

Fear, Foreboding and Fiction

Extracts: Victory Mansions to the Forest of Pendle

1. **1984**, by George Orwell

'He was blind, helpless, mindless' – How is O'Brien able to terrify Winston Smith to such a horrifying extent?

2. **To Kill a Mockingbird**, by Harper Lee

'You're scared' – Why is Jem so scared and how is Dill able to manipulate him into approaching the Radley house?

3. **I'm the King of the Castle**, by Susan Hill

'Perhaps this was only the first of a whole battalion' – How is Kingshaw presented as a vulnerable character?

4. **The Woman in Black**, by Susan Hill

'After a while, I heard the odd sound again' – To what extent does *The Woman in Black* fulfil gothic conventions?

5. **Boy: Tales of Childhood**, by Roald Dahl

'Crack! It was like a rifle shot!' – How is Roald Dahl able to convey the pain and distress he experienced as a boy?

6. **The Daylight Gate**, by Jeanette Winterson

'This is a haunted place' – How is Winterson able to evoke a menacing atmosphere?

7. **Marionette Girl**, by Aisha Bushby

'Ask yourself what you would do if you were in my shoes' – How is Amani presented as an anxious character?



1984 is a dystopian novella by George Orwell published in 1949, which follows the life of Winston Smith, a low ranking member of 'the Party', who is frustrated by the omnipresent eyes of the party, and its ominous ruler Big Brother.

At each stage of his imprisonment he had known, or seemed to know, whereabouts he was in the windowless building. Possibly there were slight differences in the air pressure. The cells where the guards had beaten him were below ground level. The room where he had been interrogated by O'Brien was high up near the roof. This place was many metres underground, as deep down as it was possible to go.

5 It was bigger than most of the cells he had been in. But he hardly noticed his surroundings. All he noticed was that there were two small tables straight in front of him, each covered with green baize. One was only a metre or two from him, the other was further away, near the door. He was strapped upright in a chair, so tightly that he could move nothing, not even his head. A sort of pad gripped his head from behind, forcing him to look straight in front of him.

10 For a moment he was alone, then the door opened and O'Brien came in.

'You asked me once,' said O'Brien, 'what was in Room 101. I told you that you knew the answer already. Everyone knows it. The thing that is in Room 101 is the worst thing in the world.'

15 The door opened again. A guard came in, carrying something made of wire, a box or basket of some kind. He set it down on the further table. Because of the position in which O'Brien was standing. Winston could not see what the thing was.

'The worst thing in the world,' said O'Brien, 'varies from individual to individual. It may be burial alive, or death by fire, or by drowning, or by impalement, or fifty other deaths. There are cases where it is some quite trivial thing, not even fatal.'

20 He had moved a little to one side, so that Winston had a better view of the thing on the table. It was an oblong wire cage with a handle on top for carrying it by. Fixed to the front of it was something that looked like a fencing mask, with the concave side outwards. Although it was three or four metres away from him, he could see that the cage was divided lengthways into two compartments, and that there was some kind of creature in each. They were rats.

'In your case, said O'Brien, 'the worst thing in the world happens to be rats.'

25 A sort of premonitory tremor, a fear of he was not certain what, had passed through Winston as soon as he caught his first glimpse of the cage. But at this moment the meaning of the mask-like attachment in front of it suddenly sank into him. His bowels seemed to turn to water.

'You can't do that!' he cried out in a high cracked voice. 'You couldn't, you couldn't! It's impossible.'

30 'Do you remember,' said O'Brien, 'the moment of panic that used to occur in your dreams? There was a wall of blackness in front of you, and a roaring sound in your ears. There was something terrible on the other side of the wall. You knew that you knew what it was, but you dared not drag it into the open. It was the rats that were on the other side of the wall.'

'O'Brien!' said Winston, making an effort to control his voice. 'You know this is not necessary. What is it that you want me to do?'

35 O'Brien made no direct answer. When he spoke it was in the schoolmasterish manner that he sometimes affected. He looked thoughtfully into the distance, as though he were addressing an audience somewhere behind Winston's back.

'By itself,' he said, 'pain is not always enough. There are occasions when a human being will stand out against pain, even to the point of death. But for everyone there is something unendurable – something that cannot
40 be contemplated. Courage and cowardice are not involved. If you are falling from a height it is not cowardly to clutch at a rope. If you have come up from deep water it is not cowardly to fill your lungs with air. It is merely an instinct which cannot be destroyed. It is the same with the rats. For you, they are unendurable. They are a form of pressure that you cannot withstand. even if you wished to. You will do what is required of you.

