

The Lady with the Purple Eye

François Bloemhof

School Edition

Please note that the answers should be used as guidelines. Essentially, the focus is not on 'right' answers, but on helping learners to understand the text. They aim to alert learners to the development of plot and characters and to the writer's imaginative use of language. Throughout it is important to help learners make connections between what they know and what is in the text. As the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: Senior Phase Grades 7-9 reminds us: "The teaching of literature . . . is impossible without the thoughtful and honest interpretations of the learners themselves".

Chapter 1: First sight

Pre-reading

1. Look at the title. What do you think is going to happen in this novel?

This requires a personal response, but the learner should connect the answer to the content of the title.

During reading

2. Make a list of the characters and jot down what you find out about them.

Chris – A school boy

He has recently come to this area.

He has a sister, Marley, and two loving parents.

He is at the stage when he does not like his mother kissing him in front of the other boys (feels embarrassed) and knows they will tease him.

He is a bit insensitive (makes jokes about the boy with the bald head).

He finds Miss Badman frightening.

Marley – A school girl

She has recently come to this area.

She has a brother, Chris, and two loving parents.

She is quick to assert her rights (complains about Chris's suitcase pressing into her).

Bert – A school boy

About Chris's age

Goes to Chris's new school

Friends with Chris

He enjoys teasing his friends.

Post reading

1. What do the words "make a quick getaway" suggest about the way Chris feels about school?

Chris clearly doesn't enjoy it and sees himself as being imprisoned there.

2. How long have Chris and Bert known each other?

The two boys have only known each other for one school day.

3. Who is Marley?
Marley is Chris' sister and one of the main characters.
4. Explain why Chris calls his sister "Your Highness".
He feels that Marley is acting like a princess, when she complains about his bag pressing into her side.
5. Chris's Mother calls him and his sister her "beautiful children" and runs her hand through their hair. What kind of mother does this suggest that she is? (Choose the correct letter.)
A. strict B. affectionate C. reserved D. abrasive
B. affectionate.
6. Explain what is meant by: "Chris's mood darkened." on page 2.
Chris started feeling unhappier.
7. Reread page 4: The narrator says, "The boy was looking unhappier by the minute." Suggest two reasons why the boy was unhappy.
He probably feels embarrassed about having no hair and the other children are giving him a hard time.
8. Explain why Chris's mother scolds him for laughing.
She feels that he is being cruel, and suspects that the boy had no choice in the haircut – she thinks he has had to undergo chemotherapy.
9. Name the illness most associated with "chemotherapy".
Cancer
10. What do you think Miss Badman is likely to do in this story?
From her name she probably has an evil role to play.

Chapter 2: Miss Badman

Pre-reading

1. Has anyone ever made you feel uneasy, but you did not know why? What happened?
Personal response. (Question a "no" response as the vast majority of people have experienced this. Look particularly at the relevance of the account of what happened).

During reading

2. How does Marley show her uneasiness?
Firstly, she almost runs away. Secondly, she catches fright when she hears the door groan. Thirdly, when she hears Miss Badman and sees her, she finds herself unable to move. Fourthly, she is unable to answer Miss Badman at first, and finally she grabs any book, just to get out of the library.

Post reading

1. Explain why Marley might feel strange being around an empty classroom.
Classrooms are meant to be full of students and it would feel strange to be in one alone. (Accept valid alternatives).
2. Refer to: "It just didn't feel right being in there . . ." What does the ellipsis (" . . .") at the end of this sentence suggest?
It suggests that the sentence/thought is unfinished and that there is more that she cannot quite put her finger on.

3. Explain why Marley thinks she is being silly to want to turn around.
She cannot explain why she is afraid or uncertain.
4. Miss Badman seems strange. Explain what makes her seem strange and who you think she really is. How do you think she changes her eye colour?
She has unusual hair and eyes that change colour – one purple eye in fact! She probably uses colour contact lenses.
5. Name three things that make the library seem scary.
The fact that there is no one else in the library. The fact that Miss Badman is there. The fact that the doors creak.
6. Explain what was wrong with the book that Marley chose and why she chose it.
*Marley chose **Hansel and Gretel**, which is for little children, because she snatched the book nearest to her. She was nervous and just wanted to leave (escape).*
7. Write Marley's diary entry for this day. Use 15 January as the date.
Personal Response: Diary Entry.

15 January

Dear Diary

(Personal response)

Signature/ salutation.

