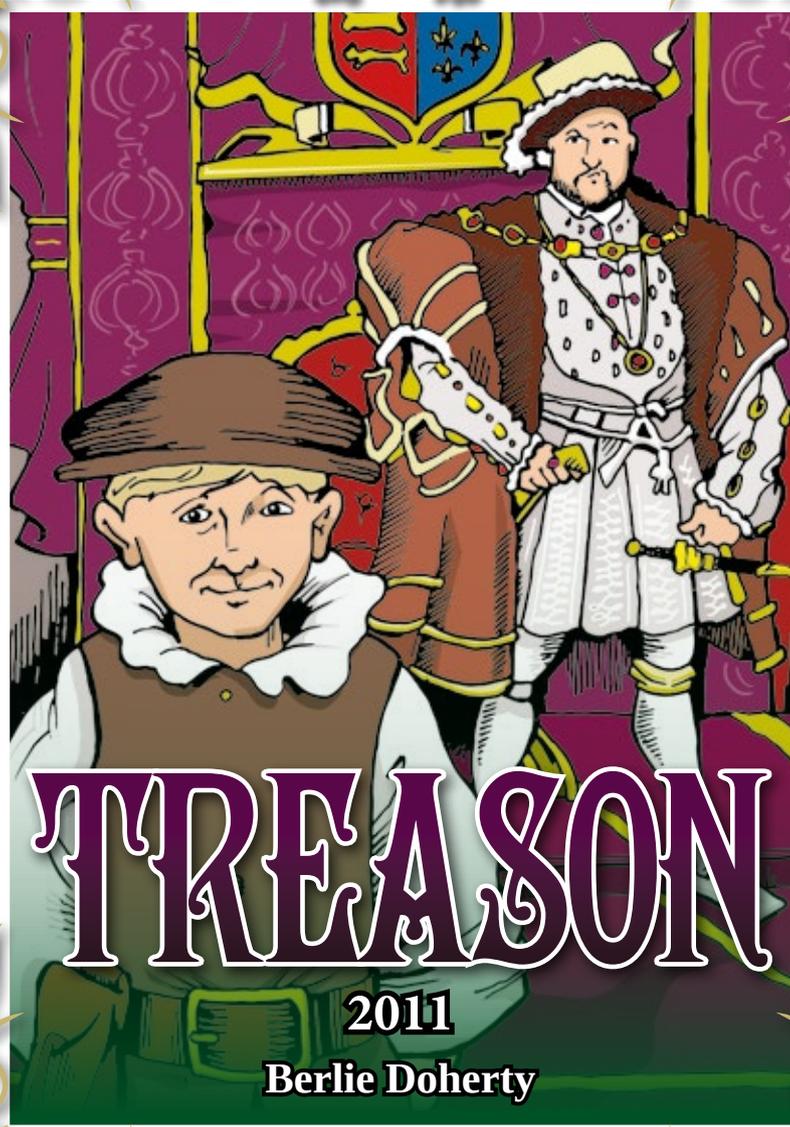


Love to Read



Cornerstones



2011

Berlie Doherty

Evocative, pacey historical novel, redolent in detail, bringing to life both the splendour and squalour of Tudor England. Some historical vocabulary will need covering with the children. Although the hero is a young boy, it is an entertaining adventure story that should appeal to girls and boys alike.



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The year is 1539. Henry VIII is King of England.

All three of his wives, Katherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour are dead. He had three children: Mary, Elizabeth and the long-awaited heir to his throne, Edward. Henry has broken away from the Church of Rome because the Pope would not allow him to divorce his first wife. Anyone who refuses to accept that he is the Supreme Head of the Church of England is accused of an offence that is punishable by death.

Treason





Overview for teachers

Context

About the author

The prolific author, poet, playwright and screenwriter, Berlie Doherty was born on 6th November 1943 in Liverpool. A keen reader, and encouraged to write from an early age by her father, her first stories were published in local newspapers when she was only five years old! Naturally enough it seems, she went on to study English at Durham University before training to be a teacher at the University of Sheffield. She worked as a social worker and teacher and was later commissioned to write a schools series for BBC Radio Sheffield after they broadcast a short story she had submitted whilst on her teaching course.

She decided to create stories full-time when her children were older and her first book *How Green You Are!* was published in 1982. She mostly writes for children and often works with them when developing her novels, having 'a conviction that children are the experts and I can always learn from them'.

She has won many awards including the prestigious Carnegie Medal twice; the first time in 1987 for *Granny Was a Buffer Girl*, and again in 1992 for *Dear Nobody*.

She lives in Edale, Derbyshire and continues to write, taking inspiration from the places and people around her.

What's the story about?

When William Montague's elder brother, Matthew, accidentally drowns, he is tormented by grief and guilt and believes his withdrawn father blames him for Matthew's death. Distraught, his father leaves William and his sister, Margery, in the charge of his austere and loveless aunt, Lady Carew, who uses the two children to help further her husband's ambitions in the court of King Henry VIII.