'But what is it, what is it? How can I do it if I don't know what it is?'

45 O'Brien picked up the cage and brought it across to the nearer table. He set it down carefully on the baize cloth. Winston could hear the blood singing in his ears. He had the feeling of sitting in utter loneliness. He was in the middle of a great empty plain, a flat desert drenched with sunlight, across which all sounds came to him out of immense distances. Yet the cage with the rats was not two metres away from him. They were enormous rats. They were at the age when a rat's muzzle grows blunt and fierce and his fur brown instead of
50 grey.

'The rat,' said O'Brien, still addressing his invisible audience, 'although a rodent, is carnivorous. You are aware of that. You will have heard of the things that happen in the poor quarters of this town. In some streets a woman dare not leave her baby alone in the house, even for five minutes. The rats are certain to attack it. Within quite a small time they will strip it to the bones. They also attack sick or dying people. They show
55 astonishing intelligence in knowing when a human being is helpless.'

There was an outburst of squeals from the cage. It seemed to reach Winston from far away. The rats were fighting; they were trying to get at each other through the partition. He heard also a deep groan of despair. That, too, seemed to come from outside himself.

O'Brien picked up the cage, and, as he did so, pressed something in it. There was a sharp click. Winston made
60 a frantic effort to tear himself loose from the chair. It was hopeless; every part of him, even his head, was held immovably. O'Brien moved the cage nearer. It was less than a metre from Winston's face.

'I have pressed the first lever,' said O'Brien. 'You understand the construction of this cage. The mask will fit over your head, leaving no exit. When I press this other lever, the door of the cage will slide up. These starving
65 brutes will shoot out of it like bullets. Have you ever seen a rat leap through the air? They will leap on to your face and bore straight into it. Sometimes they attack the eyes first. Sometimes they burrow through the cheeks and devour the tongue.'

The cage was nearer; it was closing in. Winston heard a succession of shrill cries which appeared to be occurring in the air above his head. But he fought furiously against his panic. To think, to think, even with a
70 split-second left – to think was the only hope. Suddenly the foul musty odour of the brutes struck his nostrils. There was a violent convulsion of nausea inside him, and he almost lost consciousness. Everything had gone black. For an instant he was insane, a screaming animal. Yet he came out of the blackness clutching an idea. There was one and only one way to save himself. He must interpose another human being, the body of another human being, between himself and the rats.

The circle of the mask was large enough now to shut out the vision of anything else. The wire door was a
75 couple of hand-spans from his face. The rats knew what was coming now. One of them was leaping up and down, the other, an old scaly grandfather of the sewers, stood up, with his pink hands against the bars, and fiercely sniffed the air. Winston could see the whiskers and the yellow teeth. Again the black panic took hold of him. He was blind, helpless, mindless.

'It was a common punishment in Imperial China,' said O'Brien as didactically as ever.

80 The mask was closing on his face. The wire brushed his cheek. And then – no, it was not relief, only hope, a tiny fragment of hope. Too late, perhaps too late. But he had suddenly understood that in the whole world

there was just one person to whom he could transfer his punishment – one body that he could thrust between himself and the rats. And he was shouting frantically, over and over.

85 'Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me! Julia! I don't care what you do to her. Tear her face off, strip her to the bones. Not me! Julia! Not me!'

90 He was falling backwards, into enormous depths, away from the rats. He was still strapped in the chair, but he had fallen through the floor, through the walls of the building, through the earth, through the oceans, through the atmosphere, into outer space, into the gulfs between the stars – always away, away, away from the rats. He was light years distant, but O'Brien was still standing at his side. There was still the cold touch of wire against his cheek. But through the darkness that enveloped him he heard another metallic click, and knew that the cage door had clicked shut and not open.

Big Question

'He was blind, helpless, mindless' – How is O'Brien able to terrify Winston Smith to such a horrifying extent?

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Quick Review Questions

1. What colour is the baize (i.e. woollen) that covers each of the two small tables?
2. Why is Winston Smith unable to move his head?
3. What is in the wire cage?
4. Where will the cage eventually be placed?
5. How is Winston able to save himself?

