

Unit: The Short Story  
Lesson: 3

Instructor: Amber Murray

## Language Arts 8

Lesson and Assignment: Week 23

Lesson Title: "The Captain and His Horse" by Beryl Markham

Suggested Due Date: 2/20/99 Absolute Due Date: 2/27/99

## Bits and Pieces

Take a minute and think of suspenseful stories, novels, movies, or television shows that you have enjoyed. **Did the plot offer any hints about events that were to come? How did such hints add to the suspense of the plot?**

**Suspense** is what keeps us reading or watching – it is the quality of a story that makes us excited – and sometimes a little nervous – about what will happen next. When an author or director hints at something that is yet to come, that is called **foreshadowing**. I want you to keep these ideas in mind as you read the next story, "The Captain and His Horse", by Beryl Markham.

## About the Author

Beryl Markham's father was a scholar, a horse breeder, an adventurer, and a farmer. With his hour-year-old daughter, he left England to live in Africa "because it was new and you could feel the future of it under your feet." **Wow!** His daughter inherited from him his fierce independence and love of adventure. After you have read this story, ask yourself whether or not you can feel the influence of Markham's father in the story.

## Vocabulary

The following words are not included in the definitions on page 46. However, I feel that they are important, so I would like you to define them. **Do this in your notebook, please.**

Benevolent  
Frugality  
Lavished  
Futile

Counterpane  
Flanking  
Stealth  
Tawny

# Things you might find confusing...

This story takes place during **World War I** – in the story it is only referred to as “**the old war, the nearly forgotten war...**” During World War I, German troops from German East Africa invaded Kenya, which was controlled by Great Britain.

Until World War II, **Prussia** was the largest and most powerful state in the German Empire, and its armies were among the best drilled and disciplined in the world. Prussian desire for more land was one of the causes of World War I. Now, much of the land once called Prussia lies in the eastern part of German, Poland, and Russia.

You will also find mention of a “mud-and-daub house.” This type of house is made of dried mud covered with a material such as plaster.

In this story, Beryl and the Baron have a too-close-for-comfort with the African buffalo. The African buffalo weighs about 1,800 pounds and carries 5-foot-long curved horns. It is reputed to be Africa’s most dangerous animal. Although it is normally peaceful unless provoked, a buffalo may stalk and charge a human, even without provocation.

## Grammar and such

### Demonstrative pronouns

Sometimes **demonstrative** words – **words that specify** – are used as **pronouns**. ***This, that, these,*** and ***those*** can be used as demonstrative pronouns. A **demonstrative pronoun** may refer to a whole thought rather than to just one or more nouns.

As with any pronoun, the writer must be careful that the **antecedent** (the word or words to which the pronoun refers) is clear to the reader. The antecedent usually precedes the pronoun; however, the pronoun should be close enough to its antecedent so that the reference is clear.

The demonstrative pronoun ***this*** appears at the end of the following passage from “The Captain and His Horse.” As you read over the passage, note to what the word ***this*** refers:

The days were clear and many-colored. You could sit in your saddle and look at the huge mountains and at the river valleys, green, and aimless as fallen threads on a counterpane – and you could not count the colors or know them, because some were nameless. Some colors

you never saw again, because each day the light was different, and often the colors you saw yesterday never came back. But none of **this** meant much to me that morning.

To what does **this** refer? If you said the complete thought or description of the mountains and valleys, you would be correct!

What would happen if we rewrote the last sentence like this:

But none of the beauty of Africa meant much to me that morning.

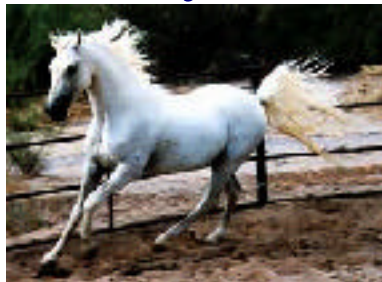
How does the use of the pronoun enhance the reading of the passage?

Writing Assignment:



Write as Beryl Markham does about a beautiful place you have seen. You might describe a natural scene such as a view from a mountaintop or a quiet place in the woods, or you might choose the interior of a beautiful building you have visited. Use demonstrative pronouns in your description, but be careful not to overuse them, and make sure that they are placed correctly.

