

The Sound of a Pony and Trap

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

1. Find three phrases or sentences to show how quickly Arthur goes from confidently setting off along the causeway to turning back in fear that he will get lost in the mist. Look at the way Hill shows his increasing bewilderment and fear.
2. Find the verbs that Arthur uses to describe the sinking of the pony and trap in the marsh. Why does Hill use three and what effect do they have?
3. When Arthur reaches the house again, what does he do? List his various actions and make a note of his corresponding feelings. What does this show us about him?
4. Compare the characters of Arthur and Keckwick and their behaviour at the end of this chapter. What do we learn about each man? Why do you think Hill has Keckwick react to Arthur in the way he does?
5. Look at the last paragraph of the chapter which is all one sentence, 'So I thought that night, as I laid my head on the soft pillow and fell eventually into a restless, shadowy sleep, across which figures came and went, troubling me, so that once or twice I half-woke myself, as I cried out or spoke a few incoherent words, I sweated, I turned and turned about, trying to free myself from the nightmares, to escape from my own semi-conscious sense of dread and foreboding, and all the time, piercing through the surface of my dreams, came the terrified whinnying of the pony and the crying and calling of that child over and over, while I stood, helpless in the mist, my feet held fast, my body pulled back and while behind me, though I could not see, only sense her dark presence, hovered the woman.'

 - a. Why do you think Hill has written such a long last sentence?
 - b. What is the effect of it?
 - c. What does it reveal to us about Arthur's feelings?
 - d. Try changing it to a number of short sentences and see what difference it makes to the effect.