Retrieval Statements

1. Winston Smith is initially confused
2. Winston Smith becomes increasingly fearful
3. O'Brien remains calm

Aspects to Consider

1. The setting
2. O'Brien's emotional detachment
3. Winston Smith's gradual realisation of what his punishment will involve
4. The presentation of the rats
5. Winston Smith's feeling of terror
6. Winston Smith's eventual feeling of relief

Through the young eyes of Scout and Jem Finch, Harper Lee explores with exuberant humour the irrationality of adult attitudes to race and class in the Deep South of the 1930s.

The Radley Place jutted into a sharp curve beyond our house. Walking south, one faced its porch; the sidewalk turned and ran beside the lot. The house was low, was once white with a deep front porch and green shutters, but had long ago darkened to the color of the slate-gray yard around it. Rain-rotted shingles drooped over the eaves of the veranda; oak trees kept the sun away. The remains of a picket drunkenly guarded the front yard – a ‘swept’ yard that was never swept— where johnson grass and rabbit-tobacco grew in abundance.

Inside the house lived a malevolent phantom. People said he existed, but Jem and I had never seen him. People said he went out at night when the moon was down, and peeped in windows. When people’s azaleas froze in a cold snap, it was because he had breathed on them. Any stealthy small crimes committed in Maycomb were his work. Once the town was terrorised by a series of morbid nocturnal events: people’s chickens and household pets were found mutilated; although the culprit was Crazy Addie, who eventually drowned himself in Barker’s Eddy, people still looked at the Radley Place, unwilling to discard their initial suspicions. A [grown man] would not pass the Radley Place at night, he would cut across to the sidewalk opposite and whistle as he walked. The Maycomb school grounds adjoined the back of the Radley lot; from the Radley chickenyard tall pecan trees shook their fruit into the schoolyard, but the nuts lay untouched by the children: Radley pecans would kill you. A baseball hit into the Radley yard was a lost ball and no questions asked.

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‘Wonder what he looks like?’ said Dill.

Jem gave a reasonable description of Boo: Boo was about six-and-a-half feet tall, judging from his tracks; he dined on raw squirrels and any cats he could catch, that’s why his hands were bloodstained – if you ate an animal raw, you could never wash the blood off. There was a long, jagged scar that ran across his face; what teeth he had were yellow and rotten; his eyes popped, and he drooled most of the time.

‘Let’s try to make him come out,’ said Dill. ‘I’d like to see what he looks like.’

Jem said if Dill wanted to get himself killed, all he had to do was go up and knock on the front door.

Our first raid came to pass only because Dill bet Jem The Gray Ghost against two Tom Swifts that Jem wouldn’t get any farther than the Radley gate. In all his life, Jem had never declined a dare.

Jem thought about it for three days. I suppose he loved honor more than his head, for Dill wore him down easily: ‘You’re scared,’ Dill said, the first day. ‘Ain’t scared, just respectful,’ Jem said. The next day Dill said, ‘You’re too scared even to put your big toe in the front yard.’ Jem said he reckoned he wasn’t, he’d passed the Radley Place every school day of his life.

‘Always runnin’,’ I said.

But Dill got him the third day, when he told Jem that folks in Meridian certainly weren’t as afraid as the folks in Maycomb, that he’d never seen such scary folks as the ones in Maycomb.

This was enough to make Jem march to the corner, where he stopped and leaned against the light-pole, watching the gate hanging crazily on its homemade hinge.

Big Question

'You're scared' – Why is Jem so scared and how is Dill able to manipulate him into approaching the Radley house?

Quick Review Questions

1. 'The remains of a picket drunkenly guarded the front yard' – what do we learn about the picket fence?
2. What does the word 'malevolent' mean?
3. 'People said he existed, but Jem and I had never seen him' – who is being described?
4. What is the name of the town in which the novel is set?
5. 'A baseball hit into the Radley yard was a lost ball and no questions asked' – why is this the case?
6. What does Jem think about for three days?
7. What does Jem love 'more than his head'?
8. Which town does Dill come from?

Key Image

How is the house described?



Aspects to Consider

1. The urban myths associated with the Radley house
2. Jem's description of Boo Radley
3. Dill's persistence
4. Jem's sense of honour

Susan Hill's *I'm King of the Castle* was first published in 1970. Telling the story of two boys forced to live together by their widowed parents, it is a chilling portrayal of childhood cruelty and persecution.

