The Jungle Book

Excerpt from *Mowgli's Brothers*

Shere Khan the tiger has attacked a woodcutter's camp, but their young child has escaped him and walked into the cave of a family of wolves. The Tiger has tracked the child to the cave and wants his prey to be handed over to him.

Shere Khan had jumped at a woodcutter's campfire, as Father Wolf had said, and was furious from the pain of his burned feet. But Father Wolf knew that the mouth of the cave was too narrow for a tiger to come in by. Even where he was, Shere Khan's shoulders and forepaws were cramped for want of room, as a man's would be if he tried to fight in a barrel.

"The Wolves are free people," said Father Wolf. "They take orders from the Head of the Pack, and not from any striped cattle-killer. The man's cub is ours – to kill if we choose."

"Ye choose and ye do not choose! What talk is this of choosing? By the bull that I killed, am I to stand nosing into your dog's den for my fair dues? It is I, Shere Khan, who speak."

The tiger's roar filled the cave with thunder. Mother Wolf shook herself clear of the cubs and sprang forward, her eyes, like two green moons in the darkness, facing the blazing eyes of Shere Khan.

"And it is I, Raksha [The Demon], who answer. The man's cub is mine, Lungri – mine to me! He shall not be killed. He shall live to run with the Pack and to hunt with the Pack; and in the end, look you, hunter of little naked cub – frog-eater – fish killer – he shall hunt *thee*! Now get hence, or by the Sambhur that I killed (*I* eat no starved cattle), back thou goest to thy mother, burnt beast of the Jungle, lamer than ever thou earnest into the world! Go!"

Father Wolf looked on amazed. He had almost forgotten the days when he won Mother Wolf in a fair fight from five other wolves, when she ran in the Pack and was not called The Demon for compliment's sake. Shere Khan might have faced Father Wolf, but he could not stand up against Mother Wolf, for he knew that where he was she had all the advantage of the ground, and would fight to the death. So he backed out of the cave-mouth growling, and when he was clear he shouted –

"Each dog barks in his own yard! We will see what the Pack will say to this fostering of man-cubs. The cub is mine, and to my teeth he will come in the end, O bush-tailed thieves!"

Mother Wolf threw herself down panting among the cubs, and Father Wolf said to her gravely –

"Shere Khan speaks this much truth. The cub must be shown to the Pack. Wilt thou still keep him, Mother?"

"Keep him!" she gasped. "He came naked, by night, alone and very hungry; yet he was not afraid! Look, he has pushed one of my babes to one side already. And that lame butcher would have killed him and would have run off to the Waingunga while the villages here hunted through all our lairs in revenge. Keep him? Assuredly I will keep him. Lie still, little frog. O thou Mowgli – for Mowgli the Frog I will call thee – the time will come when thou wilt hunt Shere Khan as he has hunted thee."

Questions for *The Jungle Book*

Vocabulary:

1. Look at the paragraph beginning *Shere Khan had jumped ...* **Find** and **copy** one word that means *very angry.*

_____

2. … *this fostering of man-cubs* … What does the word *fostering* mean in this sentence?

_____

3. … *And that lame butcher* … Which of the following is closest in meaning to *lame* in this sentence? **Circle one**.

vicious **weak** **injured** **hopeless**

Retrieval:

4. Who did the wolves take their orders from?

_____

5. What were Mother Wolf's eyes compared to?

_____

6. Complete the sentence below.

Father Wolf had earned the right to be Mother Wolf's partner by ...

_____

Inference:

7. Complete the table below with **one** piece of evidence to support each statement.

	Evidence
Shere Khan is angry with the wolves.	
Mother Wolf could be dangerous.	

8. "Each dog barks in his own yard!" This means … (**tick one**)

Everyone is braver when they are in their own home.

Wolves make good guard dogs.

I don't believe you.

Wolves are only fit to be pets.

9. Why was Mother Wolf impressed that Mowgli had pushed one of her cubs to one side?

_____
_____
_____

Summarise:

10. Which statement is the best summary of the whole extract? **Tick one**.

Shere Khan is frightened of the wolves.

The wolves want to annoy Shere Khan.

The wolves will let Shere Khan have Mowgli when they have finished with him.

The wolves think it will be a mistake to let Shere Khan have Mowgli.

Authorial intent:

11. *"… They take orders from the Head of the Pack, and not from any striped cattle-killer ..."* What does the phrase *striped cattle-killer* tell us about Father Wolf's impression of Shere Khan?_____
_____
_____
_____

Beethoven's Hard Life

There is a popular saying that you have to suffer for your art. Perhaps in Beethoven's case, the greater the art, the greater the suffering.

Ludwig van Beethoven is widely acknowledged to be one of the greatest musical composers of all time. Even if you could not name any of his works, you would undoubtedly recognise at least one if it were played to you. His Moonlight Sonata and Fifth Symphony are prime examples. It is perhaps amazing that someone could create so many works of great joy and beauty when you contemplate how much pain and ugliness there was in his life.

