

READING**Elementary**

Dears, last week we started to read 'Sherlock Holmes Investigates' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Here we can continue.

Sherlock Holmes Investigates***The adventure of the speckled band.***

"Wait a moment" said Holmes, "are you sure that you heard a whistle and of the sound of something metal ? Are you quite sure that you heard these sounds?"

"That was what the police asked me afterward. I really think that I heard it, but there was the noise of the storm and the sounds of the house. I may be wrong."

"Was your sister dressed?"

"No, she was in her night dress. In her right hand she held a used match, and in her left hand she had a matchbox."

"So she had light from the match. She was frightened by something, and lit the match to look around. That is important. And what did the police decide?"

"The police tried to find out everything about my sister's death, because no-one trusted doctor Roylott. But they couldn't find out what killed her.

I told them that my sister's room was locked on the inside. The windows were closed and my sister locked them at night. The police looked at all the walls carefully but they could not find any doors or holes for the killer to come in by. They checked the floor too, but there was nothing there to help them.

The chimney is wide, but no-one can come down it. So I am sure that my sister was completely alone when she died. Also, it did not look as if anyone tried to hurt her.

"How about poison?" asked Holmes

"The doctors thought about that, but they could not find any".

"What do think killed your sister?"

"I think she died from fear but I cannot imagine what frightened her so much."

"When she died, were there any gypsies in the woods?"

"Yes, the gypsies are in the woods almost all the time."

"Why do you think she said the words "The speckled band?""



"I don't know. Sometimes I think that she was not thinking properly. At other times I think she was talking about a band, or a group of people. Maybe she was talking about those gypsies in the woods. Some of them have spotted handkerchiefs. They wear them on their heads. She may have seen the spotted handkerchiefs and that is why she said those words."

"Holmes shook his head. He was not satisfied.

"This is a very strange case", he said. "Please go on with your story".

Our visitor told us some more of her story. "My sister died two years ago. Or two years I have been very lonely. But now an old friend says he is in love with me, and he wants to marry me. My stepfather does not mind, and we are going to be married in the spring. Two days ago, some builders repaired a part of the house. They broke the wall of my bedroom, so now I sleep in my sister's room. The room where she died. I am in the same bed too.

Last night something terrible happened. I was in bed thinking about my sister's death when I heard a whistle. It was the same whistle that my sister asked me about before she died. I was very frightened and got out of bed. I turned on the light, but there was nothing in the room. As soon as the morning came, I went to the train station, and came to ask you for help."

"You did the right thing" said Holmes. "But that is not all the story."

Source: <http://www.english-online.org.uk/reading/elementread.htm>

Intermediate

Last week you continued reading Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift. I am using the Oxford Bookworms Library Green Series, Adaptations of classic and modern stories for younger readers. In this Library Gulliver's Travels is classified as stage 4 (of the 6 stages), which means approximately 1400 headwords, ideal for intermediate learners. The story is retold by Clare West and is divided into 12 chapters. Today you are going to read the second part of the sixth chapter. After the last chapter you will be given a glossary.

CHAPTER SIX – PART TWO

GULLIVER AND HIS MASTER

Soon all my master's neighbours were talking about the strange little creature he had found in a field. One of them came to see me, and as I walked towards him across the table, he put on his glasses. His eyes behind the glasses looked like the full moon shining into two windows. I thought this was very funny, and laughed loudly. Unfortunately, that made him very angry. I heard him whispering to my master all evening, and I was sorry I laughed at him.

Next day Glumdalclitch came to me in tears.

'You'll never guess what's happened!' she told me sadly. 'Our neighbour has advised Father to show you to people, for money! Father's going to take you to market tomorrow, and there will be crowds of people ready to pay for entertainment! I'm so ashamed! And perhaps you'll get hurt! Other people won't be as careful with you as I am!'

'Don't worry, Glumdalclitch,' I replied. 'As I'm a stranger here, I don't mind being shown to people like a strange wild animal. I must do what your father wants.' I was secretly hoping I would one day find a way of escaping and returning to my own country.