When he first saw the crow, he took no notice. There had been several crows. This one glided down into the corn on its enormous, ragged black wings. He began to be aware of it when it rose up suddenly, circled overhead, and then dived, to land not very far away from him. Kingshaw could see the feathers on his head, shining blank in between the butter-coloured cornstalks. Then it rose, and circled, and came down again, this time not quite landing, but flapping about his head, beating its wings and making a sound like flat leather pieces being slapped together. It was the largest crow he had ever seen. As it came down for the third time, he looked up and noticed its beak, opening in a screech. The inside of its mouth was scarlet, it had small glinting eyes.

Kingshaw got up and flapped his arms. For a moment, the bird retreated a little way off, and higher up in the sky. He began to walk rather quickly back, through the path in the corn, looking ahead of him. Stupid to be scared of a rotten bird. What could a bird do? But he felt his own extreme isolation, high up in the cornfield.

For a moment, he could only hear the soft thudding of his own footsteps, and the silky sound of the corn, brushing against him. Then, there was a rush of air, as the great crow came beating down, and wheeled about his head. The beak opened and the hoarse *caaw* came out again and again, from inside the scarlet mouth.

Kingshaw began to run, not caring, now, if he trampled the corn, wanting to get away, down into the next field. He thought that the corn might be some kind of crow's food store, in which he was seen as an invader. Perhaps this was only the first of a whole battalion of crows, that would rise up and swoop at him. Get on to the grass then, he thought, get on to the grass, that'll be safe, it'll go away. He wondered if it had mistaken him for some hostile animal, lurking down in the corn.

His progress was very slow through the cornfield, the thick stalks bunched together and got in his way, and he had to shove them back with his arms. But he reached the gate and climbed it, and dropped on to the grass of the field on the other side. Sweat was running down his forehead and into his eyes. He looked up. The crow kept on coming. He ran.

But it wasn't easy to run down this field, either, because of the tractor ruts. He began to leap wildly from side to side of them, his legs stretched as wide as they could go, and for a short time, it seemed that he did go faster. The crow dived again, and, as it rose, Kingshaw felt the tip of its black wing, beating against his face. He gave a sudden, dry sob. Then, his left foot caught in one of the ruts and he keeled over, going down straight forwards.

He lay with his face in the coarse grass, panting and sobbing by turns, with the sound of his own blood pumping through his ears. He felt the sun on the back of his neck, and his ankle was wrenched. But he would be able to get up. He raised his head, and wiped two fingers across his face. A streak of blood came off, from where a thistle had scratched him. He got unsteadily to his feet, taking in deep, desperate breaths of the close air. He could not see the crow.

But when he began to walk forwards again, it rose up from the grass a little way off, and began to circle and swoop. Kingshaw broke into a run, sobbing and wiping the damp mess of tears and sweat off his face with one hand. There was a blister on his ankle, rubbed raw by the sandal strap. The crow was still quite high, soaring easily, to keep pace with him. Now, he had scrambled over the third gate, and he was in the field next to the one that belonged to Warings. He could see the back of the house. He began to run much faster.

40 This time, he fell and lay completely winded. Through the runnels of sweat and the sticky tufts of his own hair, he could see a figure, looking down at him from one of the top windows of the house.

Then, there was a single screech, and the terrible beating of wings, and the crow swooped down and landed in the middle of his back.

45 Kingshaw thought that, in the end, it must have been his screaming that frightened it off, for he dared not move. He lay and closed his eyes and felt the claws of the bird, digging into his skin, through the thin shirt, and began to scream in a queer, gasping sort of way. After a moment or two, the bird rose. He had expected it to begin pecking at him with his beak, remembering terrible stories about vultures that went for living people's eyes. He could not believe in his own escape.

50 He scrambled up, and ran on, and this time, the crow only hovered above, though not very high up, and still following him, but silently, and no longer attempting to swoop down. Kingshaw felt his legs go weak beneath him, as he climbed the last fence, and stood in the place from which he had started out on his walk, by the edge of the copse. He looked back fearfully. The crow circled a few times, and then dived into the thick foliage of the beech trees.

Big Question

'Perhaps this was only the first of a whole battalion' – How is Kingshaw presented as a vulnerable character?

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Quick Review Questions

1. What sort of bird is described in the first paragraph?
2. 'The inside of its mouth was scarlet' – how is 'scarlet' different from the colour red?
3. 'Perhaps this was only the first of a whole battalion of crows' – What is a 'battalion'?
4. Why is Kingshaw unable to move swiftly through the cornfield?
5. Why does Kingshaw lose his balance and fall over?
6. What does Kingshaw believe eventually scares the bird away?

Multiple-Choice Question

Which two adjectives most precisely describe Kingshaw's emotional state?