8. Summarise the story of Hansel and Gretel in less than 200 words.
Two children √ live with their father a woodcutter√ and their evil stepmother.√ When the family falls on hard times,√ the stepmother persuades the father to take them into the woods and leave them there.√ The boy overhears and collects white pebbles to guide their way back.√ He drops the pebbles on his way and they work well to guide the children back.√ The stepmother persuades the father again and this time there is no warning.√ Improvising, the boy drops breadcrumbs instead and the birds eat the breadcrumbs. √Lost in the forest, the children come upon a gingerbread house.√ They are so hungry that they start eating the roof.√ The witch who lives there, convinces them to go inside and imprisons them both.√ She makes Gretel feed Hansel to fatten him up, so that she can cook him and eat him. √ Gretel tricks her into thinking that he wasn't getting fatter and eventually manages to push the witch into the fire meant for cooking him.√ They escape and get home to discover that the stepmother is dead √and the father is overjoyed to have them back.√

Chapter 3: Brothers and sisters

Pre-reading

1. How do you get along with your brothers and sisters if you have any?
Personal response.
2. Who do you talk to when things bother you? Explain.
Personal response.

During reading

3. Compare the relationship Marley and Chris have with the relationship Bert has with Angela.
Both brothers seem almost embarrassed by their sisters and are almost mean to them, but they also seem a little protective over them. The girls look up to their brothers for security and protection. Bert and Angela seem to be more relaxed in the way they relate to each other, whereas Chris makes a point of hiding his concern and showing his irritation at Marley's coming to him now.

Post reading

1. If you had experienced what Marley had just experienced, would you also have gone to speak to your brother immediately or would you have waited to speak to him after school (or not at all)? Why?
Personal response.
2. At first Chris laughs off Marley's confession. What makes him reconsider?
When he sees how vulnerable she seems, he realises that she is an easy target for such things.
3. In what type of story might someone "know that something's wrong" and no one believes him or her?
A horror story or thriller.
4. When Chris sees the bald boy again he feels: a. Amused b. guilty c. sympathetic d. empathetic.
a. sympathetic.
5. Quote evidence from the text that implies that Chris wasn't the only one to feel like the day had gone on forever.
"When the intercom crackled, it wasn't a moment too soon, and everyone perked up."
6. Bert and Angela's dad hadn't dropped them off at school that morning, and now Bert is unresponsive. Suggest what might have happened.
There might have been a death or serious illness in the family. (Accept valid alternatives).
7. For what normal reason might children not be allowed to speak to anybody?
The class is writing a test or the teacher is speaking. They could also be warned against talking to strangers.
8. Does it seem likely that this is the reason that Angela and Bert are not allowed to talk to anyone? Explain.
No. Chris is able to talk to Bert and Marley is able to talk to Angela. They are also far from strangers.

Chapter 4: Pink Friday

Pre-reading:

1. What do you think has happened to Bert and Angela?
Personal response, but must fit with what we know.

During reading

2. If this story were a movie what type of movie would it be? Explain.
A mystery/ thriller/ horror movie. There are unexplained occurrences which are eerie and seem to point to something monstrous that is about to happen.
1. How do the children react to Bert and Angela losing all their hair?
The children laugh at them, but Chris decides to investigate further.

Post reading

1. When Chris arrives at school, the boys are laughing at someone. Who does Chris think that they are laughing at?
He thinks they are laughing at the bald guy from the first chapter.
2. Who does he discover they are really laughing at?
Bert.
3. Chris asks Bert why he had been acting so strangely the day before. What is strange about how Bert responds? Suggest an explanation.
He says he doesn't know and seems to be telling the truth. Personal response, but must be feasible.
4. Explain why Chris thinks of the first boy with no hair "the original baldy" and doesn't describe him more kindly.
He is irritated and upset by the situation.
5. Why does Chris try not to stare at Angela and why is it hard for him not to?
He doesn't want to be nasty, but her head is also clean-shaven.
6. Explain why it might be "a whole lot worse for a girl".
Boys often choose to shave their hair off and most often wear their hair short, whereas girls tend to wear their hair longer.
7. What connection does Chris find between all of the children affected with this baldness? Explain why this is alarming.
They all have reddish-brown hair, which is the same colour hair he and Marley have.

Chapter 5: Number 13

Pre-reading

1. Have you ever told your parents you were going one place and gone somewhere else? Explain why.
Personal response.
2. What could make this dangerous?
If your parents don't know where you are, they won't know where to come and look for you if you have an accident or land up in trouble.