After a period of grooming, 'William Carew' is presented to King Henry VIII at Hampton Court Palace by his uncle and is chosen by the King to be the page for his infant son, Prince Edward. William is initially delighted with his important position and flatters himself that he is the 'King's favourite', but his delight quickly turns to unease. Not only does he find he has a very real enemy in the sinister and vengeful Lord Percy Howard (Percy believes himself usurped of his rightful position by William), but William is also a Catholic - a treasonable offence under Henry Tudor's Protestant rule. On top of all this, William begins to understand the danger that lies behind Henry VIII's fickle and tyrannical nature and increasingly finds himself feeling like an imprisoned bird, albeit in a gilded cage.

All of William's fears eventually come to a head when his father is thrown into the notorious Newgate Prison for treason after the Howards succeed in convincing King Henry that William's father is a Catholic. Driven by fear for his own life and by a determination to save the life of his father, William flees Hampton Court and goes into hiding in the grim backstreets of London. Fortunately for William, he stumbles upon a poor boy, Nick Drew and his family who agree to help him.

While Nick's grandmother, Widow Susan, visits William's father in Newgate and attempts to keep him alive with special potions of her own creation, Nick and William journey to France to visit Margery, now the wife of the influential Lord Richard of Carlisle. Luckily for William, King Henry is indebted to Lord Richard so he agrees to write a letter to the King begging him to release William's father to him. Nick and William return to England and the letter is a success. William's father is released and the pair happily journey together to France.

Themes to look out for

- Guilt
- Trust
- Familial relationships
- Social status



Literary techniques

Presentation of character is achieved through

- What the character says
- What the character does
- What other characters say about them
- How other characters react to them
- How they are described in the narrative



Characters

William Montague

William begins the story as a likeable young boy who shows bountiful love for his family and a kind regard for those who are of a lower social status than himself. He elicits the reader's sympathy when he blames himself for his brother's death and shows a needy desire to feel worthy of his father's love once more - an emotion that propels his actions henceforward in the story.

Born into an old Catholic family that once had royal connections, William Montague finds himself and his family thrown into the royal limelight once more when, with the aid of his ambitious Aunt and Uncle Carew, he becomes a page to Henry VIII's infant son, Edward. The initial warmth and sympathy the reader felt for William is tempered at times when he shows pride, self-pity, mistrust and a high-handedness towards those socially inferior to himself - a negative impact of Henry VIII's court. Ultimately, William is a good person and, because of this, he is able to recognise his more unattractive attitudes and feel a sense of remorse. The story shows him growing in maturity and bravery, epitomised by his seeming willingness to exchange places with his father in Newgate Prison in return for his father's freedom. A fine son, indeed.

Father/Robert Montague

William's father, Robert Montague, appears infrequently in the story, but brings a measured, level-headed gravitas to the action whenever he does. Like his son, he is a slightly flawed character. On the one hand he is completely without pride, and his regard and respect for other people is derived from their actions and not their social status or wealth. However, incapacitated by his elder son's death, the once warm father withdraws from his family, leaving an immature William bewildered and tragically shouldering the blame for Matthew's drowning. It is only at the end of the novel that he explicitly lets William know that he is 'as fine a son as any man could wish to have'.

King Henry VIII

King Henry VIII is portrayed as a fickle, tyrannical figure who, though he lingers mainly in the background, has a profound effect on those around him. His character is built up not so much by what the reader directly hears from the King himself, but from William's narrative; his descriptions of the extravagant opulence of Henry's court, the gluttonous feasts, his imperious demands and the court's simpering reactions borne from ambition, paranoia and fear. When he gets close to William, the reader gets to imagine the foul smell of his breath and bad body odour. Obviously, the writer does not have a very high regard of Henry and, in this way, the reader is encouraged not to either.

Brother John

Brother John is Robert Montague's cousin and a Catholic priest. A kind man, he takes care of William for a short while before Aunt Carew arrives and is William's only solace during this time. Thrown out by Aunt Carew because of the danger his Catholicism could bring to the family, he becomes a beggar and is later hanged for treason. His appearance in the story serves to portray the effects of Henry's merciless tyranny to those who refused to renounce the Catholic faith and join the reformation during his reign.

Lord Percy Howard

Ice-cold, sneering and swaggering, Percy is a one-dimensional, menacing figure. His character is built-up so that every time he appears in the story a sense of anxiety, dread and unease is awakened in the reader, thereby wrenching up the tension.

Widow Susan

Acerbic Widow Susan and her fatalistic socialist views could be viewed as a mouthpiece for the author to express ideas about social status pertinent not only to Tudor times, but today also: 'The peasants work the land and the rich folks own it, and it's always been that way and always will'. Having a strong sense of self-esteem, she is nobody's fool and ridicules William for his impertinent manner when they first meet. Beyond her initial fearsomeness however lies a very brave and tenderhearted woman whose help William and his father are absolutely indebted.

Nick Drew

A chirpy brave-hearted character who unfailingly helps and follows William purely from the goodness of his own heart. In a world of mistrust, he shows William that trust is possible after all.

