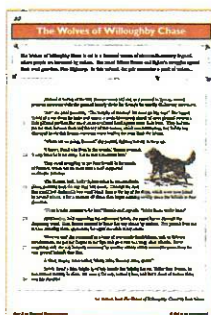


The Wolves of Willoughby Chase



Question Book:
Year 5, pages 30-31

Author / Source:
Joan Aiken

Genre:
Classic fiction — novel extract

Cross-curricular links:

- Art (cartoon strip)

Introduction

The British author Joan Aiken (1924-2004) received many awards for her work, including an MBE for her services to children's literature. *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* is the first in a series of twelve novels. Set in a fictionalised version of nineteenth-century England that is terrorised by marauding wolves, the novel follows Bonnie and her orphaned cousin, Sylvia, as they struggle to escape the clutches of their unscrupulous guardian, Miss Slighcarp. Before pupils read the extract, ask them to explain what suspense is.

Answers

1. third
2. "wasted precious moments"
3. E.g. She feels upset and frightened because she thinks it would be safer to go back to the house, and she doesn't understand where Bonnie is taking her.
4. E.g. It makes you worried that Bonnie and Sylvia won't be able to find anyone to help them.
5. E.g. They are the wolves in the distance that are chasing Bonnie and Sylvia.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. I think she feels glad to see him because he might be able to protect them from the wolves. She also feels confused because she doesn't know who he is or where he came from.
7. E.g. Bonnie is in control. You can tell because she is confident and knows her way around and decides where to go, while Sylvia just follows her.

Extra Activities

- As a class, explore the techniques Aiken uses to create tension and suspense in this extract. How does the setting contribute to the tense atmosphere? Why are the wolves important? How does Bonnie's behaviour help to build suspense? Why is it important that Sylvia doesn't know where they are going?
- Give pupils a visual prompt, such as a picture of a darkened house or an overgrown garden, and ask them to write a short story inspired by it. Pupils should focus on creating tension and suspense in their stories.
- Divide the class into two groups. Ask pupils from the first group to write a diary entry describing the events in the extract from Bonnie's perspective, while those in the second group write a diary entry from Sylvia's viewpoint. As a class, compare the two groups' diary entries. What do the similarities and differences between them suggest about the way different people may view the same events?
- Ask pupils to create a cartoon strip of the extract. Encourage them to think about how they can convey the tense atmosphere of the text in their drawings.
- Thinking back to the news article about the reintroduction of wolves to the UK (p.28-29 in the Year 5 Question Book; p.57 in the Teacher Book), discuss whether the extract from *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* gives an accurate portrayal of what might happen if wolves were reintroduced. How might reading this extract affect people's attitudes towards the reintroduction of wolves?