More stuff you may not know...



Arabian Stallion

The Baron was trained as a war horse. Horses have been bred throughout the world for various purposes. The Arabian, the world's oldest pure horse breed, was developed on the Arabian Peninsula more than 1,000 years ago. From just three Arabian horses, the British at the turn of the eighteenth century developed thoroughbreds to use as racehorses. The Appaloosa, (see right) a spotted horse used in the American West as a cow pony, is descended from horses from central Asia. Draft horses like the Belgian (in Belgium), the Clydesdale (in Scotland), and the Percheron



(in France) were bred to do heavy work. Wales and the Shetland Islands produced the Welsh Pony and the Shetland Pony, respectively.



Welsh Pony

The largest number of horses in the world today are in Brazil. The United States, the countries of the former Soviet Union, China, Mexico, and Argentina also have many horses. One of the few wild breeds of horses, known as Przewalsky's horse, used to roam the plains of Mongolia but may already be extinct.

## Deeper into the text

Remember **suspense** and **foreshadowing**? Let's take a deeper look at the text of the story and see what we can find....

Take a look on page 51. Read again (I say again because you should already have read the story!) the paragraph that begins

“We hit the bowl of the valley, and in a little while the captain raised his hand....”

What parts of this paragraph heighten the suspense of the story – that is, what parts make you WANT to keep reading?

Look on page 52. The author is going to do something very interesting on this page. **She is going to shift from past tense to present tense in the middle of the story.** Can you point out exactly where she begins to do this? Why in the world would she mix verb tenses like this? If you said to heighten the suspense, to make you hang on every word as if you were right there, you would be exactly right! Using the present tense in this situation makes us feel as if we are stuck right in the middle of the action. We can almost feel our hearts pound along with Beryl's.

Cool, huh.

And now – the rest of your  
assignment...

In addition to the writing assignment in green above, you need to complete the following. As always, the work in **VIOLET** is to be done in your notebook, and the work in **GREEN** is to be turned in to me.

**DON'T FORGET THE PINK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – ANSWERS TO BE POSTED TO THE GROUP DISCUSSION CONFERENCE, NOT SENT TO ME!! 😊**

## **Textbook work:**

Page 59 – Responding to the Selection, Analyzing Literature, and Critical Thinking and Reading.  
Part 2 of the Lesson/Assignment

## **Worksheets:**

Interpreting Metaphors  
Usage and Mechanics (Proofreading)  
Investigating Suspense  
Demonstrative Pronouns  
(as always, the worksheets are at the end of this file)

## **Writing Assignments:**

Writing assignment using demonstrative pronouns (directions above)  
Thinking and Writing – page 59

## **Assessments:**

Vocabulary Quiz  
Selection Test

## ***Demonstrative Pronouns***

A **demonstrative pronoun** is a word that points out something and can stand alone in a sentence. Like other pronouns, demonstrative pronouns take the place of the noun or nouns to which they refer. The demonstrative pronouns are *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*. In the following example, the demonstrative pronoun *this* points out the word *revolver*. Notice that the word *this* stands alone in the second sentence. It is not necessary to repeat the word *revolver*.

**Demonstrative Pronoun** Here is a revolver. Take *this* with you.

Writers use demonstrative pronouns to avoid repetition. The words *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those* are particularly useful when they take the place of an entire thought. Notice that in the following example from the story, the word *this* takes the place of the entire sentence that precedes it.

### Example of Demonstrative Pronoun Use

Now there is war, and it is hard to say a thing or think a thing into which that small but most tyrannical of words does not insert itself. I suppose it is because of *this* that the name of the Baron comes most often to me...

In the above example, the word *this* acts as a kind of shorthand for a whole lengthy and complex thought.

When you write, do not use a demonstrative pronoun unless it is absolutely clear to what the pronoun refers. Unclear pronoun reference will make your writing confusing. For instance, in the following example, the reference of the pronoun *this* is unclear.

A good hunter must stay calm. This is one advantage of experience.

Instead, the writer should have said:

A good hunter must stay calm. This is one reason to get plenty of experience.