So the next day my master and his daughter got on their huge horse. Glumdalclitch carried me inside a small box, which had air-holes so that I could breathe. When we arrived at the market town, my master hired the largest room in the public house, and placed me upon the table there. His daughter stayed close to me to make sure that nobody hurt me. I was told to speak in their language, pull out my sword, drink from a cup, and do other things to amuse the crowd. Only thirty people were allowed in to see me at one time. On that first day everybody wanted to see me, and I was shown to over three hundred and fifty people.

My master's plan was so successful that he arranged to show me again on the next market day. I did not look forward to this at all. I was so tired with the journey and the entertainment that I could only walk and speak with difficulty for the next three days. Even when we were at home, neighbours and friends from all parts of the country came to look at me, and my master made me work hard to amuse them. So I had almost no rest.

My master finally realized that he could make a fortune by showing me to people all over the country. So about two months after my arrival in Brobdingnag, we left the farm and started our journey to the capital. As before, Glumdalclitch came with us, to take care of me. On the way we stopped in many towns and villages, so that I could be shown to people. At last, after a journey of nearly five thousand kilometres, we arrived at the capital. Now I had to work even harder, as people came to look at me ten times a day.

TO BE CONTINUED

Advanced

All you need is Love - A (true) Celtic Fairy Story

Angela's Ashes, the autobiographical novel by Irish writer Frank McCourt, was a runaway bestseller; McCourt told of the terrible misery and suffering of his childhood in the poor district of Limerick; but was it really as bad as that? Leanne Meyer, who lives in Ireland, brings the true story of another large Irish family, and how they coped with life.

The first thing you notice is the fire. And then you realise that this has more to do with the family than the outside temperature. Their father used to stoke the fire each morning to warm them up before school, and this was also where he would toast the bread which would blacken their faces and taste like charcoal.

Sadly, their father died a year ago. But as we speak "Mammy", at sixty-five, is walking to town to buy the goodies her boys need for the weekend.

What makes their mother remarkable is that she bore six boys, four of whom still live at home, along with 12 girls, two of whom are also still at home. Yes, Mammy was pregnant for 18 years of her life and almost produced a child a year. All the babies arrived naturally with the smallest weighing a good seven pounds and Owen, the biggest, registering a whopping 13 pounds on the scales.



After the birth of Susie (the youngest) however, Mammy moved out of the marital bed and into the "girls room." As committed Catholics, who ensured that their family went to confession every Saturday and mass each Sunday, this was the right and only way.

All eighteen children still live in Waterford, Ireland. Not one child has been lost. Twelve of them have their own families, making Mammy a grandmother forty-eight times over, with three great grandchildren as well. One daughter-in-law claimed that she would break Mammy's record. Not surprisingly she gave up after the birth of her tenth child.

Mammy on the other hand revelled in raising her brood with not even the assistance of a disposable nappy. Meals were cooked in a pot "big enough to bath a baby in", using all four plates on the cooker. The twelve girls shared a room and the six boys shared another. Each room had a double bed, where on average six kids slept. If you were small enough you slept in the chest of drawers which has only recently been sold. Otherwise you had to find your own spot somewhere between the bed and the chest. When it came to personal hygiene, you just made sure that you got into the bath or sink (depending on your size) first. Understanding the scale of what it means to have twenty people in the house, had to lead to the question, "How did your father afford it?"

This stops the conversation immediately.

"Daddy was a block layer (a builder) which was a very good job in those days."

They truly believe that they were blessed; that they did not want for anything. Yet they tell stories that fellow countrymen have written books about, lamenting the conditions in which they grew up.

Firstly there was the food. They reminisce about how their father used to make the most delicious chicken soup. But how all that changed when Carole found the rabbit carcasses in the shed. Their father also later admitted to using sweetbreads when no rabbit could be found. "You know testicles form part of sweetbreads."

