

Kaleidoscope

Belfast

Teacher's Notes and Key

Before Listening, Watching, Reading

Indicate where Belfast is.



The answers required in this section are subjective and so there are no right or wrong answers. It is not enough simply to accept the answers given - ask questions and delve deeper - why did (your character) do/feel/want that? etc The answers given below are those of the author, and are useful in Part 2. Do not use them to judge your student's answers

- Do you ever wish you lived in a different place?
If you live in a city, do you ever wish you lived in the country? Why? If you live in the country, do you ever wish you lived in the city? Why?

Answer the following questions using your imagination. Later you can compare your ideas with those of the author.

1. Why did Stephen want his mother to put flowers in window boxes of their house?
He liked the countryside and wanted to bring some of it to his street
2. Why didn't Stephen's mother put flowers in window boxes?
She couldn't afford to
3. What kind of house does Stephen live in?
A mean, terraced house - small and cramped, in a poor area of the city
4. Why did Stephen go on long walks across Belfast?
to escape the streets of his home, in search of wide open spaces
5. How did Stephen feel when he reached the 'wide open space and green loveliness' of Ormeau Park?
Very pleased, but also embarrassed if anyone should notice his happiness
6. Why does the Ormeau Bridge carry 'the tensions of two communities who would not meet halfway'?
It's the dividing point between west and east Belfast. There were a number of tension points between the sectarian Protestant and Catholic communities in Belfast, and for decades in the 20th century the two communities were at war with each other.
7. Why does Stephen feel that the towpath by the river is his 'ultimate bliss'?
It is the closest he gets to the countryside, where he can forget he is in the city

After Listening, Watching, Reading

1. Look at your answers in 'Before Listening' again. Compare with what you have heard.
2. Match the pictures from the video with the descriptions.



- a) The houses are terraced, they're small and mean. No one here has a garden. *Picture 4*
- b) I leave behind all the chip shops and charity shops of the Newtownards Road, and the great gable-wall murals for the Loyalist paramilitaries. *Picture 3*
- c) all the houses terraced and cramped, but somehow neater than ours *Picture 1*
- d) There's a side gate that takes you into Stranmillis, all big houses and gardens. *Picture 2*

3. What do you think Stephen means when he says 'Aye, grand' to lads he once went to school with?

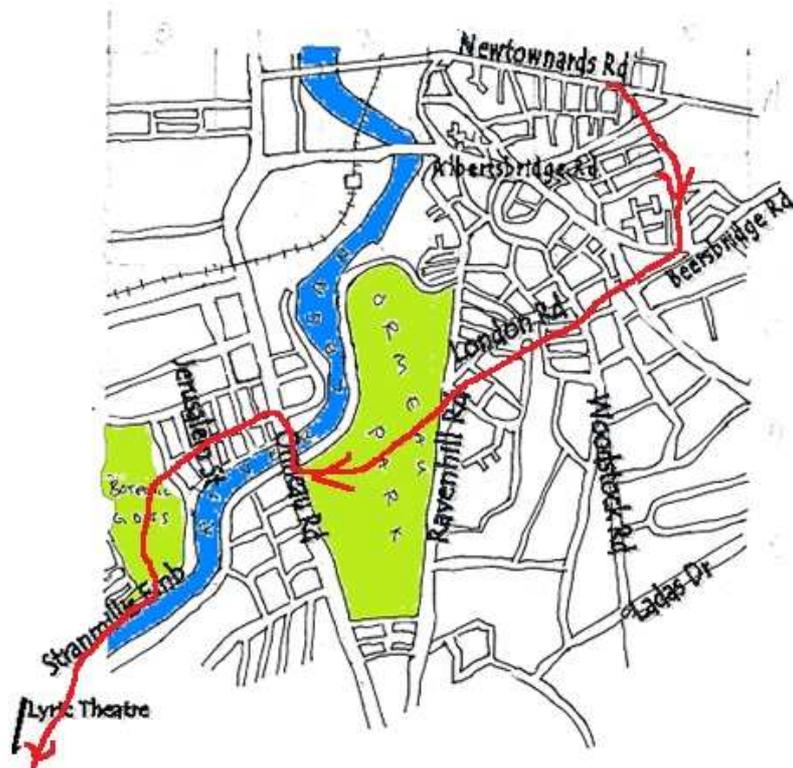
He is being honest 'Grand' meaning 'Fine' but he is also being deflective as he doesn't want any enquiries into what he is doing

4. What does Stephen have in common with the dogs he finds in the park? *Happy to be free in the park among the flowers and plants*

5. Why did Stephen used to be worried that people would ask him what he was doing in the Botanic Gardens?

It was if he didn't have a right to be there: he was from the other side of the river, after all, but also no one else he knew from his community went there, it seems, so he must have felt isolated