**EXERCISE A: Finding Demonstrative Pronouns.** Underline the demonstrative pronoun in each passage from the story. Indicate in blue the word or words to which the pronoun refers.

1. There was a war, too, when I was a girl of thirteen living on what was euphemistically called a Kenya farm... That was the old war, the nearly forgotten war.
2. The captain would say things like this. He would say, "It looked difficult to me ....
- 3 .....I was used to sensitive, symmetrical, highly strung horses, clean-bred and jealous of their breeding. But the Baron was not like this.
4. The revolver slung at my waist in a rawhide holster, the broad, straight backs of the cavalymen riding ahead, the confident pace of the Baron--all these made me feel very proud...
5. You can find many easy explanations for the things that animals do. You can say that they act out of fear, out of panic, that they cannot think or reason. But I know that this is wrong...

**EXERCISE B: Using Demonstrative Pronouns.** Read each sentence. On the lines below, write another sentence, using a demonstrative pronoun to refer to a word or thought in the first sentence.

1. Beryl's father taught her not to waste emotion on trivial things.
2. Beryl had learned to hunt when she was very young.
3. The Prussian soldiers were well trained, but the British soldiers were fighting for their homes.
4. The Baron showed both wisdom and courage.
5. The colonel called Captain Dennis a "blasted fool."

## *Investigating Suspense*

**Suspense** is the quality in a story that makes you want to find out what will happen next. Suspense sometimes arises out of a sense of danger. When you feel suspense, you find yourself troubled by questions like these: Is something terrible going to happen? Can it be avoided?

Authors often use **foreshadowing** to help build suspense. Foreshadowing involves giving hints about future events without revealing what will actually happen. Authors also create suspense by descriptions that make the setting, characters, or circumstances appear threatening.

Read the following passages from "The Captain and His Horse." On the lines provided, answer these questions about each passage: (1) How does the author create suspense in this passage? (2) What question or questions does the passage raise?

1. He sees what I see, he knows more than I know. He tilts his ears, his nostrils distend ever so slightly, the muscles of his shoulders tighten under his skin like leather straps. The tension is so great that it communicates itself to the kongoni. His head comes up and he trembles, he smells the air, he is about to plunge.
2. Their eyes were round and small and they burned with a carnelian fire. They moved upon us with slow leisurely steps, and the intensity of their fury was hypnotic. I could not move.

3. It was south of Kilimanjaro. Not nice country, but he got through on that clumsy half-breed of his--or almost got through, that is.

## *Interpreting Metaphors*

A **metaphor** is an implied comparison between two things that are not alike. For example, when Beryl recalls the names of horses she has known, she says

Names like these ... are to me bright threads in a tapestry of remembrance hardly tarnished after all these years.

The author is comparing the names of the horses with the threads of a tapestry. The two things are not alike, but they can be compared because the horses' names run through the author's memories as threads run through a tapestry. We say that the comparison is implied because it does not use the word *like* or *as*.

Writers use metaphors to make their writing more vivid. Here, by comparing the narrator's thoughts and feelings with something concrete that the reader can visualize, Markham brings the experience to life for the reader.

In each of the following passages from the story, find and underline the metaphor. Then briefly explain the metaphor on the lines below.

1. "... it had the elements of all wars: ... it threw strong lights on the souls of men, so that you could see, sometimes, courage that you never knew was there."
2. "And time does not move. Time is a marble moment."
3. "He whirled, striking a flame of dust from his heel..."

# Usage and Mechanics

The following sentences are from a first draft of an essay about "The Captain and His Horse." Correct all usage and mechanics errors. The number in parentheses indicates the number of corrections to be made.

1. Beryl a thirteen year old girl lives with her father on a farm in Kenya. A small company of british soldiers come to stay at the farm Beryls Father tells her to be kind to them, and to their horses. (9)
2. Beryl meets the Baron, captain Dennis' horse. He is not like the other horses she is use to. Finally, the Captain invite Beryl to go hunting with the men. He tells her that, "she can ride the Baron." Beryl feels very proud and a bit nervously. (8)
3. Beryl finds her self in a dangerous situation. She is surrounded by a heard of African Buffaloes the most dangerous animals in Africa. She is terrified but the Baron knows what to do. His cleverness and courage saves Beryl's life.(6)