Then gales of laughter are the only response to what some would consider a gourmet horror. Then there had to be the pig's head. These girls, however, are quite practical about how pigs tongue really tastes like corned beef, and then proceed to tease Susie because their father used to give her cooked pigs tails to suck on as a baby, and she apparently "loved it."

Even in midwinter when building work was scarce and there often wasn't enough money for electricity, they spent time in the upstairs room telling ghost stories, which in retrospect, they point out is quite silly as they would all be terrified but could not switch the lights on. When sleep came there was always a fight about who would sleep in the middle, as this was the warmest place to be.

The only thing the children say they missed while growing up was being Mammy or Daddy's "pet." There was never space for one child to be treated differently from another; but that, no doubt, was actually the key to this abundant family's remarkable coherence..

All this joy in living may sound the stuff of fairy tales; but this is the story of a real family that is solidly anchored in reality, with moments of drama and pain.

Often the children missed out on school trips as there was not enough money to pay for the outing. In fact, daughter Carole was once so keen to go on a trip that she encouraged her teacher to come and speak to her parents. Proud Mammy told the teacher that Carole was ill and would not be able to attend; but, unfortunately for Mammy, Carole was listening upstairs and shouted down that she was not sick. She went on that trip and still remembers it as "one of the best days of my life."

Susie is still recovering from the loss of her fiancé at sea. Carole can recall the horrors of the convent she was sent to when, unmarried, she announced that she was expecting a baby. Yet it



seems that it is all a question of attitude and approach to life. In this family, it was all a matter of love, with no room for self-indulgence and self-encompassing privacy. All you need is love.

WORDS

attend: participate - blessed: looked on favourably by God - brood: young ones - charcoal: partly burned wood - committed: devout - cope with: deal with, succeed in - gale: storm - goodies: nice things to eat - gourmet horror: something inedible - nappy: cloth worn by young babies who are not yet toilet-trained - pet: favourite - plates: hotplates, burners - pregnant: expecting a baby - reminisce about: recall - revel in: really love - runaway: very big - scales: apparatus for measuring weight - self encompassing privacy: the desire of people to have their own personal space. self indulgence: egocentric behaviour - stoke: disturb - sweetbreads: the pancreas and thymus - tease: mock - want for: lack - whopping: very big

Worksheet

1. Comprehension questions:

Students can either answer these questions in writing, or the teacher can ask them orally, for oral answers.

1. How old was Mammy when she spoke to the writer?
2. How many children did she have?
3. How many grandchildren does she have?
4. How many sons does she have?
5. Who is the youngest child?
6. How heavy was the heaviest baby at birth?
7. What town does Mammy live in?
8. How big was Mammy's cooking pot?
9. How many bedrooms did the children have?
10. Where did the smallest kids sleep?
11. What was the father's profession?
12. How do the children feel about their childhood?
13. What did their father make his so-called "chicken soup" with?
14. What did Susie do with pigs' tails?
15. Why did the girls tell ghost stories in the dark sometimes?
16. Why did they fight after telling ghost stories in the dark?
17. What did the children miss most about their childhood?
18. What else did they regret?
19. Why did Carole ask her schoolteacher to talk to her Mammy?
20. What did Mammy tell the schoolteacher?
21. Why was Carole sent to a convent?
22. What tragedy affected Susie's life?

2. Syntax

Replace the missing relative -or nominal relative - pronouns (that, which, who, whom, what, how) in the following sentences. These sentences are very indirectly modeled on examples in the article.

1. My brother is a computer expert, _____ is a well paid job.
2. I told them about _____ we found our way home again.
3. Many Irish writers are among the great names of _____ is known as "English" literature.



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4. They could never agree about _____ would use the bathroom first.
5. _____ I can't understand is _____ he made chicken soup using rabbits.
6. I have four brothers, one of _____ is in the navy.
7. This is an exercise _____ is not very easy.
8. I told them _____ I thought about their ridiculous proposals.
9. Read the instructions if you want to know _____ to do.

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