

Lesson 8 - The Giant's Necklace

LC: Can I discuss how an author develops a character through dialogue?

There are no more online lessons for this text, however Mrs Williams will take a look at the rest of the story with you. There is a video clip on Google Classroom to watch along with this lesson.

The tunnel widened now and she found she could walk upright again, but her feet hurt against the stone and so she moved slowly, feeling her way gently with each foot. She had gone only a short distance when she heard the tapping for the first time, distinct and rhythmic, a sound that was instantly recognisable as hammering. It became sharper and noticeably more metallic as she moved up the tunnel. She could hear the distant murmur of voices and the sound of falling stone. Even before she came out of the tunnel and into the vast cave she knew she had happened upon a working mine.

The cave was dark in all but one corner and here she could see two men bending to their work, their backs towards her. One of them was inspecting the rock face closely whilst the other swung his hammer with controlled power, pausing only to spit on his hands from time to time. They wore round hats with turned up brims that served also as candlesticks, for a lighted candle was fixed to each, the light dancing with the shadows along the cave walls as they worked.

Cherry watched for some moments until she made up her mind what to do. She longed to rush up to them and tell of her escape and to ask them to take her to the surface, but a certain shyness overcame her and she held back. Her chance to interrupt came when they sat down against the rock face and opened their canteens. She was in the shadows and they still could not see her.

How did Cherry realise that she was in a working mine before she saw it?

What job do the two men have?

'Tea looks cold again,' one of them said gruffly. 'Tis always cold. I'm sure she makes it wi' cold water.'

'Oh stop your moaning, Father,' said the other, a younger voice, Cherry felt. 'She does her best. She's five little ones to look after and precious little to do it on. She does her best. You mustn't keep on at her so. It upsets her. She does her best.'

'So she does, lad, so she does. And so for that matter do I, but that don't stop her moaning at me and it'll not stop me moaning at her. If we didn't moan at each other, lad, we'd have precious little else to talk about, and that's a fact. She expects it of me, lad, and I expects it of her.'

What stands out about the way that the two men talk?

Who do you think the 'she' is that they are discussing?

'Excuse me,' Cherry said tentatively. She felt she had eavesdropped for long enough. She approached them slowly. 'Excuse me, but I've got a bit lost. I climbed the cliff, you see, 'cos I was cut off from the Cove. I was trying to get back, but I couldn't and I saw this light and so I climbed up. I want to get home and I wondered if you could help me get to the top?'

'Top?' said the older one, peering into the dark. 'Come closer, lad, where we can see you.'

'She's not a lad, Father. Are you blind? Can you not see 'tis a filly. 'Tis a young filly, all wet through from the sea. Come,' the young man said, standing up and beckoning Cherry in. 'Don't be afeared, little girl, we shan't harm you. Come on, you can have some of my tea if you like.'

Identify the vocabulary that the two men use that is different to the vocabulary we would normally expect?

Why do you think they use different vocabulary?

Which word does Cherry use that is not a real word?

What does this show us about Cherry?

They spoke their words in a manner Cherry had never heard before. It was not the usual Cornish burr, but heavier and rougher in tone, more old-fashioned somehow. There were so many questions in her mind.

'But I thought the mine was closed a hundred years ago,' she said nervously. 'That's what I was told, anyway.'

'Well, you was told wrong,' said the old man, whom Cherry could see more clearly now under his candle. His eyes were white and set far back in his head, unnaturally so, she thought, and his lips and mouth seemed a vivid red in the candlelight.

'Closed, closed indeed, does it look closed to you? D'you think we're digging for worms? Over four thousand tons of tin last year and nine thousand of copper ore, and you ask is the mine closed? Over twenty fathoms below the sea this mine goes. We'll dig right out under the ocean, halfway to 'Merica afore we close down this mine.'

He spoke passionately now, almost angrily, so that Cherry felt she had offended him.

'It was not the usual Cornish burr,' What does this sentence mean?

If the mine was closed a hundred years ago, like Cherry believes, what does that suggest about these miners?

'Hush, Father,' said the young man taking off his jacket and wrapping it round Cherry's shoulders. 'She doesn't want to hear all about that. She's cold and wet. Can't you see? Now let's make a little fire to warm her through. She's shivered right through to her bones. You can see she is.'

'They all are,' said the old tinner pulling himself to his feet. 'They all are.' And he shuffled past her into the dark. 'I'll fetch the wood,' he muttered, and then added, 'for all the good it'll do.'

'What does he mean?' Cherry asked the young man, for whom she felt an instant liking. 'What did he mean by that?'

'Oh pay him no heed, little girl,' he said. 'He's an old man now and tired of the mine. We're both tired of it, but we're proud of it see, and we've nowhere else to go, nothing else to do.'