‘spoke’ to her outside her house.
- 30 She didn’t want to end up like the woman – isolated and mad, and a suicide risk.

Language study

Structuring the narrative: using the past perfect simple and continuous

Use

- 1 a stopping at the bridge for the first time;
b at a time before this point in the story;
c simple past
- 2 a an earlier point in time, when the woman saw the figure in her garden;
b because the action was in progress at the time

Stative verbs in the past perfect

- 3 1 Had the woman been asking for help?; 2 had looked; 3 had stood; 4 had been crawling;
5 had always been/had very much liked/had fitted; 6 had hardly been/had been

Adding detail: participle clauses

- 5 1 There seemed to be total classlessness, total acceptance, offence only taken if you gave yourself airs or offered money in return for presents.
- 2 Language addressed to animals was foul and unrefined, ringing over the fells and sheep dips and clipping sheds.
- 3 I took a corner rather faster than I should and saw a woman, standing in her garden, waving at me.
- 4 The sheep was taut between his legs, its yellow eyes glaring.
- 5 The animal sprung out of his clutches like a soul that had been released.

- 6 As I turned into my yard I found I was very out put to see Mrs Metcalfe coming across the yard with yet another great basket of beans.

Multiple-clause sentences

- 6 *The fell that had looked so bare at night, I by daylight could be seen to be dotted with crumpled, squat little stone farms, I their backs turned to the view, I two trees to each to form a wind-break, I grey with white stone slabs to the window land only a tall spire of smoke to show they were occupied.*
- 7 Seven clauses.
- I went flying through High Thwaite, hurtling through Low Thwaite and the same landscape spread out still in front of me – endlessly deserted, not a light in any cottage, not a dog barking, not a cry of a bird.*

Literary analysis

Plot

- 1 The writer arrived in the Yorkshire Dales.
A woman killed herself.
The writer saw the woman in the middle of the night.
She saw her again the next day.
The writer met the doctor on his way to see the woman.
The doctor visited the woman.
The writer heard the full story of the woman's death.
The writer left the Yorkshire Dales.
- 2 The sequence in the story reflects the order in which the storyteller experienced the events. Although the woman was already dead when she first saw her, she didn't find out about her death until after the second sighting.
- Effect:** Student's own answer

3, 4 Student's own answers

Character

- 5 We only know that she is married and has no children. Student's own answers
- 6 We know a lot about how she reacts to the landscape and the people of the fells and that she enjoys being alone more than she thought she would. She thinks the landscape in the fells is beautiful and the people warm and welcoming.
- 7 Because she tells us the story in the first person. Student's own answer
- 8 They are both married to military men. They both live alone. They are both outsiders, they are not from the fells.
- 9 (Suggested answer) The doctor and her neighbours; the Metcalfes.
- a The description of the day-to-day lives of the Metcalfes gives us an idea of what a typical farming life is like in the Dales.

- b Her easy, relaxed relationship with the people around her suggest that the storyteller is a friendly, open, sociable person.
- c The doctor gives us the background to Rose's life.

10 Student's own answer

Narration

11, 12, 13 Student's own answers

Atmosphere

14 Student's own answer

15 It was midnight. There were no other cars on the road. The road was dark and quiet but the night sky was lit by the moon and the stars. The fells were empty and silent with no sign of life, not even a dog or a bird.

16 A woman, dressed very formally. Student's own answer

Style

Similes and metaphors

17, 18, 19 Student's own answers