Early years

Born in Bonn, Germany, in 1770, he was one of seven children, although only three of them survived childhood. From an early age, Ludwig was seen as having a rare gift for music and his talent was developed by a succession of local tutors. Most of them were not very kind, however, and often treated him so badly they made him cry. One of them even had problems sleeping and would drag the poor little boy out of bed in order to practise.

Despite these hardships, he was soon writing his own music and his first collection of compositions was published when he was only thirteen years old. Not long after that, he travelled to Vienna – the capital of Austria and a major centre of the arts at that time – in order to continue his education. Within a year, however, he had to return to Bonn as his mother had died and his father was unable to look after his brothers, so that responsibility fell to Ludwig for the next five years.

Along with his family tragedies, his love-life was causing him a great deal of heartache. His musical ability and reputation meant that he was often asked to give lessons to members of upper-class families. He fell in love with at least two of the young women he was tutoring but was unable to marry them as he had not been born into wealth and privilege, which meant he was not seen as being good enough for them.

Loss of hearing

Of all your senses, which would be cruellest to lose if you were a musician? Perhaps the greatest tragedy to befall Beethoven was when he started losing his hearing in his late twenties. It is not clear what caused it, but we do know that he suffered from a severe form of tinnitus – a condition which makes you hear noises which are not there, such as buzzing or bells ringing. By the time he was 44 years old, he was totally deaf. Amazingly, he continued composing wonderful music but when one of his works was performed for the first time, he had to be turned around to see the audience clapping because he couldn't hear the thunderous applause.

It also didn't help that much of Europe was at war while he was composing. The famous French general and emperor Napoleon was rampaging all over the continent and, in 1809, he attacked Vienna. The noise of the bombardment was so loud that Beethoven was worried it would ruin what was left of his hearing. In order to protect himself, he hid underground during the assault and covered his head with pillows.

Bad behaviour

Given all his problems, it is perhaps not surprising that Beethoven was known to be rather rude. If he noticed people in the audience talking while he was performing, he would just stop. He also

refused to show much respect for the ruling classes. One archduke decided that the normal rules of polite society should not apply to Ludwig, presumably because there was no point in hoping he would follow them!

His health deteriorated and he eventually died in 1827 at the age of 56. Some 20,000 people turned out to show their respects at his funeral procession. For all his faults and misfortunes, he had still managed to produce an enormous collection of outstanding music. He may have suffered terribly but we have all benefited from his genius, whether we know it or not.

Questions for *Beethoven's Hard Life*

Vocabulary:

1. Look at the second paragraph. **Find** and **copy** one word meaning *accepted*.

_____

2. … *when you contemplate* … What does the word *contemplate* mean in this sentence?

_____

3. … *His health deteriorated* … This means that his health … Circle **one**.

stopped him working **got worse** **kept people away** **improved**

Retrieval:

4. Where was Beethoven born?

_____

5. How many of Beethoven's brothers and sisters died in childhood?

_____

6. What is the name of the hearing disorder Beethoven suffered from?

_____

Inference:

7. Complete the table below with **one** piece of evidence to support each statement.

	Evidence
Beethoven's ability was recognised during his life.	
Beethoven continued to be respected after his death.	

8. How does the author suggest that Beethoven was unusually young to have his work published?

_____
_____

9. Why was it hard for Beethoven to focus on his music after his mother died?

_____
_____
_____

Summarise:

10. Here are some summaries of different events in the text. Number them from 1 to 4 to show the order in which they appear.

Beethoven first travelled to Vienna.

Beethoven's mother died.

Beethoven had horrible teachers.

Beethoven lost his hearing.

Authorial intent:

11. *… in Beethoven's case, the greater the art, the greater the suffering ...* What impression does this give you of both Beethoven and his life?

_____
_____
_____
_____

The Alps

One of the most dominant geographical features of western Europe is the vast mountain range known as the Alps. The Alps extend from the Mediterranean coast of south-western France across to Germany, Austria and Slovenia in the east. Other countries, such as Switzerland, Italy and tiny Liechtenstein also include sections of this rugged landscape. With peaks as high as 4,800m (Mont Blanc), the Alps are high enough to affect the climate of the whole continent.

Formation

The Alps are part of a series of mountain chains, running from the Atlas Mountains in northern Africa right across to the Himalayas north of India, that were formed by the same basic process. The Earth's crust is made up of a number of massive sections called tectonic plates. These are continuingly moving, slowly but incredibly powerfully. When the African plate to the south started inching northwards, it collided into another plate which covers much of northern Europe. The extraordinary pressures generated by this process caused the land to be pushed up, much like a tablecloth will form ridges if you push it across a table.