Margery

William's sister does not have much of a role to play in the story except to show how daughters from wealthy families were considered as chattels to be bartered for land or political power. This can be seen when Aunt Carew tutors her differently to William, grooming her to be the young bride of a wealthy older man.

Aunt and Uncle Carew

A politically ambitious couple who use the Montague children to further their own careers in the court of King Henry VIII. Openly willing to disown family who could harm their chances of progression, they are an offensive couple; wintery, sharp and soulless.

Setting

The setting can

- Be a backdrop to the action
- Reflect characters' experiences
- Symbolise ideas the author wishes to convey
- Have its own culture and values
- Cause conflict and distress



Tudor England, 1593

Rich in sensory detail, Doherty takes the reader on a vividly-imagined journey through the many worlds of Tudor England.

Montague Hall

William's family home is a symbol of refuge, and a crumbling one at that. The Montague family first retreated there after William's ancestor, Walter Montague, fell out of favour with King Edward II and the building is all that remains of their power. As the walls of the hall around them crumble and fall, so does the Hall's power to protect. Matthew dies, William's father leaves, Aunt Carew, a merciless representative of Henry VIII's new order, takes over and evicts Brother John, her cousin. When Brother John does return, he is no longer safe. Discovered and handed over to the King's men by another agent of the court of Henry, Lord Percy Howard, he is hanged for refusing to acknowledge Henry as head of the church. The ensuing burning of the chapel and the destruction of the hall symbolically ends the idea of any safe place in England for William and his family, and for Catholics too.

Doherty also uses William's return to Montague Hall to show the reader how time spent at Henry's court has changed him - for the worse. Once on friendly terms with Ned Porritt, the Montague's groom, William, on his return treats him with an unbecoming disdain, regarding him solely as servant and refusing to look him in the eye and acknowledge his presence as a person.

London

Doherty builds up the depiction of London, beginning with sound - 'mad ding-dong', 'thunder of carriage wheels', 'shouting', 'din', 'hammering, bleating, chiming, babbling', then sights - 'cram of buildings', 'black smoke', 'twisting river', 'hovels and sheds', and finally by the smells of London - the odour of 'dirt, sweat and rot', 'cooking fumes billowed round us, choking us with a stink...'. All conspire to create a deeply unattractive, overpowering and relentlessly miserable world where the individual is lost to be replaced by 'the swarm of people like maggots on a carcass'. The depressing images of death and decay in the world of the common Tudor man are made even more acute when contrasted directly with the lavish descriptions of Hampton Court palace. In this way, Doherty's social comment on the unjust differences between the rich and the poor are difficult to ignore.

Indeed, the streets take on an even more repugnant quality when William is forced to take refuge in their doorways after fleeing Hampton Court. The people become a 'howling bunch' of animals 'thrusting out their grimy paws for coins'. William is completely vulnerable, no longer having even a pomander to ward off the reek and stench of the 'filthier and dingier' streets.

Hampton Court

As with her depiction of London, Doherty uses the same techniques of sound, sight and smell to build up the atmosphere of Hampton Court Palace, but there is a difference. Here the sounds are no less loud, but are 'colourful', superficial sounds of entertainment and enjoyment rather than hardship. There is 'laughter and gossip, high chattering of children, music from tambors, and the whining and yapping of dogs'. Everything shimmers or is golden at Hampton Court and the air is suffused with the scent of spiced pomanders or the aroma of sumptuous feasts, extravagant beyond imagination. But behind all the splendour and simpering, lurks an omnipresent danger where no one can be trusted, enemies abound and a capricious, narcissistic king reigns unchallenged and supreme. William is initially dazzled, but as time goes by he begins to see beyond the veneer, acknowledging his imprisoned place in the world and finally seeing Henry, not as a golden sun but as a cankerous human who 'oozes yellow pus'.

Newgate Prison

The stuff of nightmares and another example of Henry VIII's unsavoury world. The reader is treated to a hellish, foreboding description of the place and its inhabitants to prepare us for the unimagined condition William's father must be in. The prison is swathed in darkness with 'stern black gates', 'a gloomy hall' and 'it was so dark' repeated more than once. The prisoners are half-mad, tortured or 'crouching still and silent on the end of chains'. Unlike Doherty's other descriptions of place, the sounds here are muted or non-existent, adding to the eerie atmosphere. The only sound is the screaming in William's head.



Narrative techniques

The story is told from the point of view of William, allowing the reader insight into his inner most thoughts, his frequent worries and his intimate views on King Henry's world. William's honest reactions may not always incline the reader to like or agree with him, but the first-person narrative lets the reader see at first-hand the detrimental effects Henry's world has had on William's way of thinking and his changing behaviour towards others.

Structure

Structure is the order or pattern in which a novel is put together and should

- Maintain the interest of the reader
- Move the action from one episode to the next
- Arouse a reader's interest in character or situation
- Create a moment of crisis
- Create expectation or surprise



Characters and place are frequently introduced by sound before sight to build up a sense of mystery, fear and foreboding. Hearing London and Hampton Court at first is disorientating for William as the sounds are in stark contrast to the quietness of Montague Hall. Introducing Aunt Carew as a 'flurry' with a '...voice raised in sharp anger, feet pattering in the corridor...' creates a sense of mysterious apprehension within the reader, indicating that this character is here to unsettle.

