

Goodnight Mister Tom

Dobbs clopped slowly past cornfields and cottages, bees and cream-coloured butterflies. Tom and Willie sat in the front of the cart. They had left Sammy behind to collapse in the cool darkness of the tiled hallway. Willie clutched on to the long wooden seat and, as they jolted over the rough cobbled road, his eyelids drooped and he became drowsy. Suddenly he gave a frightened start, for he had nearly fallen asleep and the ground below seemed a long distance away. Tom squeezed the reins and they came to a halt.

'Here,' he said, 'you hop in the cart and take a nap.' He helped Willie into the back and threw him an old rug to cover himself with for he still looked terribly pale. As soon as the rhythmic motion of the cart began Willie fell into a disjointed sleep. His thin elbows and shoulder blades hit the sides of the cart at frequent intervals so that he would wake suddenly, only to fall back exhausted into a chaotically dream-filled sleep. He was just about to be attacked by a horde of anxious faces when he felt himself being gently shaken.

'We'se comin' into it, boy. Raise yerself.'

Willie staggered to his feet and hung on to the side of the cart. They jogged past a river that was sheltered by overhanging trees. It curved and disappeared from view behind some old buildings.

'Remember any of this?'

Willie shook his head. 'No.'

They halted at a blacksmith's. Tom stepped down and lifted Willie after him. He untied Dobbs and led her into a large dark shed. Willie heard him talking to someone inside. It wasn't long before he reappeared and swiftly removed his haversack, bags and boxes from the back of the cart. He placed a hand on Willie's shoulder.

'We got a lot to do, boy. You reckon you can keep up?'

Willie nodded.

Tom handed him one of the two small buff-coloured boxes and they both slung them over their shoulders and set off. They passed a bicycle shop and a cobbler's and turned a corner into the main street. It curved round a large square.

'On market days that be filled with all kinds of stalls,' said Tom.

In the centre of the square was a stone archway with a clock in its wall and on the ground below, surrounding it on four sides, were wooden benches.

They stopped outside a newsagent's shop. Two placards were leaning up against the walls. 'Poland Invaded!' read one and 'Turn your wireless low. Remember, someone might be on duty,' read the other. The door of the shop was already propped wide open.

'Hot, ent it?' said a tiny old lady from behind the counter. 'Your usual is it, Mr Oakley?' she added.

Tom nodded.

She reached up to a yellow tin of tobacco on one of the shelves. A pile of comics caught Willie's eye. Tom glanced at him.

'One sweet and one comic,' he said sharply. 'Choose.'

Willie was stunned.

'Don't you hurry, sonny,' said the old lady kindly. 'You jest take yer time.' She pointed up at some of the many jars. 'We got boiled ones, fruit drops, farthin' chews, mint humbugs, there's lollies, of course. They'se popular. There's strawberry, lemon, lime and orange.'

Tom was annoyed at the long silence that followed and was just about to say something when he caught sight of Willie's face.

Willie swallowed hard. He'd never been asked to choose anything ever.

'A lolly, please, Miss,' he said at last.

'What flavour?'

He frowned and panicked for a moment. 'Strawberry,' he answered huskily.

The old lady opened a jar and handed one to him. It was wrapped up in black-and-white striped paper and twisted like a unicorn's horn.

'Now what comic would like, dear?'

Questions

- 1 Which of these words is a not synonym for the word 'disjointed'?
erratic agitated chaotic disordered [1 mark]

- 2 What flavour lolly did Willie choose? [1 mark]

- 3 Decide whether each statement about the extract is true or false. [2 marks]

	True	False
Willie sleeps under a blanket.		
Willie and Tom leave the horse at the blacksmith's.		
There were two placards against the wall at the newsagents.		
The lady in the newsagents offers Willie a cherry lolly.		

- 4 What evidence is there that Tom Oakley shops in the newsagent's regularly? [1 mark]

- 5 Why do you think Willie 'panicked' when the lady asked him what flavour lolly he wanted? [2 marks]

- 6 Do you think Willie will find it easy to choose a comic? Give a reason for your answer. [2 marks]

- 7 Why do you think the dialogue the writer has written for the lady in the newsagent's contains a long list of different sweets and flavours? [2 marks]

- 8 Why does the writer use the word 'huskily' to describe how Willie speaks to the lady? [1 mark]

- 9 '*... as they jolted over the rough cobbled road, his eyelids drooped and he became drowsy.*'

Find another place where the motion of the cart makes Willie tired. Copy the phrase or sentence. [1 mark]

- 10 What do you notice about how the description of the setting during the journey to the town differs from the description of the town itself? [3 marks]

Teaching assessment

Supporting pupils to read and understand fiction.

When answering questions about fiction, encourage pupils to read the extract all the way through first. Encourage them to think about what is happening in the story, noticing who the main characters are and where the action is taking place. Pupils are now ready to think about how the writer has used language to develop the characters and their relationships with each other. Encourage pupils to think about how the characters are feeling, and to note any changes that occur during the extract. They should underline the important descriptive words and put a circle around any words they are unsure about. They may be able to work out what these mean from the context. Pupils are now ready to start answering questions about the text.

- 1 agitated
1 mark (Content Domain 2a)

- 2 Strawberry
1 mark (Content Domain 2b)

3

	True	False
Willie sleeps under a blanket.		✓
Willie and Tom leave the horse at the blacksmith's.	✓	
There were two placards against the wall at the newsagents.	✓	
The lady in the newsagents offers Willie a cherry lolly.		✓

2 marks for all correct (Content Domain 2c)

- 4 **Expected standard:** Pupils should be able to identify how the lady in the newsagent's knew Tom's name and that his 'usual' was a specific type of tobacco suggests that he visits the shop regularly enough for her to become familiar with his preferences.
1 mark (Content Domain 2d)

- 5 **Expected standard:** Pupils should be able identify that Willie is completely unfamiliar with making choices and may not know what the different sweets taste like. They may also note that as he has clearly rarely (if ever) eaten sweets, he will be anxious to make the right choice.
1 mark

Extension: In addition to the above, pupils may comment that Willie may feel under pressure to choose quickly as Tom spoke 'sharply' to him when he offered to buy him a sweet, and is about to say something about how long Willie is taking to choose.
1 additional mark (Content Domain 2d)

- 6 **Expected standard:** Pupils should predict that Willie will have similar difficulty choosing a comic because he has never been given the opportunity to choose a comic before. They should refer to the line which states 'He'd never been asked to choose anything ever.'
1 mark

Extension: Pupils may also note that as Willie is already feeling overwhelmed, he is likely to find choosing a comic as well even more difficult.
1 additional mark (Content Domain 2e)

- 7** **Expected standard:** Pupils should identify that including a long list of options enables the reader to understand how overwhelmed Willie feels when choosing his sweet.
1 mark
Extension: Pupils may also refer to the fact that the sweets listed by the lady represent just 'some of the many jars.'
1 additional mark (Content Domain 2g)
- 8** **Expected standard:** Pupils should identify that choosing the type of sweet and then its flavour has been overwhelming for Willie, and this emotion affects the way his voice sounds.
1 mark (Content Domain 2g)
- 9** **Expected standard:** As soon as the rhythmic motion of the cart began Willie fell into a disjointed sleep.
1 mark (Content Domain 2f)
- 10** **Expected standard:** Pupils should identify that the description of the setting during the journey to town makes reference to nature and rural life, referring to the description of 'cornfields and cottages, bees and cream-coloured butterflies'. In contrast, the description of the town refers to a range of man-made structures including a range of different business premises, a 'large dark shed' and 'stone archway with a clock in its wall'.
3 marks (Content Domain 2h)