During reading

3. Thirteen is considered an unlucky number. What unlucky things are associated with this number?
All feasible answers. There were thirteen at the Last Supper, including Judas who betrayed Jesus, hence the notion that thirteen is unlucky and that Friday the thirteenth is particularly unlucky.
4. How do the trees contribute to the atmosphere?
In the shadows they look distorted, twisted and spooky.

Post reading

1. Explain what Chris plans to do and why this might make Marley be "worried sick" if she weren't with him.
Chris is planning on breaking into Miss Badman's house to see if he can get any leads on what is happening to these children – particularly what her involvement is. This is a dangerous plan.
2. Explain why Chris and Marley's mom is surprised that they were going somewhere together.
They don't usually do things together.

3. Marley expects Miss Badman's house to look rather different. Study her description of what she expected and say what fairy tale character would live in that type of place.
3. *Rapunzel lived in such a home.*
4. Suggest two reasons why the black cat brushing up against Marley's leg scares her.
She is trying not to be noticed and is very tense, so any sudden movement or touch would scare her. Secondly, a black cat is superstitiously associated with evil – particularly with witches.
5. What was Miss Badman sewing onto her coat?
Miss Badman was sewing children's hair onto the coat.
6. When they leave, Miss Badman's cat follows them. What eventually saves them?
Their dog comes out barking.
7. What suggests that Marley isn't used to lying?
We are told that she lied "like a veteran" as if this is reason for surprise. Also she doesn't look at Chris.

Chapter 6: Prints

Pre-reading

1. What are “Prints”? What do you associate with them?
Marks people or animals leave behind from their feet (hooves) or hands. I associate fingerprints and so crime scenes with “prints”.

During reading

2. Do you think that this is a good title for this chapter? What other title do you think the author could have used?
Personal response.

Post reading

1. Explain why Marley was having the dreams she was.
Marley had almost been caught when she tried to break into Miss Badman’s house.
2. Marley’s dad complains about a cat leaving paw prints all over his car. What has happened?
Miss Badman’s cat got trapped on top of the car by the dog, after the dog rescued the children from the cat’s attack.
3. Identify and explain the figure of speech used in “. . . the announcements took forever.”
Hyperbole. The announcements seemed to take a very long time, so he exaggerates how long they took.
4. Why might Chris want to know where Miss Badman had come from?
He wants to find out if any of the strange things that are happening here, happened where she was before.
5. Why do you think that Miss Badman wants to see Marley? Supply two reasons why she chooses Marley over Chris.
She wants to confront Marley about sneaking around her house. She chooses Marley because she is the more vulnerable one and because she has already been in the library for a book, so it would seem less strange to claim that Marley has ordered a book.
6. Explain why Marley chooses to go to the library to see Miss Badman, despite her misgivings.
She is afraid that not going could anger Miss Badman and make the situation worse.
7. Why does Marley have a lump in her throat and what is a “dead giveaway”?
She is very nervous, because she is sure Miss Badman has planned something awful to take revenge on her for sneaking around her house. A “dead giveaway” is something which makes what you are hiding, obvious.
8. Suggest what might happen to make it “too late” for the children to find out what was going on.
They would be victims of what she was doing – they would know what was going on too late to save themselves.
9. Explain the irony in Miss Badman calling Marley a “sly little snake”.
Miss Badman is extremely sly.
10. Name the figure of speech in “Fury boiled up in her like potion in a cauldron.” Explain what makes this comparison particularly appropriate.
Simile. Miss Badman’s anger is compared to potion or a magic liquid in a witch’s cauldron. We are pretty sure that Miss Badman is a witch or something close to one.

Chapter 7: Candidates for what?

Pre-reading

1. What is a candidate? Give some examples.

Someone who is in the running for something is called a candidate: a candidate for a bursary; a candidate for Miss South Africa; a candidate to be an organ donor; a candidate for the presidency.

During reading

2. How does reading the journal help the children?

They can see what is coming and can plan to defend themselves.

Post reading

1. Explain why Chris is barking like a dog.

He has realised that this is the only thing that will unsettle the cat.

2. What has Marley taken, and why could it cause trouble?

Miss Badman's journal. Miss Badman has written everything that she has planned and done in this journal. For this reason, it could uncover all the evil that she has been doing.

3. What is frustrating about its contents?

It is all very vague.

4. How do the children expect Miss Badman to react to their threat to take her journal to the police?

They expect her to be scared and to hold back.

5. How does she react?

At first she is furious, but in talking to them, she is vaguely amused and frighteningly open about what she is doing and how she does it. She seems totally unthreatened.