Like the Carews, Lord Percy Howard is used to add friction and tension to the proceedings. Described as powerful with 'a swaggering walk and an unpleasantly curling lip', he becomes William's nemesis and, like Pavlov's dog, the reader anticipates that his appearance brings no good to William or his family, thereby increasing the tension and suspense within the novel.

Doherty uses the technique of 'form within form' in the story when she includes letters from Margery and Mother Jack. Margery's letters to William offer an opportunity for Doherty to present the story from Margery's viewpoint, to highlight the loving relationship between William and his sister and to fill in information from back home that the reader would otherwise have no access to since the story is told from William's point of view. The difference in style and length of the two letters from Margery shines a light on the negative impact the Carew's ambitions are having on her. It is not just William who feels powerless. While Margery's letters show insight into character, Mother Jack's letter to William in *Two Letters* is a literary device to add tension to the story as she reports the foreboding news that King Henry 'travels home in a bad mood'. The reader knows enough by this time to understand the possible repercussions of this simple statement.

Language

Making no attempt to replicate the speech patterns of 1593, Doherty chooses instead to authenticate the novel using Tudor specific nouns, for example: coif, doublet, wherryman and drop-spindle. The author does not explain these items, it would interrupt narrative and hamper pace, instead it is for the reader to find out for themselves.

Another method the writer uses that is paramount to the reader's successful transportation to Tudor times is to vividly evoke a sense of place. Our senses are bombarded with a cacophony of sounds, sights and smells when describing London, Hampton Court and Newgate that the reader cannot fail to feel they are part of the action.

Carefully-chosen similes (and there are lots of them!) using birds ('...my voice was a poor shaking thing at first, like a baby sparrow that's just crunched out of its shell...'), animals ('...my majesty stood watching me, making me as nervous as a mouse...') and time-appropriate objects ('Courtiers...stood idly by like painted maypoles') as comparisons similarly help to give an aura of the workings of a boy's mind in Tudor times, restricted as they must be by objects to compare with.

The imagery of birds is taken one step further in the story and becomes a running motif often used by William to describe himself and other characters around him. He sings like 'some nightingale' for the king, Uncle Carew 'pecked his face' towards him and William even receives a kestrel as a present. The birds take on a different meaning in each case, depending on the characteristics highlighted, symbolising either beauty and fear or acting as a metaphor for freedom and imprisonment.

The presentation of William's internalised narrative is helped along by his frequent self-questioning. In the beginning, the questions resonate with guilt 'Is it wrong, I wondered? Is it wrong to laugh and joke, when the rest of the house is so wrapped in grief for Matthew?' (*You are alive*), but as the novel progresses they take on a more fearful quality, highlighting his growing vulnerability, principally awakened by Lord Percy Howard. In *The sweat*, the Howards arrive at Montague Hall and William is thrown into a desperate state of uncertainty and a whole paragraph is taken up by questions: 'Why had he and his father come all the way to Montague to tell us this? Why hadn't one of the king's messengers been sent from Hampton Court?...Were Percy and his father going to stay with us all summer?...surely, surely, there was somewhere else for them to stay?'

Later in the novel, when William has fled Hampton Court, his questions show the precipice of despair he teeters on: 'How would I get to Greenwich? How would I find Lord de Crecy? And my father was locked in Newgate, left to rot with the rats and mice. What would happen to him?'



Special feature

The historical novel

The historical novel is a genre where the novel is written at least fifty years after the events described and where the author is writing from research rather than personal experience.



Treason forms part of a long traditional canon of historical prose fiction, the earliest of which dates back as early as fourteenth-century China. The Scottish writer, Sir Walter Scott, is credited with its re-emerging popularity in Europe in the nineteenth century, with novels such as *Waverley* and *Ivanhoe*.

The historical novel is often chosen by a writer not only for its opportunity for an engaging narrative, but to explore and convey crucial social settings, cultural conditions and manners with an eye on its impact and developments. It can also act as a platform to frame and discuss current ideas and issues safe in another setting. For example, *Treason* deals with the idea of equality - an issue that is as pertinent today as it was over four hundred years ago.

The novel may or may not be wholly faithful to historical fact and often deals with actual people from history or it may contain a mixture of fictional and historical characters - as is the case in *Treason*. The historical novel may focus on a single historic event or portray a broader view of a past society. *Treason* deals with a specific time in the reign of Henry VIII, that is, 1593 just prior to his fourth marriage to Anne of Cleves, but creates the fictional hero William Montague to provide the narrative brushstrokes of what it might have been like to live in his world.



Activities for children



Before reading

Ideas for getting started

Engaging with the world of the novel

Social and historical context

Research the life of King Henry VIII and Tudor England. What did people do for entertainment in Tudor times? What did they wear? What type of housing did they live in? How did a poor person's experience of Tudor England differ from a rich person's?

