

A Packet of Letters

Answer the following questions carefully and be prepared to share your ideas with others in your class.

1. What does Arthur's conversation with Samuel Daily show us about Arthur's feelings and state of mind?
2. What are Arthur's thoughts when Samuel Daily tells him he has come to take him away from Eel Marsh House? What is it that Arthur is keen to escape from?
3. Describe what Arthur finds when he enters the nursery this morning. What does he consider might have been to the room and why does he dismiss the idea?
4. As Arthur and Samuel leave Eel Marsh House, what is the atmosphere and the weather like?
5. Re-read the paragraph that begins, 'I rested but I could not sleep ...' What do you think Arthur means when he writes about being reassured by all the people?
6. How does Arthur feel about not returning to Eel Marsh House? Explain his feelings.
7. What does he mean when he writes that he has 'learned a hard lesson.'?
8. How does Arthur feel when he reads the last of Janet's letters?
9. Why is Arthur so horror-stricken when he finds the three death certificates? What do you think he has realised?
10. As Arthur sets off for a walk with Spider, the atmosphere and surroundings are again described. Write down what Hill depicts for the reader and explain why you think she sets the scene like this.
11. When Arthur and Samuel Daily talk together after dinner, what does Samuel's hesitation in telling Arthur any more about the Drablow story suggest to us?
12. What does Samuel eventually tell Arthur? Why might this alarm Arthur even though he is now leaving the town?
13. What further illness does Arthur suffer before he is able to leave the Dailys' house? Why do you think Hill includes this sickness and graphic description of it?
14. Describe the weather on the morning Arthur is meant to leave and the last morning when he is sitting up watching the bird. Why has Hill juxtaposed these two images?