Tenth Lecture

"**Wassermarrer**?" asked Phyllis, still almost wholly asleep.
Page 29

"Wake up! wake up!" said Roberta. "We're in the new house--don't you remember? No servants or anything. Let's get up and begin to be useful. We'll just creep down mouse-quietly, and have everything beautiful before Mother gets up. I've woke Peter. He'll be dressed as soon as we are."

So they dressed quietly and quickly. Of course there was no water in their room, so when they got down they washed as much as they thought was necessary under the spout of the pump in the yard. One pumped and the other washed. It was splashy but interesting.

"It's much more fun than **basiny washing**," said Roberta. "How sparkly the weeds are between the stones, and the moss on the roof--oh, and the flowers!"

"Wassermarrer?"
basiny washing
Germ of endearment

These are ways in which the writer emphasizes the……..of the novel.

1. *Verisimilitude*
2. *Breadth*
3. *Length*
4. *Power*

CHAPTER 2

The family do not get a decent supper as they think Mrs. Viney has not prepared it for them. Mother prepares what she can and off they go to bed. The next morning, the children wake up feeling excited in their new home. They discover that a nearby field backs onto a railway line but the railway station is too far to see from where they are.

When Mother discovers that Mrs. Viney has not prepared the food for the moving family and that she has not taken care of the new house, she says some strong words about her:

"There's the house," said Mother. "I wonder why she's shut the shutters.“

"Who's she?" asked Roberta.

"The woman I engaged to clean the place, and put the furniture straight and get supper."

"Well," she said, "you've often wanted something to happen, and now it has. This is quite an adventure, isn't it? I told Mrs. Viney to get us some bread and butter, and meat and things, and to have supper ready. I suppose she's laid it in the dining room. So let's go and see.“

p.24

"It isn't pigeon-pie," said Mother; "it's only apple. Well, this is the supper we ought to have had last night. And there was a note from Mrs. Viney. Her son-in-law has broken his arm, and she had to get home early. She's coming this morning at ten.“

p. 35

It was the very next day that Mother had to stay in bed because her head ached so. Her hands were burning hot, and she would not eat anything, and her throat was very sore.

"If I was you, Mum," said Mrs. Viney, "I should take and send for the doctor. There's a lot of catchy complaints a-going about just now. My sister's eldest--she took a chill and it went to her inside, two year ago come Christmas, and she's never been the same gell since." **p. 35**

Then they all looked at each other. Each of the three expressive countenances expressed the same thought. That thought was double, and consisted, like the bits of information in the Child's Guide to Knowledge, of a question, and an answer.

Q. Where shall we go?

A. To the railway.

So to the railway they went, and as soon as they started for the railway they saw where the garden had hidden itself. It was right behind the stables, and it had a high wall all round.

Idyllic, railways, adventure, realistic

"Oh!" said Roberta, drawing a long breath; "it was like a great dragon tearing by. Did you feel it fan us with its hot wings?"

"I suppose a dragon's lair might look very like that tunnel from the outside," said Phyllis.

But Peter said:--

"I never thought we should ever get as near to a train as this. It's the most ripping sport!"

"Better than toy-engines, isn't it?" said Roberta.

(I am tired of calling Roberta by her name. I don't see why I should. No one else did. Every one else called her Bobbie, and I don't see why I shouldn't.)

p.34

1. Children are children. They have forgotten all about Father. They view an unidyllic world from the point of view of innocence.
2. The narrative voice replaces Mother in being very close to the children.

(I am tired of calling Roberta by her name. I don't see why I should. No one else did. Every one else called her Bobbie, and I don't see why I shouldn't.)

p.34

Never before had any of them been at a station, except for the purpose of catching trains,--or perhaps waiting for them,--and always with grown-ups in attendance, grown-ups who were not themselves interested in stations, except as places from which they wished to get away.

p.36

Have you ever gone into a farm-house kitchen on a baking day, and seen the great crock of dough set by the fire to rise? If you have, and if you were at that time still young enough to be interested in everything you saw, you will remember that you found yourself quite unable to resist the temptation to poke your finger into the soft round of dough that curved inside the pan like a giant mushroom.