What were the major events during Henry VIII's reign leading up to the year 1593?

Investigate the Catholic and Protestant situation in England during Henry's reign. Why did he break from the Catholic Church and make himself Head of the Church of England?

Debate

What is trust? Consider how important trust is in our lives? Can we live without it? What might a life without trust look like? Who do you trust and why? Have you ever trusted or mistrusted anyone? Why was that? Has your trust ever been misplaced? How did that make you feel?

Are you trustworthy? What does it feel like to be like that?

Is everyone born equal? How should we regard those who are socially different to us?

Is society equal? Why/why not?

Pictures and objects

Look at a selection of Hans Holbein pictures, including those he painted of Henry VIII and Edward VI. Describe what you see. What impressions of Henry VIII and Edward VI do the pictures give? See how many items of clothing you can identify.

Compare a map of London from the 1500s with a modern map. What do you notice? Find Westminster Palace on each of the maps. Use a map to find Hampton Court Palace.

Look at photographs of the interior and exterior of Hampton Court Palace including its gardens. What are your impressions? How would you describe it? Have you ever seen anything like this before?

Facts

What is a courtier?

What does the word 'treason' mean?

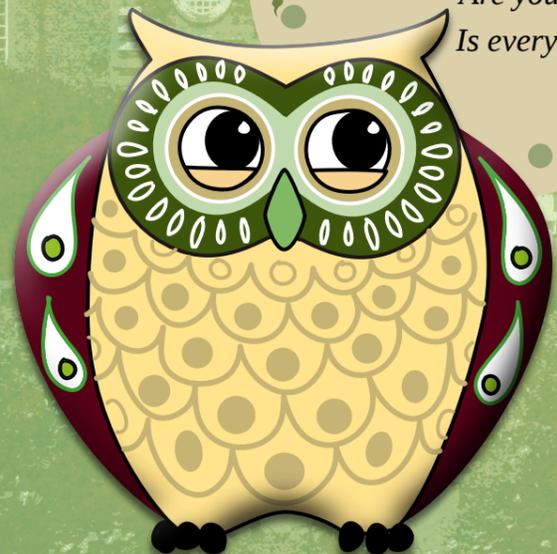
The story mentions items of clothing worn during Tudor times. Find out what the following were: doublet, coif, jerkin, nether hose, upper hose.

What is a wherry?

When did Henry VIII rule?

How many wives did Henry VIII have and what were their names?

Where did they come from? What was the fate of each of his wives?



During reading

Stopping places

Developing understanding of narrative and literary techniques

1

**Read to the end of
*The heir to Montague Hall***

Focus on...

- *Presentation of Matthew*
- *Use of setting to indicate danger*



Things to discuss

Character: Although Matthew dies in the first chapter, he is clearly presented by what the others say about him. What's your impression of him?

What do you learn about William and Margery? What are your first impressions of them?

Is anyone to blame for Matthew's death? Why/why not?

What do you think of the father's behaviour? How far do you agree with William that his father 'wishes it was Matthew that he'd saved, not me'?

In *You are alive*, Brother John states 'Nothing in this world is quite as it seems'. How important a statement do you think this might be in the novel? Do you agree with his statement? Why?

We hear a little about Aunt Carew. What do you think she will add to the story?

Setting: How would you describe the atmosphere of the first chapter?

How does the author use the setting to warn you that something bad is going to happen in the first chapter?

What does the description of William's father's room in *The heir to Montague Hall* suggest about him and how he is feeling?

Structure: What did you think about the opening of the story? Did you like it?

Language: Highlight the verbs in the first two paragraphs. What do they have in common? How would you describe them and how do they make you feel about the story you are about to read?

Now do the same for the verbs and adverbs used to describe the sea on page two. What do these words suggest about the sea?

Story: What was the most dramatic part of the first chapter for you? Why do you say that?

How do you think the story might develop from here?

What kind of story do you think it is going to be?

You could...

Begin to pick out words or phrases that shows the story was set during Tudor times and discuss what they add to the story. Look up any words you do not know. What do the words and phrases suggest about life during this time?

2

**Read to the end of
*You are to meet the King today***

Focus on...

- *The presentation of London*
- *The presentation of Aunt Carew*
- *The mood of the story*
- *The withholding of information*



Things to discuss

Character: What does the conversation between Aunt Carew and Brother John in the chapter *Aunt Carew* suggest about each character? Whose side were you on during the conversation? What does their conversation reveal about the world they live in and how does this add to the mood of the book? What, if anything, might their conversation foreshadow?

How does the author present Aunt Carew? What has the author written to make you think that?

What are your impressions of Henry VIII?

How is William's father presented so far? Do you think he is a good man? Why do you say that?

What are your first impressions of Uncle Carew?

Setting: At the beginning of the chapter *Aunt Carew*, the author describes the weather as 'windy' and 'cold'. How does this affect the mood of the story and what might it suggest about Aunt Carew's imminent arrival?

How is London presented? Does it remind you of anywhere?

Why do you think the author included the bear-baiting scene in the chapter *You are to meet the king today*? How does the author want you to feel about the scene? Why do you say that? What did you think of this scene?

