

SHADOWED VALLEY (an excerpt)

by

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Because *Shadowed Valley* is a longer prose piece
we offer a more in-depth set of Literacy Activities
that go along with an excerpt from the novel:

LIT Questions to answer:

Tenancy:

What do you think a *factor* is?

Who do you think 'Mr Ogilvy' is?

Why hasn't he come himself?

Why will the factor not wait any longer for rent money?

[Establish the meaning of: *landlord, factor, tenant, creditor.*]

Where does the factor go at the end?

Money is not decimal money here: shillings are mentioned. There were 20 shillings in a pound. So..... can you work out the sums of money mentioned in the story?

Poverty: £12.15/- doesn't seem like a lot o money nowadays.

How do we know from the story that it is a great lot for Hakki's mother to pay off? [Look at the sums of money mentioned, and what she says.]

How does she feed her family?

They are devastated at the thought of losing their milking cow. Why is the cow so important?

The truck system: (introduction)

What can Hakki's mother do if she needs to buy something from the shop?

Geography/maps:

Do you know where the people who were evicted from Weisdale lived?

Or where Hakki went to work [at Nesbister, Whiteness]?

If you read the whole book, find out where the Weisdale people went after they were evicted.

Find out if there were any evictions in your area, or somewhere you know.

Questions on the characters' feelings based on short passages:**Passage 1:**

Hakki stepped over to Blacky, stroked her back and neck. He looked at her right horn and there on the smooth curve was the ragged outline of the letter O. He was standing stroking her head, muttering over and over again 'Poor peerie Blacky' when he was aware of his mother at his side. Her face was white, her lips set. 'Da deevils!' she said, the words compressed in anger. 'Dey wid tak da very maet fae your mooth.'

Hakki's own anger flickered before the intensity of his mother's. He had never seen her like this before. Usually she accepted what came as inevitable; that she and her family were just as helpless before the tide of events as the ebbstanes before the crash of waves on the shore. But this seemed different. Someone, identifiable, had come to her door and had put his mark on something she knew was her own, something she and her family had reared and needed for their survival. She put out her hand and stroked Blacky's neck, shaking her head in incomprehension. 'Hoo dey lippen folk ta live when dey come an tak awa da very animals aff o da rigs!'

Hakki suddenly sees how his mother is behaving, and hears what she is saying. **'He had never seen her like this before'**.

Do you understand Hakki's mother's feelings here?

Passage 2:

She turned and made for the house, hands folded behind her back. Hakki followed and as his eyes fell on the figure ahead in whose shadow he had lived as long as he could remember, he suddenly seemed to step outside their closeness and see her as herself, a woman who had struggled and suffered, whose tiredness showed in every step she took, whose goodness was being battered by alien forces. He couldn't understand why this had to be. He was confused but through the confusion came an overpowering desire to help her. He hurried and came up alongside her. 'Mam', he said, 'you can git aa da money I earn at da beach ta help ta git anidder coo.'

Hakki has always loved his mother, but he suddenly sees her differently.

How does she seem to him at this moment? What effect does this have on him?