The process of raising and shaping the Alps has not finished, however. The area is still prone to powerful earthquakes. Meanwhile, the weather plays a large part in wearing down the rocks. This includes the action of glaciers. These slow-moving rivers of ice help to carve out huge valleys, some of which have been lined with a thick layer of sand and gravel, dumped by the melting glaciers.

Features

The sheer height of these mountains means that moist air gets snagged on the peaks, resulting in heavy snowfalls. Large parts of the Alps remain snow-capped all the year round, although it melts away from the lower slopes during the warmer months. This leads to many of the valleys being flooded to create deep lakes. It also helps to irrigate the surrounding land and contributes to some of the largest rivers in Europe, including the Rhône, the Rhine and the Danube.

Life

The Alps provide a number of different habitats. At lower levels, there are meadows, bogs and woodland. Above the treeline, the conditions are harsher and animals as well as plants have had to adapt to survive.

Possibly the most famous plant is a little flower called the edelweiss. The most common name of this tough little relative of the daisy comes from German words meaning *noble white*. However, it is also known by other names, depending on which country you are in. For example, the French call it *Etoile des Alpes*, which means the star of the Alps.

As for the animals, the ibex is probably the most impressive. This member of the goat family lives on the rocky mountainsides above the forests. An expert climber, it shelters from the snows in caves and enjoys the safety of slopes as steep as 45 degrees.

Did you know?

Over 2,000 years ago, the great general Hannibal crossed the Alps in order to catch the Romans off guard. Imagine their surprise when they saw that he had not only marched a huge army over the dangerous mountain passes but that he had brought elephants with him too!

Humans

Despite the harsh conditions, the Alps have a long relationship with humans. Its caves provided ready-made homes for people as long as 10,000 years ago. More recently, it has become a popular destination for holidaymakers, especially the more adventurous ones. They come for the skiing, hiking and mountaineering as well as to enjoy the spectacular scenery provided by the mountains and lakes.

Questions for *The Alps*

Vocabulary:

1. *One of the most dominant geographical features ….* What does *dominant* mean in this sentence?

_____

2. … *The extraordinary pressures generated by this process* … What does *generated* mean? Circle **one**.

created **powered** **suffered** **related**

3. Look at the section headed ***Humans***. **Find** and **copy** one word meaning *stunning*.

_____

Retrieval:

4. From which sea do the Alps extend?

_____

5. Where are the Himalayas?

_____

6. What does *edelweiss* mean?

_____

Inference:

7. …*the Alps are high enough to affect the climate of the whole continent*. This suggests that … Tick **one**.

All of Europe is cold.

The weather across Europe would be different if the Alps were not there.

All of Europe's weather comes from the Alps.

Rainclouds are formed on mountain tops.

8. How do the Alps help farmers in the surrounding areas?

_____
_____
_____

9. What do the Alps have that helped early humans to survive?

_____
_____
_____

Summarise:

10. Look at the section headed ***Formation***. Which statement is the best summary of this part of the text? Tick **one**.

The Alps continue to grow and change.

The Alps are part of one long mountain range.

The Alps are a dangerous place to live.

The Alps have bad weather.

Compare:

11. According to the text, give **one** reason why …

people might want to spend time in the Alps today.

_____
_____

people might want to stay away from the Alps.

_____
_____

Authorial intent:

12. How does the example of the tablecloth help you to understand *how* the Alps rose up?

_____
_____
_____

My Shadow

by Robert Louis Stevenson

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow—
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

Questions for *My Shadow*

Vocabulary:

1. *I have a **little** shadow…*

Which of the words below would **not** be a suitable replacement for the word *little*?

Tick one.

small tiny miniature gargantuan

2. Look at the second verse. Which verb tells us that the shadow can grow very quickly?

_____

3. *And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way…*

Which group of words is closest in meaning to ***make a fool of me***? **Circle one.**

make me fall over make me look silly transform me into a fool

Retrieval

4. **Find and copy the line** that shows the poet does not think his shadow is very helpful to him.

_____

5. Look at the first two verses. **Find and copy a group of words** that shows that the poet is amused by his shadow.

_____

6. What does the shadow do that makes the poet think it is worried about lots of things?

_____

Inference

7. Does the poet like his shadow? **Circle one:** yes no

Explain your answer, referring to the text.

_____
_____
_____
_____

8. Look at the first verse. Why does the shadow jump into the bed first?

Tick one.

Because it is a coward.

Because the poet is between a light source and the bed.

Because it is always sleepy.

Because it is no use.

9. What impressions do you get of the shadow in the poem?

Give two impressions, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

Impression	**Evidence**

Summarise

10. Which verse describes the shadow disappearing? **Circle one.**

verse 1 verse 2 verse 3 verse 4

Meaning as a whole

11. How do you think the shadow is most likely to describe the poet? **Tick one**, then **explain** your answer.

Tick one.

boring

brave

_____
_____
_____
_____