How does the description of London compare to life at Montague Hall? Which setting do you prefer? Why do you say that?

What might the change in setting signify for William?

Language: Highlight the similes used in this section. What, if anything, do you notice about them? What do they tell you about William, the narrator?

Structure: In *London*, some things go unsaid or the author withholds information from the reader. Find examples and explain what they add to the mood of the story? What is it you don't know? What questions would you like answering?

Why might the author have chosen to present the sounds of London before describing what it looks like?

You could...

Begin to collect examples of the use of repetition to emphasise a point, a technique Doherty frequently makes use of in this story. In *You are to meet the King today*, William repeats the phrase 'I hated...' three times when telling us about London. Discuss the effect the use of repetition has on you as a reader. How does it influence the way you respond to William and London?



3

Read to the end of
I should be careful, if I were you

Focus on...

- Presentation of Henry VIII and his court



Things to discuss

Character: Explore how Henry VIII is presented in this section. What is your impression of him? How does the writer's description of Henry VIII compare with the Hans Holbein painting you looked at before reading the story? Does the portrait reflect any of the qualities of Henry VIII found in this story?

What role do you think Percy Howard will play in the story? Why do you say that?

What do you think has happened to Brother John?

Underline the words and phrases used to describe Uncle Carew. Do they have anything in common? Why do you think the author has chosen to compare Uncle Carew to a bird?

What do you think of William at the end of this section?

Setting: What do you learn about the court of King Henry in this section?

How is Hampton Court Palace presented and how does it compare to London? How are the environments similar and in what ways are they different? Would you like to travel back in time and visit the court of King Henry? What things do you think you would enjoy? What wouldn't you like about it?

Structure: Doherty uses the letter form in *The secret thought* and *Matthew is found*. What do these letters reveal about William, Margery and Father? What advantages are there to presenting the information this way rather than through William's narrative? How does this literary technique help you learn more about character?

Language: Highlight the words used to describe Henry VIII. What, if anything, do they have in common? Look for examples where the author uses sound to evoke a sense of place, mood or to introduce and describe character. How successful is the writer in bringing a place and person to life using this technique? How does the variety of sound affect the way you feel as you read sections of the story? How do the sounds associated with London compare with the sounds associated with Hampton Court Palace?

Symbolism: What might the falcon, Clever, symbolise?

Story: Where do you think this story is leading you?

At the end of *Matthew is found*, William believes, had there been a choice, his father would have saved Matthew rather than himself. What do you think? How far do you agree with William that his father blames him for Matthew's death?

You could...

Discuss who you think William is potentially most in danger from. Is it Henry VIII, Percy or members of his own family? What advice would you give William at this point in the story?

4

Read to the end of
The King's visitors

Focus on...

- The role of Percy Howard in the story
- Narrative viewpoint
- The idea of change



Things to discuss

Character: How do you feel every time Percy Howard appears in the story? What has the author done to make you feel like this towards him? What purpose does he serve in the story?

In this section, William returns to Montague Hall. How has he changed?

What does the relationship between Father and Aunt Carew tell you about life in Tudor times?

What does Aunt Carew's speech at the end of *A hideous old man* tell you about her and about life at that time?

Setting: How is Montague Hall presented in *Home*? How do the words and phrases used to describe the Hall compare with those used to describe Hampton Court? Which setting do you prefer?

What more do you learn about life during the reign of Henry VIII in this section?

William's return to Montague Hall is used to highlight the changes that have come about since he was last there. What differences do you notice? What affect do these changes have on you, the reader?

Narrative: The story is told in the first person by William. What are the advantages and disadvantages of hearing the story from one person's point of view? Do you ever want to know more? How does it make you feel towards William?

Structure: At the end of *A hideous old man*, the writer contrasts William's goodbye with Margery's. Why do you think she has done this? What does it tell you about how the two characters might be feeling?

Did the book tell us enough to predict Brother John's capture? Why do you say that?

What do you notice about Margery's letter in *Two letters*? How does it contrast to the one she wrote to William in *Matthew is found*. What might the letter suggest about how she is feeling?

During the raid of Montague Hall, the reader only gets to hear what is going on. Underline what you hear and discuss what the different sounds suggest about the characters. How does hearing, but not seeing, the action make you feel about what is happening?

Language: As Father approaches Aunt Carew's room on page 91 in *Home*, the writer starts the next five sentences with 'She...'. What is the writer suggesting about Aunt Carew by using this technique?

Why do you think the author uses lots of questions in the first two pages of *The sweat*? What do they suggest about William's state of mind? What effect, if any, does it have on your feelings about William and his situation?

The questions are a direct consequence of Percy Howard's arrival at the end of the previous chapter provoking a sense of anxiety and unease in William and, therefore, in the reader.

Ideas: Brother John states in *Brother John comes home* that 'Nothing is more important than to understand people and to love them'. How far do you agree?

Story: What, if anything, shocked you in this section of the story? How do you feel about Margery's situation? Were there times when you felt uneasy reading this section? What were they? Did one part feel more threatening than the others?



