

Text for Section A, an extract from ‘Inkheart’ by Cornelia Funke.

While looking out of her bedroom window, Meggie spots a figure standing in the shadows outside her house. She immediately goes to find her father, Mo.

There was still a light on in Mo’s room. He often stayed up reading late into the night. Meggie had inherited her love of books from her father. When she took refuge from a bad dream with him, nothing could lull her back to sleep better than Mo’s calm breathing beside her and the sound of the pages turning. Nothing chased away nightmares faster than the rustle of printed paper.

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But the figure outside the house was no dream.

The book Mo was reading was bound in pale blue linen. Later, Meggie remembered that too. What unimportant little details stick in the memory.

‘Mo, there’s someone out in the yard!’

Her father raised his head and looked at her with the usual absent expression he wore when she interrupted his reading. It always took him a few moments to find his way out of that other world, the labyrinth of printed letters.

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‘Someone out in the yard? Are you sure?’

‘Yes. He’s staring at our house.’

Mo put down his book. ‘So what were you reading before you went to sleep? *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*¹?’

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Meggie frowned. ‘Please, Mo! Come and look.’

He didn’t believe her, but he went anyway. Meggie tugged him along the corridor so impatiently that he stubbed his toe on a pile of books, which was hardly surprising. Stacks of books were piled high all over the house – not just arranged on bookshelves, the way other people kept them, oh no! The books in Mo and Meggie’s house were stacked under tables, on chairs, in the corners of rooms. There were books in the kitchen and books in the lavatory². Books on the TV set and in the wardrobe, small piles of books, tall piles of books, books thick and thin, books old and new. They welcomed Meggie down to breakfast with invitingly open pages, they kept boredom at bay when the weather was bad. And sometimes you fell over them.

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‘He’s just standing there!’ whispered Meggie, leading Mo into her room.

‘Has he got a hairy face? If so, he could be a werewolf.’

‘Oh, stop it!’ Meggie looked at him sternly, although his jokes made her feel less scared. Already, she hardly believed any more in the figure standing in the rain – until she knelt down again at the window. ‘There! Do you see him?’ she whispered.

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Mo looked out through the raindrops running down the pane, and said nothing.

‘Didn’t you promise burglars would never break into our house because there’s nothing here to steal?’ whispered Meggie.

'He's not a burglar,' replied Mo, but as he stepped back from the window his face was so grave that Meggie's heart thudded faster than ever. 'Go back to bed, Meggie,' he said. 'This visitor has come to see me.'

He left the room before Meggie could ask what kind of visitor, for goodness' sake, turned up in the middle of the night. She followed him anxiously. As she crept down the corridor, she heard her father taking the chain off the front door, and when she reached the hall she saw him standing in the open doorway. The night came in, dark and damp, and the rushing of the rain sounded loud and threatening.

'Dustfinger!' called Mo into the darkness. 'Is that you?'

Dustfinger? What kind of a name was that? Meggie couldn't remember hearing it before, yet it sounded familiar, like a distant memory that wouldn't take shape properly.

At first, all seemed still outside except for the rain falling, murmuring as if the night had found its voice. But then footsteps approached the house, and the man emerged from the darkness of the yard, his long coat so wet with rain that it clung to his legs. For a split second, as the stranger stepped into the light spilling out of the house, Meggie thought she saw a small furry head over his shoulder, snuffing as it looked out of his rucksack and then quickly disappearing back into it.

Dustfinger wiped his wet face with his sleeve and offered his hand.

'How are you, Silvertongue?' he asked. 'It's been a long time.'

Hesitantly, Mo took the outstretched hand. 'A very long time,' he said, looking past his visitor as if he expected to see another figure emerge from the night. 'Come in, you'll catch your death. Meggie says you've been standing out there for some time.'

'Meggie? Ah yes, of course.' Dustfinger let Mo lead him into the house. He scrutinised Meggie so thoroughly that she felt embarrassed and didn't know where to look. In the end, she just stared back.

'She's grown.'

'You remember her?'

'Of course.'

Meggie noticed that Mo double locked the door.

Glossary

¹ Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde – a famous horror story

² lavatory – bathroom/toilet

Read the passage and answer the following questions:

1. From the opening lines, what is the mood injected? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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2. In your own words, what helps Meggie get to sleep after a bad dream?

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3. But the figure outside the house was no dream. What does this statement imply?

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4. “There’s someone out in the yard!” Meggie said. Change from the direct to reported speech and make the necessary changes.

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5. From lines (20-25), find two adverbs and specify their type.

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6. ‘Except for the rain falling, murmuring as if the night had found its voice.’ (lines 45–46) What is the underlined phrase an example of?

7. From line 43, Meggie couldn’t remember hearing it before. Underline the modal verb and specify its type.

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8. From line 54, “Come in, you’ll catch your death”, what is the tone in the statement?

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9. He **scrutinised** Meggie so thoroughly that she felt embarrassed and didn’t know where to look. What does the word in bold mean in context?

10. Her father raised his head and looked at her with the usual absent expression he wore when she interrupted his reading. Rewrite the sentence in the first type conditional. Start with the underlined condition.