- A. Bewildered and irritated
- B. Scared and confused
- C. Terrified and frantic
- D. Anxious and afraid

Quotations to Consider

1. 'The inside of its mouth was **scarlet**, it had small **glinting** eyes' (7-8)
2. 'But he felt his own **extreme isolation**, high up in the cornfield' (11)
3. 'His progress was **very slow** through the cornfield' (20)
4. '**Sweat** was running down his forehead and into his eyes (22)
5. 'He began to **leap wildly** from side to side of them' (24-5)
6. He got **unsteadily** to his feet, taking in deep, **desperate** breaths of the close air (32-3)
7. The crow was still quite high, **soaring easily**, to keep pace with him (36-7)
8. Then, there was a single screech, and the terrible beating of wings, and the crow **swooped** down (41)
9. He lay and closed his eyes and felt the **claws** of the bird, **digging** into his skin, through the **thin** shirt (44)

Arthur Kipps, a junior solicitor, is summoned to attend the funeral Mrs Alice Drablow, the former inhabitant of Eel Marsh House, unaware of the tragic secrets which lie hidden behind the shuttered windows.

5 At first all seemed very quiet, very still, and I wondered why I had awoken. Then, with a missed heartbeat, I realised that Spider was up and standing at the door. Every hair of her body was on end, her ears were pricked, her tail erect, the whole of her tense, as if ready to spring. And she was emitting a soft, low growl from deep in her throat. I sat up paralysed, frozen in the bed, conscious only of the dog and the prickling of my own skin and of what suddenly seemed a different kind of silence, ominous and dreadful.

10 And then, from somewhere within the depths of the house – but somewhere not very far from the room in which I was – I heard a noise. It was a faint noise, and, strain my ears as I might, I could not make out exactly what it was. It was a sound like a regular yet intermittent bump or rumble. Nothing else happened. There were no footsteps, no creaking floorboards, the air was absolutely still, the wind did not moan through the casement. Only the muffled noise went on and the dog continued to stand, bristling at the door, now putting her nose to the gap at the bottom and snuffling along, now taking a pace backwards, head cocked, and, like me, listening, listening. And, every so often, she growled again.

15 In the end, I suppose because nothing else happened and because I did have the dog to take with me, I managed to get out of bed, although I was shaken and my heartbeat uncomfortably fast within me. But it took some time for me to find sufficient reserves of courage to enable me to open the bedroom door and stand out in the dark corridor. The moment I did so, Spider shot ahead and I heard her padding about, sniffing intently at every closed door, still growling and grumbling down in her throat.

20 After a while, I heard the odd sound again. It seemed to be coming from along the passage to my left, at the far end. But it was still quite impossible to identify. Very cautiously, listening, hardly breathing, I ventured a few steps in that direction. Spider went ahead of me. The passage led only to three other bedrooms on either side and, one by one, regaining my nerve as I went, I opened them and looked inside each one. Nothing, only heavy old furniture and empty unmade beds and, in the rooms at the back of the house, moonlight. Down below me, on the ground floor of the house, silence, a seething, blanketing, almost tangible silence, and a musty darkness, thick as felt.

25 And then I reached the door at the very end of the passage. Spider was there before me and her body, as she sniffed beneath it, went rigid, her growling grew louder. I put my hand on her collar, stroked the rough, short hair, as much for my own reassurance as for hers. I could feel the tension in her limbs and body and it answered to my own.

30 My throat felt constricted and dry and I had begun to shiver. There was something in that room and I could not get to it, nor would I dare to, if I were able.

Big Question

'After a while, I heard the odd sound again' – To what extent does *The Woman in Black* fulfil gothic conventions?

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Quick Review Questions

1. What is the name of Arthur Kipps's dog?
2. What does the word 'ominous' mean?
3. What detailed in the second paragraph suggest that the dog is apprehensive?
4. 'I could feel the tension in her limbs and body and it answered to my own' – what does Arthur Kipps mean?

Key Image

Which details indicate that Arthur Kipps is scared?



Key Quotation

'It is usual for characters in Gothic fiction to find themselves in a strange place; somewhere other, different, mysterious. It is often threatening or violent [...] like a decaying mansion' – Professor John Bowen, University of York

Aspects to Consider

1. The nocturnal setting
2. Eel Marsh House
3. The behaviour of the dog
4. The emotions experienced by Arthur Kipps

Boy: Tales of Childhood, published in 1984, is a funny, insightful and at times grotesque glimpse into the early life of Roald Dahl.