CHAPTER 2 Page 38

And you will remember that your finger made a dent in the dough, and that slowly, but quite surely, the dent disappeared, and the dough looked quite the same as it did before you touched it. Unless, of course, your hand was extra dirty, in which case, naturally, there would be a little black mark.

Well, it was just like that with the sorrow the children had felt at Father's going away, and at Mother's being so unhappy. It made a deep impression, but the impression did not last long.

The image of the dough is very interesting and significant. It shows how the writer is very realistic and specific at the same time. In an indirect way she has shown us how the children have grown oblivious of the absence of the Father, just like a dough that is growing will never be affected if you just insert your finger inside it. It will soon come back to its original shape. The life of the children is expanding and nothing will stop that.

They soon got used to being without Father, though they did not forget him; and they got used to not going to school, and to seeing very little of Mother, who was now almost all day shut up in her upstairs room writing, writing, writing. She used to come down at tea-tine and read aloud the stories she had written. They were lovely stories.

The rocks and hills and valleys and trees, the canal, and above all, the railway, were so new and so perfectly pleasing that the remembrance of the old life in the villa grew to seem almost like a dream. Mother had told them more than once that they were "quite poor now," but this did not seem to be anything but a way of speaking. Grown-up people, even Mothers, often make remarks that don't seem to mean

anything in particular, just for the sake of saying something, seemingly.

Before supper the children decide to go to the railway station. They have a lot to see and a large heap of coal catches Peter's attention. When Peter steals coal from the station yard, he is caught by the Station Master.

Peter thinks that taking some coals from the middle of the heap is harmless. The Station Master warns them that what they have done is stealing because the coal belongs to the railway station. It is only then they realize what they have done is wrong.

Eleventh Lecture

But in June came three wet days; the rain came down, straight as lances, and it was very very cold. Nobody could go out, and everybody shivered. They all went up to the door of Mother's room and knocked.

"Well, what is it?" asked Mother from inside.

"Mother," said Bobbie, "mayn't I light a fire? I do know how."

And Mother said: "No, my ducky-love. We mustn't have fires in June--coal is so dear. If you're cold, go and have a good romp in the attic. That'll warm you." p.39

"It's more than we can afford, chickeny-love," said Mother, cheerfully. "Now run away, there's darlings--I'm madly busy!"

"Mother's always busy now," said Phyllis, in a whisper to Peter. Peter did not answer. He shrugged his shoulders. He was thinking.

Thought, however, could not long keep itself from the suitable furnishing of a bandit's lair in the attic. Peter was the bandit, of course.

But when Phyllis was going to add jam to her bread and butter, Mother said:--

"Jam **or** butter, dear--not jam **and** butter. We can't afford that sort of reckless luxury nowadays."

To Help Mother in their own way, what do the children do?

"I have an idea."

"What's that?" they asked politely.

"I shan't tell you," was Peter's unexpected rejoinder.

"Oh, very well," said Bobbie; and Phil said, "Don't, then."

"Girls," said Peter, "are always so hasty tempered."

"I should like to know what boys are," said

"If I find a coal-mine, you shall help cart the coal," Peter condescended to promise.

"Keep your secret if you like," said Phyllis.

"Keep it if you **can**," said Bobbie.

"I'll keep it, right enough," said Peter.

The chariot was packed full of coal. And when it was packed it had to be unpacked again because it was so heavy that it couldn't be got up the hill by the three children, not even when Peter harnessed himself to the handle with his braces, and firmly grasping his waistband in one hand pulled while the girls pushed behind.

Three journeys had to be made before the coal from Peter's mine was added to the heap of Mother's coal in the cellar.

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p. 45

"So I've caught you at last, have I, you young thief?" said the Station Master.

"I'm not a thief," said Peter, as firmly as he could. "I'm a coal-miner."

"Tell that to the Marines," said the Station Master.

Has the writer told us directly that the family is getting poorer and poorer?

One great technique is the image of the candle.