6. Plot Stephen's route on the map



Glossary

small and mean	<i>small and inferior, poorly equipped</i>
Ma	<i>mother</i>
ivy and pansies and petunias	<i>a green leafed plant and two kinds of coloured flowers</i>
chip shops	<i>outlet for cheap, fast food</i>
charity shops	<i>shops which sell second hand goods cheaply (profits go to charities). Common in poor neighbourhoods</i>
gable-wall	<i>End wall of a row of houses</i>
Loyalist paramilitaries	<i>Paramilitary organisation of Protestants/Unionists - 'loyal' to the British crown.</i>
lads	<i>boys</i>
'Aye, grand'	<i>'Yes, fine'</i>
cramped	<i>small, not enough space; confined</i>
thoroughfare	<i>wide road or street</i>
shrub	<i>woody, bus- like plant</i>
towpath	<i>path that follows a waterway, originally for horse which would be pulling, or towing, barges or boats</i>
hedgerows	<i>bushes, plants, shrubs by the side of the road which create a natural border, and are frequently home to many small animals</i>

Belfast Accent

The piece is read with a distinct Belfast accent. Some aspects of this Northern Irish accent may cause the uninitiated listener some difficulty.

One of the most distinctive parts of the speech from Belfast is the prominent rhoticity - the distinct pronunciation given to the <r> sounds . Listen, for example, to the way the speaker says 'flower' (16") and 'garden' (30").

Another distinctive feature is the T-voicing - the way that <t> is articulated between two vowel sounds. Listen to the way the speaker says *not in* (12") *cut across* (1') *neater* (1' 20").

However, what causes most non-Irish people problems are the vowel sounds. In particularly <o> and <a>. The <o> is frequently pronounced as a long, semi-closed sound - listen to *long time* (41") and *money* (43") as contrasted examples, as *is It was long time before I understood she didn't have any money* (41") The <a> has a number of varieties, ranging from short to long, and from what phoneticists would call *fronting* and *backing*, often depending on which consonants precede or follow it. See, for example, *blade* (18") *grass* (19") and *Ma* (32"). Included in these complex vowel sounds are diphthongs. In the text, the way that the speaker pronounces *flower* (16") is a typical example of two vowel sounds being rolled together at the back of the mouth.

Probably the most distinctive prosodic feature of Belfast speech is the rising intonation at the end of sentences, even when a question is not being asked, e.g. *The houses are terraced, they're small and mean and No one here has a garden.*

For more information on Belfast accents, go to the British Library website:

<http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sounds/text-only/ni/belfast/>

BELFAST

Eunice Yeates

I should have been born in the countryside, not in Belfast City. A tree, a flower, a blade of grass is like an oasis to me. The desert is the grey street in East Belfast where I live. The houses are terraced, they're small and mean. No one here has a garden. I used to ask Ma if we could do some window boxes with ivy and pansies and petunias and all. "Not today, Stephen," she'd always say. It was a long time before I understood that she didn't have the money.

So I take long walks across Belfast. I leave behind all the chip shops and charity shops of the Newtownards Road, and the great gable-wall murals for the Loyalist paramilitaries. I cut across to the Beersbridge Road where I sometimes I see lads I went to school with. "What about you, Stevie?" they say. "Aye, grand." I say. After the Beersbridge, I cross the Woodstock Road. I weave my way through residential streets, all the houses terraced and cramped, but somehow neater than ours. I come out on the Ravenhill Road with its large homes and wide thoroughfare.

Opposite is the Ormeau Park. I love all that wide open space and green loveliness. I'd be embarrassed if anyone I know could see how pleased I am to be strolling past the flowerbeds and the gazebo and even saying hello to friendly dogs, happy as myself to be out for their walk. Beyond the park on the Ormeau Road I turn right to cross the Ormeau Bridge, which carries the tensions of two communities who would not meet halfway. I like to stand a while watching the Lagan's dark water and the ducks scattering noisily.

I continue up through the Holylands, so-called because the streets have names like Damascus, Carmel, Jerusalem. Often there are small kids speaking languages I don't recognise, throwing a ball from kerb to kerb or fighting. On down Agincourt Avenue, I arrive at the Botanic Gardens. On fine days, the gardens are full of students from Queen's University, but I like it in all weathers. I stop to look at every shrub. I spend ages in the Palm House, heading then to the Rose Garden. It's so peaceful and beautiful that I used to worry someone would ask me what I was doing there and tell me to go back to East Belfast.

There's a side gate that takes you into Stranmillis, all big houses and gardens. I reach the river and pass the Lyric Theatre which I've never been inside. Next I'm stepping onto the towpath, my ultimate bliss because I completely forget that I'm in the city. I don't even hear the hum of traffic, there's just this narrow path with the water on your left and mad hedgerows on your right. People are nice when you pass them, they smile and say hello. You could walk all the way to Lisburn, it's about 17 kilometres. I'm going to do it one day.