I was frightened of that cane. There is no small boy in the world who wouldn't be. It wasn't simply an instrument for beating you. It was a weapon for wounding. It lacerated the skin. It caused severe black and scarlet bruising that took three weeks to disappear, and all the time during those three weeks, you could feel your heart beating along the wounds.

5 I tried once more, my voice slightly hysterical now. 'I didn't do it, Sir! I swear I'm telling the truth!'
'Be quiet and bend over! Over there! And touch your toes!'

Very slowly, I bent over. Then I shut my eyes and braced myself for the first stroke. Crack! It was like a rifle shot! With a very hard stroke of the cane on one's buttocks, the time-lag before you feel any pain is about four seconds.

10 Thus, the experienced caner will always pause between strokes to allow the agony to reach its peak.

So for a few seconds after the first crack I felt virtually nothing. Then suddenly came the frightful searing agonising unbearable burning across the buttocks, and as it reached its highest and most excruciating point the second crack came down. I clutched hold of my ankles as tight as I could and I bit into my lower lip. I was determined not to make a sound, for that would only give the executioner greater satisfaction.

15 *Crack!* Five seconds pause.

Crack! Another pause.

Crack! And another pause.

I was counting the strokes, and as the sixth one hit me, I knew I was going to survive in silence.

'That will do,' the voice behind me said.

20 I straightened up and clutched my backside as hard as I possibly could with both hands. This is always the instinctive and automatic reaction. The pain is so frightful you try to grab hold of it and tear it away, and the tighter you squeeze, the more it helps.

25 I did not look at the Headmaster as I hopped across the thick red carpet towards the door. The door was closed and nobody was about to open it for me, so for a couple of seconds I had to let go of my bottom with one hand to turn the door-knob. Then I was out and hopping around in the hallway of the private sanctum.

Big Question

‘Crack! It was like a rifle shot!’ – How is Roald Dahl able to convey the pain and distress he experienced as a boy?

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Quick Review Questions

1. What was Roald Dahl ‘frightened’ of as a boy?
2. What does the word ‘lacerated’ mean?
3. What does the word ‘excruciating’ mean?
4. How many times is Roald Dahl hit with the cane?
5. What colour is the carpet in the Headmaster’s office?

Multiple-Choice Question

Why does Roald Dahl describe the Headmaster as an ‘executioner’?

- A. Because, in the moment, he fears for his life
- B. Because he feels powerless and vulnerable
- C. Because the Headmaster could kill him if he chose to do so
- D. Because the punishment of being caned is barbaric and cruel

Literary Devices

1. Adjectives
2. Verbs
3. Exclamation
4. Metaphor
5. Simile
6. Repetition

Key Words

1. Stoical: Enduring pain and hardship without showing one’s feelings or complaining
2. Aloof: Not friendly or forthcoming; cool and distant

Contextual Information

Corporal punishment (i.e. caning) was banned in state schools in 1987.

Winterson's novella is set in 1612, during the feverishly paranoid reign of James I. It describes the plight of a group of paupers, mostly women, accused of evil practices.

The North is the dark place.

It is not safe to be buried on the north side of the church and the North Door is the way of the Dead.

The north of England is untamed. It can be subdued but it cannot be tamed. Lancashire is the wild part of the untamed.

5 The Forest of Pendle used to be a hunting ground, but some say that the hill is the hunter – alive in its black-and-green coat cropped like an animal pelt.

The hill itself is low and massy, flat-topped, brooding, disappeared in mists, treacherous with bogs, run through with fast-flowing streams plunging into waterfalls crashing down into unknown pools...

Only a fool or one who has dark business should cross Pendle at night...

10 This is a haunted place. The living and the dead come together on the hill.

You cannot walk here and feel you are alone.

Those who are born here are branded by Pendle. They share a common mark.

15 There is still a tradition, or a superstition, that a girl-child born in Pendle Forest should be twice baptised; once in church and once in a black pool at the foot of the hill. The hill will know her then. She will be its trophy and its sacrifice. She must make her peace with her birth right, whatever that means.

Big Question

'This is a haunted place' – How is Winterson able to evoke a menacing atmosphere?

Quick Review Questions

1. 'The North is a dark place' – what is the metaphorical meaning of the word 'dark'?
2. In which county is the Forest of Pendle located?
3. What does the word 'subdued' mean?
4. What would 'only a fool' do?
5. What 'tradition' should a 'girl-child born in Pendle Forest' undergo?