5

Read to the end of *Attacked*

Focus on...

- How the different worlds are presented
- The theme of trust
- Writer's viewpoint



Things to discuss

Character: When do you think William is most worried in this section? What has the writer done to make you say that?

How are Nick Drew and his family presented?

How would you describe William's behaviour towards Nick and his family? What did you think of his attitude towards them? What impact does his behaviour have on the way you view him?

Do you like William at this point? How far do you understand or blame him?

Look at the things Widow Susan says. What do you think she might represent in this novel? How far do you think the author agrees with her views?

Setting: How is Westminster Palace presented in *A palace of whispers*? What does the title suggest about the place? Is it what you expected?

How is life in *Another world* presented? This chapter immediately follows *A palace of whispers*. What do you think the author achieved by doing this? How do the two Tudor worlds compare?

How is Nick's home in *The straw dragon* presented? What does their home say about their character? How does their feast compare with the feast William experienced at Hampton Court?

Writer's viewpoint: Having looked at the different settings in this section, what do you think the writer's viewpoint is of each one? Why do you say that?

Whose voice, more than any other, do you think the writer inhabits?

What is the writer's view of Henry VIII?

How does the writer view William's behaviour when he meets the Drews?

Theme: What ideas do you think are emerging in this section?

The idea of trust is more alive than ever in this section. Underline any points in the story where William trusts or mistrusts. Is he right to trust/mistrust some people? Why is that? Who do you trust and mistrust in the novel?

Story: Why do you think William 'didn't want any of them [the Drew family] any more'? What do you think will happen next?

You could...

List the advantages and disadvantages of each of the three worlds presented in this section. Talk about which of the worlds you would most like to belong to if you lived then.

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Read to the end of the novel

Focus on...

- The presentation of Newgate Prison



Things to discuss

Character: What more do you learn about Widow Susan in this section? Is she what you initially expected?

How is Anne of Cleves presented?

At what points in the novel did you like William most and least?

How realistic a character is Nick?

Which characters seemed most or least real to you?

Do any of the characters remind you of anyone?

How would you describe William and his father's relationship at the end of the story? Do you think the father was always proud of William?

Has reading the book altered the way you feel about King Henry VIII? How does his presentation in this novel compare with other presentations of him?

Setting: How is Newgate Prison presented? How did it make you feel about life in Tudor times? How would you describe the overall presentation of life during Henry VIII's reign?

Look at the other settings in the final section of the story. What more did you learn about life during this time?

Structure: In 'Newgate Prison', William watches his father from a distance. What impact did this have on you as you were reading this section?

Story: How appropriate was the ending to the story? Did you like the way it ended?

Why did you think the King let William live?

Do you truly believe William would have swapped places with his father in Newgate prison? Why?

What was your favourite/least favourite section of the story?

Did any parts seem rushed to you?

What would you change if you were the author?



After reading

Create & imagine

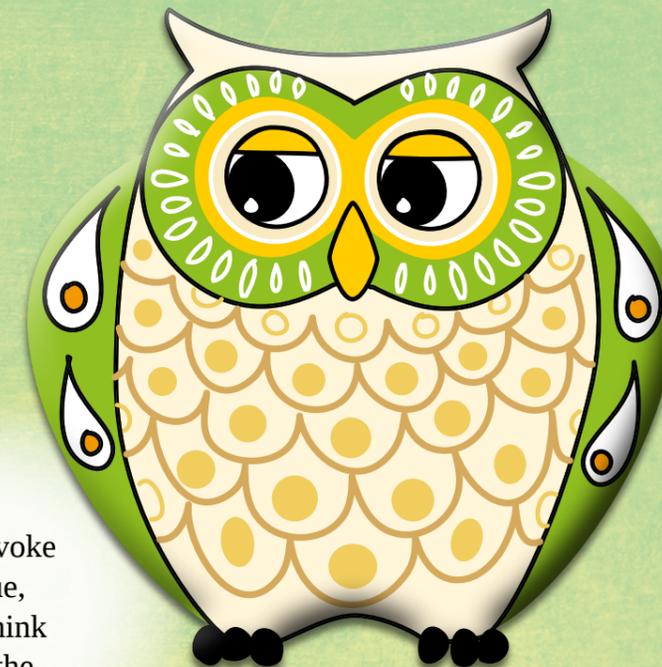
Developing a personal response to the novel

Mummers' play

Find out what you can about the tradition of mummers' plays. What was typical about their performance? Work with a friend to create your own mummer play. Don't forget to make your own costumes and masks too.

Simile sonnet

Since *Treason* is a historical novel, Doherty's use of similes had to be time appropriate - 'He was as tall as a skyscraper' would not have been suitable at all. Think of ten similes that are appropriate to your time and write a sonnet (a popular form of poetry during the Tudor period) that includes your best five similes.