6. Why do you think Chris takes his sister's hand?

He wants to reassure her, but also to reassure himself a little.

7. What does she need the hair for?

She is making a coat with the hair. The coat will give her the power to control people.

8. How does she get hair from the children?

She takes something they want and then offers it back to them in exchange for their hair.

9. Explain why she cannot simply shave their heads.

Part of the spell is that they have to give it to her willingly.

Chapter 8: The cat

Pre-reading

1. Have you ever tried to say something and found that you couldn't get the words out?

Yes! / No. (This is designed for class discussion – you could even use this as a possible unprepared oral mark for those who are willing to participate. Those who do, should tell the story of when this happened to them. You may even not want to tell them it is for marks).

During reading

2. What makes this cat an important character in the novel?
The cat is Miss Badman's accomplice and seems to know all and be almost like her henchman or guard.

Post reading

1. Explain why Marley's tongue "grew heavy in her mouth" when she wanted to say something about Miss Badman.
Miss Badman might have hypnotized them a little, but largely it is because the story seems so unbelievable that she doesn't know how to tell her parents in a way that they will believe her.
2. Describe the different reactions that the children and their father have to the sound of the cat outside.
The children are frightened by it because they realize it is Miss Badman's cat and their father is annoyed because of the noise it is making.
3. Explain the icy chill that found its way into the lounge.
It is not a physical cold, but a portent of evil (the warning that evil is coming or is close).
4. Do you think that Miss Badman was joking? Use what you know from the previous chapters.
No. Angela and Bert's parents were missing before their hair was shaved off, so this seems to be Miss Badman's m.o. (modus operandi - way of doing things).
5. The description of the moonlight is quite poetic: "The moon cast its silvery beams through the window." Do you think that Marley notices this? Why?
No. It is a calming image and she is focused on signs of evil and what may or may not be happening to her parents.
6. Marley is more scared of what she doesn't see than what she does. Explain why.
Marley might be able to do something if she sees Miss Badman coming, but she will not be able to do anything if she is unaware that Miss Badman is there.

Chapter 9: The call

Pre-reading

1. What are your connotations/associations with darkness?
All of the following are possibilities: evil, lack of knowledge, scary, uncertainty, sleep, winter, unsafe. (Accept all feasible alternatives).

During reading

2. Why does the hair have to be children's hair? What else does it need to be?
It has to be children's hair because it has so much more life to it than adult hair - "so much more vitality". It also has to be given by the children - she cannot merely take it.

Post reading

1. The coat gives Miss Badman power.
 - a) What does she dream about being able to do once the coat is finished?
She dreams of being able to go to the bank and make the bank manager give her a million rand from someone else's account, and then cause the manager to take the full blame. She dreams of making someone jump off a high building. She also dreams of becoming president of the country or of the world.
 - b) If you had such power, how would you use it?
Personal response.

2. Explain why Miss Badman needs to sound concerned when she speaks to Chris and Marley's mom.
She wants to ensure that they come at once.
3. Suggest something that the children have done that would make it more likely that their mother will believe that something is wrong.
They have been acting strangely. When their mother has asked them what is going on, they have not been able to answer.
4. What is unusual about what Miss Badman suggests for their meeting?
She suggests that they meet at her house.
5. Where is their mother?
She is at Miss Badman's house.
6. What is strange about Miss Badman asking the children to do her a favour?
She is no friend of theirs.
7. Explain why catching Miss Badman unawares could be an advantage.
Her plans may not work if she is not expecting the children at that point. They may be able to upset her plans.
8. Do you think that the children will catch Miss Badman off guard? Explain.
No. She has done this many times before, so she will have planned for all eventualities./They have sneaked around her house before, so it is to be expected that they will come at any time. OR Yes. She is not expecting them to be this bold, now that she has their parents.
9. The strange thing is that Marley is really not feeling well. Why?
She has not slept well and she is very worried about her parents.

Chapter 10: On the inside

Pre-reading

1. If you could advise the children on what to do now, what would you tell them to do?
Personal response. (Another possibility for an unprepared oral mark - others should be encouraged to question each response to promote critical thinking).
2. If they insist on going, what would you advise them to remember?
Personal response.

During reading

3. Write down some of the things that make Miss Badman's house (inside and out) strange or eerie.
It is very dark; the cat is waiting for them; there is no furniture in the room apart from the cupboard and a table; the cupboard creaks; the tap is dripping; the walls are cold and sticky "like old glue".