Retrieval Statements

1. Pendle is a dangerous place
2. Pendle is a wild place
3. The people who inhabit Pendle are superstitious

Key Image



Quotations to Consider

1. 'The North is the dark place' (1)
2. 'The north of England is untamed' (3)
3. 'Only a fool or one who has dark business should cross Pendle at night' (9)
4. 'This is a haunted place' (10)
5. 'Those who are born here are branded by Pendle' (12)

Aisha Bushby's short story *Marionette Girl* follows Amani and her family as they learn to cope with Amani's OCD symptoms.

Ask me anything about Harry Potter. Seriously. I've done twenty-three quizzes online so far and got one hundred per cent on all of them. I'm a Gryffindor, apparently, although I don't feel brave most of the time. Usually I feel scared when things don't go to plan, but that's for another conversation.

My wand is seven inches, maple, unicorn hair, bendy.

5 The bit about the unicorn hair is my favourite.

Maple is supposed to mean I'm a natural traveller and adventurer. That made me laugh. On a scale of adventurousness, I don't even register.

Oh, and my patronus is a cat. That I can believe because cats thrive on routine. Did you know that if you try and disrupt their routine it messes with their mental health?

10 I did, because I've researched it.

A lot.

Friday

12:01pm

15 Maths is my favourite subject. I like the certainty of it. We spend the first half of the lesson learning a new formula and the second half applying it to a worksheet. Also, unlike in English, we aren't asked to contribute our opinions. That terrifies me.

But today is different. I go to sit at my usual spot: third row in, by the wall. I don't sit right at the back where Callum and his minions cluster, nor do I sit at the front.

20 But today someone else has taken my seat and I freeze, actually freeze, by the door when I see her. A few people who had been following behind bump into my heavy rucksack and swear at me, but I don't care. Eventually they squeeze past while I stay glued to the spot.

'A problem, Amani?' Mr Delacourt asks. He has a stern-looking face with a thick greying moustache and he always sounds sarcastic, even when he's being sincere.

25 'Um...' I pause. I want to say someone is in my place but it's a girl who's just visiting for the day before deciding whether to join our school next year. Milly Wilkinson. Our form tutor, Ms Yates, introduced her to us this morning and she looks terrified.

Plus it's petty, isn't it? Even so, I hope this doesn't mean I'll have to move around during my other lessons. Mr Delacourt's drawl interrupts my worries.

30 'Well, then, take your seat,' he says, shuffling through his papers. Everyone is starting to stare. I take the only seat left, which is right in front of Mr Delacourt's desk, and already I feel exposed.

I drop my bag to the floor, sit down and pull the chair forwards. As I do I feel something pliable beneath my fingers. I cringe. Someone has stuck a piece of used gum under the chair and I've just touched it.

My uncontaminated hand shoots up.

'Yes, Amani?' Mr Delacourt sighs.

35 'Please may I go to the toilet?' I ask. Please, please, please. My heart beats in time with the request. I can feel the germs dancing across my fingers – it makes them tingle.

'Has someone put you up to this?' He sounds irritated now.

'What? No, I—'

40 'You had plenty of time to go to the toilet during break. I'm sure you can hold it until lunch.' Without a pause he launches into the lesson, but I can't concentrate.

All I can think about is washing my hands. I can't touch any of my things, either, so I flip through my book one-handed.

Mr Delacourt's words float in one ear and out the other. My mind is too full of worries to absorb anything.

Instead I sit and watch as the clock tick-tocks closer to 1:00 p.m.

45 **1:03pm**

I'm in the girls' toilets before most people have even made it out of their lessons. I let the tap run extra hot and stick my hand under it for as long as I can bear.

I feel the anxiety slip down the drain as I wash.

But once isn't enough.

50 One, two, three.

Some girls walk in and I have to speed up my ritual.

They can't know.

1:27pm

'Chicken and sweetcorn again?' Gabby teases.

55 I look up from my lunch in time to catch the amused expression on her face.

'And, let me guess.' Efe joins us at the table. 'Salt and vinegar crisps?' She grins. 'And...'

'A Mars bar!' they both finish together in a fit of giggles.

'You are a weird one, Amani,' Gabby says, smiling at me fondly.

60 Whenever we get into this sort of territory, I clam up. 'Ha, yeah,' I mumble, swallowing half of my sandwich in one go. It hurts as it goes down – too dry.

But they've already moved on to discussing their summer plans, barely registering as I sink further into myself.