Innocence & Child Talk

"It would be just as true whoever I told it to," said Peter.

"You're right there," said the man, who held him. "Stow your jaw, you young rip, and come along to the station."

"Oh, no," cried in the darkness an agonized voice that was not Peter's.

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"Not the **police** station!" said another voice from the darkness.

"Not yet," said the Station Master. "The Railway Station first. Why, it's a regular gang. Any more of you?"

"Only us," said Bobbie and Phyllis, coming out of the shadow of another truck labelled Staveley Colliery, and bearing on it the legend in white chalk, "Wanted in No. 1 Road."

"What do you mean by spying on a fellow like this?" said Peter, angrily.

"Time some one did spy on you, **I** think," said the Station Master. "Come along to the station."

"Oh, **don't**!" said Bobbie. "Can't you decide **now** what you'll do to us? It's our fault just as much as Peter's. We helped to carry the coal away--and we knew where he got it."

"Then why did you?" The Station Master's voice was so much kinder now that Peter replied:--

"You know that wet day? Well, Mother said we were too poor to have a fire. We always

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had fires when it was cold at our other house, and--"

"**Don't**!" interrupted Bobbie, in a whisper.

"Well," said the Station Master, rubbing his chin thoughtfully. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll look over it this once. But you remember, young gentleman, stealing is stealing, and what's mine isn't yours, whether you call it mining or whether you don't. Run along home."

"Do you mean you aren't going to do anything to us? Well, you are a brick," said Peter, with enthusiasm.

"You're a dear," said Bobbie.

"You're a darling," said Phyllis.

"That's all right," said the Station Master.

And on this they parted.

CHAPTER 3: THE OLD GENTLEMAN

By now the children know the time when the trains pass. Every morning, they will wave to an old gentleman who always waves back at them. They pretended that the old man knows their father and takes their love to him in London. One day, their mother becomes very ill and Bobbie resolves to do something positive to help.

AFTER the adventure of Peter's Coal-Mine, it seemed well to the children to keep away from the station,--but they did not, they could not, keep away from the railway. They had lived all their lives in a street where cabs and omnibuses rumbled by at all hours, and the carts of butchers and bakers and candlestick makers (I never saw a candlestick-maker's cart; did you?) might occur at any moment.

Here in the deep silence of the sleeping country the only things that went by were the trains. They seemed to be all that was left to link the children to the old life that had once been theirs. Straight down the hill in front of Three Chimneys the daily passage of their six feet began to mark a path across the crisp, short turf. They began to know the hours when certain trains passed, and they gave names to them. The 9.15 up was called the Green Dragon. The 10.7 down was the Worm of Wantley.

The children paint the words, ‘‘LOOK OUT AT THE STATION’’ on a large white sheet and wave it at the 9.15 train the next day. When the train is about ready to leave, Phyllis passes a letter to the Old Gentleman. In the evening, a large box of supplies is delivered to the children with all the things they have asked for.

CHAPTER 4: BOBBIE’S RIDE

When their mother finally recovers from her illness, they confess to her what they have done earlier. The family later celebrates Bobbie’s 12th birthday, all dressed in their best. Bobbie receives various presents from the family including Peter who reluctantly has to give her the broken half of his toy train filled with sweets.

Her lovely birthday party however ends on a sad note when she realizes that her mother is very upset later that night. Bobbie secretly wants to repair Peter’s broken train. She goes to the station and accidentally gets into the engine of one of the trains. Feeling scared, she seeks help from two railway workers. The two men not only repair the toy but also make sure she arrives home safely. Weeks later, Bobbie introduces Peter and Phyllis to the friendly engine driver and Jim, the fireman.

CHAPTER 5: SAVING THE TRAIN

The children witness a landslide that covers the railway line. The children prevent an imminent accident by waving the girls' red petticoats. The train comes to rest just in time, at about twenty metres from where Bobbie stands on the tracks. Weeks later, a ceremony is held at the station to commemorate the children's bravery. The Old Gentleman presents the children with a gold watch each and meets their mother at home. The children relay that eventful day to their mother.