Post reading

1. Explain why Chris feels that Rex shouldn't come with them.
He is afraid that the dog would bark at the wrong time and would alert Miss Badman to them being there much earlier.
2. Chris thinks that it is important that the hair be red-brown.
 - a) Explain how he comes to this conclusion.

All the children who have fallen victim to Miss Badman have had red-brown hair.

- b) Is it important for the power of the coat? Substantiate your answer from the text.
Miss Badman makes no mention of the colour being important, but does make mention of their hair being beautiful and so one can assume that it is personal preference.
3. Marley says that the cat “wanted to scare [her and her brother]”
 - a) What does this suggest about how she sees the cat?
The cat seems almost human and entirely malicious.
 - b) What else has the cat done to support her view?
The cat followed them to their house and came to visit them after Miss Badman threatened to abduct her parents.
4. What is eerie about having nothing more than a table and a cupboard in the room?
It suggests that she never has guests and has never really made this a home.
5. Suggest TWO possible reasons for the room being icy.
The window has been open and it is night time. There is a presence of evil in the house.
6. What do you think has made the walls sticky?
Personal response, but should be in tune with the story.
7. “There you are at last,” Miss Badman says, when she sees them. Explain what makes Miss Badman’s statement strange.
She told them to be there much later, but seems to have been expecting them earlier.

Chapter 11: Cat and dog

Pre-reading

1. Now that the children have been caught, what do you think will happen next? Explain.
Personal response, but in line with what we know so far. E.g. She will enforce her plan. OR She will reveal the rest of her plan and go back on their deal in some way.

During reading

2. Miss Badman’s behaviour has changed. Write down some of these changes.
She is no longer hiding who she is – she isn’t wearing her contact lenses or her wig.

Post reading

1. Why did Chris need to “keep his wits about him”?
He intended to put an end to Miss Badman’s plans.
2. What does “we were getting bored” suggest about how Miss Badman sees her relationship with Chris and Marley’s parents? Comment on this.
She is almost suggesting that they are friends and in agreement. It suggests that their parents were also waiting for the entertainment of Marley and Chris handing over their hair.
3. Do you think that Miss Badman is genuinely touched by the sight of Marley throwing her arms around her parents? Explain.
No. She has no heart or sense of caring about anyone but herself.
4. Why does Marley relinquish her power and agree to give her hair to Miss Badman?

She loves and is concerned about her parents and would rather relinquish her hair than jeopardise their safety.

5. Have you ever experienced a time when you could not move? Explain what happened in 100 words or less.
Personal response, but must be in 100 words or less (50 words or even 20 is fine as long as the story is communicated well).
6. How does Chris finally overcome Miss Badman?
He barks like a dog, the cat catches fright, leaps away dragging the coat with it a little way, knocking over the candle and the coat is set alight.
7. Explain what else could cause the coat to burn like that?
Magic! Evil (within this genre of writing) could make it burn like that.
8. Miss Badman starts to melt when she catches fire.
 - a) Do you find this surprising? Say why.
Yes. She seems to be a very evil human being, and humans don't melt. OR No, she doesn't seem human and if her hair and eyes were fake, so could the rest of her body be.
 - b) Explain why you think this happens.
She isn't human and so her body doesn't respond to flames the way a human body would.

Chapter 12: Miss Bertram

Pre-reading

1. If you had been through this experience, what sorts of things would you have learnt?
Personal response, but hopefully including honesty with parents (this might have prevented them from going to Miss Badman's house).
2. Would you have any fears? What would you be afraid of? Explain.
Personal response – credit for well-substantiated answers.

During reading

3. Write down all the things that cause the change in the library's atmosphere.
I quote: "the curtains are open and they smelled good, too." Miss Badman is no longer there, so evil is gone. Miss Bertram has a sunny disposition and is very welcoming. There are colourful posters on the walls.

Post reading

1. Which of the two children do you think recovers from this experience faster? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
Marley does. She chooses a book about cats from the library, whereas Chris has "had enough of cats".
2. What evidence is there that this new teacher is the very opposite to Miss Badman?
She sounds friendly, and has made the library welcoming and bright.
3. What book would you recommend for Marley?
Personal response.
4. Design a poster for the library advertising a book that you enjoyed reading.

If you want to use this poster for a formal assessment, you should give the children a word count and perhaps define the task a little more. They should also make sure that the lettering is bold enough to be read from a distance so as to make their poster effective. These posters could be put up in your classroom.