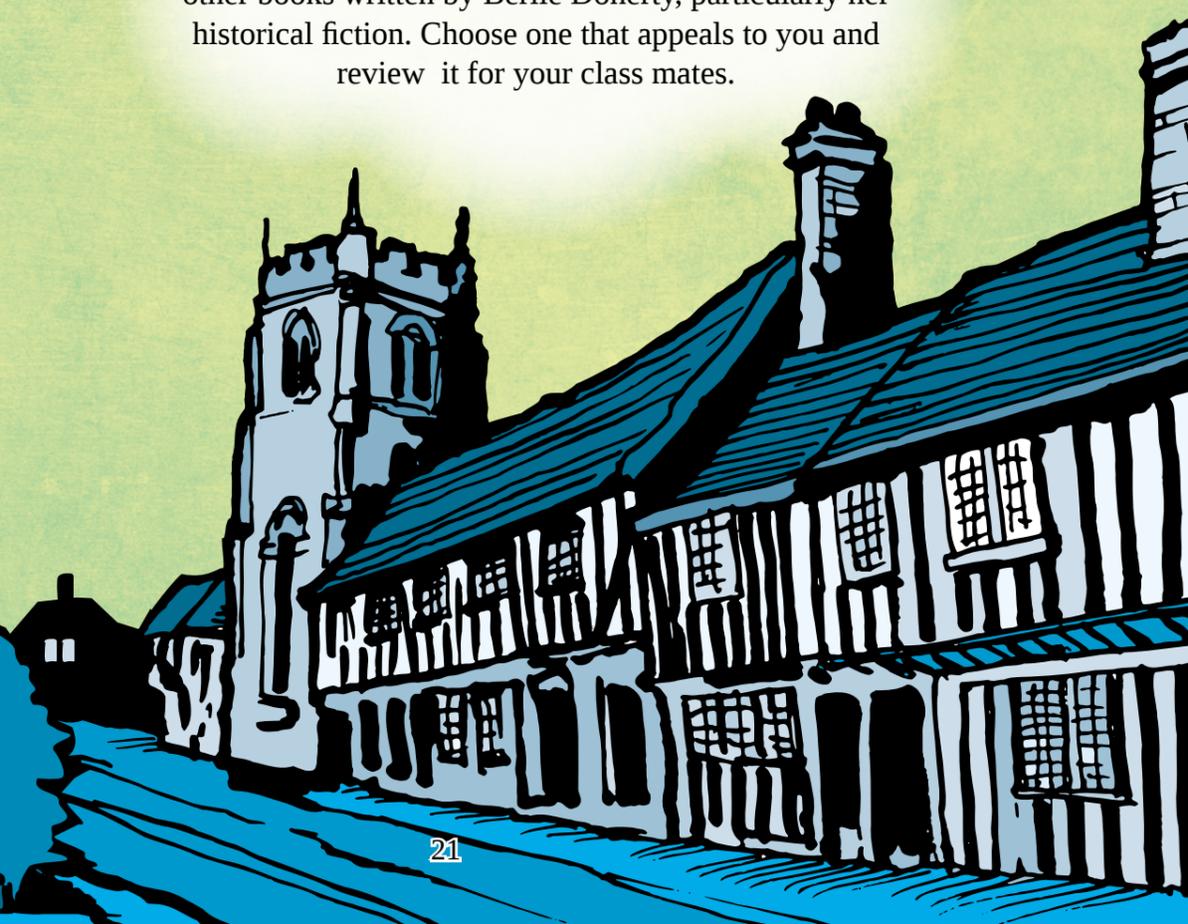


Setting the scene

The writer uses sights and sounds to vividly evoke place in the novel. Using a similar technique, bring to life a place you know well. Really think about the impression you want to create for the reader and thoughtfully choose your words.

What next?

If you enjoyed *Treason*, you could find out about other books written by Berlie Doherty, particularly her historical fiction. Choose one that appeals to you and review it for your class mates.



Memorable quotes

I hear muffled voices, and Father, far, far away, saying, 'I tried to save him. I tried, I tried. I could only save one of them'.

But which one? I tried to say, and couldn't. Am I alive, or am I dead? The voices were spinning away from me, fainter and fainter.

Is it wrong, I wondered? Is it wrong to laugh and joke, when the rest of the house is so wrapped in grief for Matthew?

'One day it will fit you, and it will be yours till you die,' Father promised. 'You will wear it with pride, and men will always honour you.'

'I hope you understand that I am deeply ashamed of being a member of this ill-bred Montague family.'

'Don't let me down, boy. Don't make the Carews ashamed of you.'

I knew how to bow and ingratiate myself, how to look interested, how to say clever things to make people smile.

'I've made you an amulet, to guard you against evil. Be safe, William,' she whispered, shy now. 'Be strong.'

'Go,' he said at last. 'Take your father to France. You are released, both of you. But never come back to England again, as long as I live.'

'Nothing is more important than to understand people and to love them.'

'You're as fine a son as any man could wish to have. I'm proud of you, Will.

I always was, and I always will be. You know that, don't you?'

I nodded, but I couldn't make any words come.

I don't think my father expected me to, either.



'A rich piece of historic fiction....written by an author who really brings to life the setting and characters.'

The Bookbag

'A beautifully paced and measured story.'

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