

Key

Summary of the story. Billy Weaver, a young man visiting the City of Bath for the first time, is looking for accommodation. He is inexplicably drawn to a house where the landlady seems to be expecting him. The house and the landlady seem friendly and welcoming, and he looks forward to staying there. Signing the guest book, two names disturb him. Where has he heard them before? Why aren't there any other guests? What actually happens is left very much up to the reader, but Roald Dahl, the master of this kind of story, gives us all the clues we need to concoct a grisly ending.

This Resource Kit: The resources provided for the teacher are designed to introduce the student to the background of the tale before they even look at a page of the story. Extracts from the story are used to provide context for certain aspects to enhance understanding. One result of this technique is that whole chunks of the text will therefore be familiar to the student before they start to read the complete story.

The material is divided into three sections: **Pre-reading**, **Context**, and **Word Work**

- 'Pre-reading' examines who Billy and the landlady are and asks the students to speculate on what they might look like.
- 'Context' looks at some of the issues that can be explored from the story: the year in which it was set (1959), embalming, taxidermy and a look at some famous poisoners!
- 'Word Work' takes some aspects of language in use from the text - the use of reflexive pronouns and a 'glossary' of words and phrases used in the story.

Ideas for project work and homework are presented throughout the worksheets.

The teacher should decide how much, or how little of the material they want to use in class or as homework. If all the materials are used then this would take in the region of eight hours of combined class work and homework. Teachers are advised that the BritLit 'Index' project (with links from the Teaching English webpage) can assist teachers in finding suitable material by thematic interest.

Additional background material and language work can be obtained by accessing the internet links provided.

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Pre-reading

Billy

- 1 C - Cold (He's wearing an overcoat. Raining: umbrella or raincoat? Hot: coat? Foggy: brisk?)
2. D 3 C 4 B 5 A

Old fashioned clothes? Trilby hat - G (D has wider brim; rest don't have 'dent in crown')

Landlady

Warm Welcoming Round Pink Gentle (Terribly) Nice Best

There are no negative adjectives, though one might speculate on the reason for 'quickly moving hands', which could sound a little threatening

Observation 1 slightly dotty 2. Off her rocker

Context

Poisoners

1. B, C, D 2 E 3 A, B 4 D 5 D 6 B, E 7 A 8 D 9 D 10 C

Dr Pritchard purchased/ standing/ became/ look after/ died/ found/ hanged/ watched

Witches

Item	Billy	You
green curtains		
flowers in the window	√	
fire burning in the hearth	√	
carpet		
dog sleeping in front of the fire	√	
piano		
comfortable sofa and armchairs	√	
parrot	√	

For part 2, let students imaginations take over - items not there could range from TV and computer - to mum!

1. held/holding 2 compelling 3 forcing
1. moving 2 climbing 3 reaching

List

"then at once...the door swung open" / "Yes, I know"

"It's all ready for you" "all ready for someone to get in"

"I'm so glad you appeared....I was beginning to get worried"

Speculation: prompt for 'could/might/must be' etc

Hansel and Gretel There are no exercises for this. Use it as a reading aloud exercise.

Preserving the body

1. They had died 2. She had stuffed them 3. Admiration 4. Two 5 All implies more than two; are others stuffed? (If more has been read - the other guests?)

Taxidermy: 1. representation 2. completely 3. Greek 4. definition 5. lifelike 6. artistic 7. natural 8. incorporates 9. created 10. harmlessly

Embalming: 1 D 2 A 3 F 4 B 5 C or E 6 G 7 E or C 8 K 9 J 10 H 11 I

Word Work

Pronouns

Extracts: reflexive/ reflexive/reflexive/emphasis

1.1. and 2. are given 3.a pretty little dachshund had curled itself up asleep...

4 ..he couldn't help himself staying where he was....

1. And this one is all for yourself

2. ...if you want to warm yourself.

3. ...he congratulated himself....

4. ...they have the whole floor to themselves.

5. Help yourself

6. I did it myself

2.1...can feed himself

2. ...asking myself...

3. ..expressing herself.

4. ...hurt herself

5. ..behaved himself

6. ...introduce himself...

7. ..blame yourself.

8. ..talking (to) herself...

9. ...cut herself...

10. ...enjoy yourself....