They don't mean to be unkind.

They just don't understand.

3:45pm

65 The bell rings, signalling the end of the day, and I rush out to meet Dad, who should be waiting in the car park.

Or, at least, I try.

On the way out Callum intercepts me. 'Hey, Amaaar-niii,' he says, standing in my way.

I hate the way he stresses the vowels in my name, drawing them out. He always likes to point out how 'foreign' my name is.

70 Callum's the popular guy at school and he loves to exercise his power by getting a few laughs from his friends. Unfortunately, tormenting people like me will do it.

I don't say anything, just keep my head down and try to push past. We do a little dance as he matches his steps to mine.

Eventually I mumble a request for him to move.

75 'What was that?' he asks exaggeratedly.

I glance at the clock. 3:51 p.m. I'm officially late. We won't make it home in time.

Callum still doesn't move and my hands start shaking. I know he's taunting me but all I can hear is the blood pulsing in my ears as the clock ticks on and on.

80 Eventually I shove him aside, adrenaline fuelling me. I hear him yell after me, 'Oi, you bit – ' but I'm already out of the door before I can hear the rest, my breath coming in heavy pants as I race to Dad's car.

I'll pay for this on Monday but right now I don't care.

'We have to hurry!' I cry as soon as I get in.

'Well, hello to you, too,' Dad remarks, but he starts the car quickly after he sees my face.

'How much time do we have?'

85 'Five minutes,' I say, glancing at the clock.

'Don't worry,' Dad says, determined. 'We'll make it in time.'

I wonder what would happen if we didn't make it in time. I don't find out as Dad speeds to get home and we step through the front door at 3:59 p.m. I know this because I set an alarm to go off at 4:00 p.m. It vibrates in my pocket just as I rush up the stairs to my room.

90 As I step inside I feel my chest deflate, the tension oozing out of my body.

I have several alarms that get me through the day.

This is one of them.

It's hard to explain why I do this. But try to imagine that your brain is going to internally combust unless you walk through the door of your home before 4:00 p.m.

95 And then ask yourself what you would do if you were in my shoes.

Big Question

'Ask yourself what you would do if you were in my shoes' – How is Amani presented as an anxious character?

.....

Quick Review Questions

1. What is Amani's favourite book?
2. How many online quizzes has Amani done?
3. What is Amani's patronus (i.e. animal guardian)?
4. What is Amani's favourite subject at school?
5. What does Amani ask Mr Delacourt?
6. What is the name of the girl who teases Amani?
7. What is the name of the boy who taunts Amani?
8. What time does Amani finally arrive home?

Contextual Information

According to the Royal College of Psychiatrists, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) has three main parts:

- Obsessions: The thoughts that make you anxious
- Emotions: The anxiety you feel
- Compulsions: The things you do to reduce your anxiety

Aspects to Consider

1. The use of first-person narrative perspective
2. The use of short, declarative sentences
3. The precise chronological structure of the narrative
4. Amani's interaction with her peers and her father

Fear, Foreboding and Fiction

Guidance: Key Words and a Checklist

Link	Hint	Show	Strengthen
Firstly	Implies	Expresses	Highlights
Secondly	Suggests	Conveys	Emphasies
Finally	Foreshadows	Expresses	Amplifies
Ultimately	Signals	Demonstrates	Elevates
Conclusively	Indicates	Reveals	Contrasts

- **Firstly**, Orwell **reveals** that O’Brien is a cruel and sadistic character...
- In **contrast**, Winton Smith is...
- The acute sense of isolation that Kingshaw feels in the cornfield **conveys** his vulnerability...
- Hill clearly **demonstrates** the fear Arthur Kipps feels when he begins to shiver...
- Winterson **emphasies** the supernatural aspects of Pendle by evoking a scene of darkness...

Narrative	Protagonist	Tension	Ambiguity
Narrator	Tone	Gothic	Power
Setting	Mystery	Anxiety	Supernatural
Context	Foreboding	Uncertainty	Isolation

- The urban myths about the Radley family are clearly untrue but, nevertheless, create **uncertainty** about...
- Hill capitalises on established **gothic** conventions to generate **tension**...
- The first-person **narrative** perspective of *Mariotte Girl* helps the reader to understand Amani’s struggle...

Checklist:

- ✓ Handwriting
- ✓ Capital letters
- ✓ Sentence structures
- ✓ Apostrophes
- ✓ To / Too / Too
- ✓ Their / There