

Oh, Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad

By M R James

Part 3

Author: Daniel Barber

Level: Advanced

Age: Young adults / Adults

Aims: In this lesson, the students will:

1. recap the story so far by quizzing one another;
2. take part in a visualization to prepare them for listening;
3. listen for gist for the main character's thoughts and feelings;
4. practise intensive listening to compare punctuation with intonation and pausing;
5. listen for specific information;
6. write a journal entry summarizing the story so far.

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student; Track 1 (first half of Part 3), Track 2 (short extract), Track 3 (second half of Part 3) and Track 4 (full audio) downloaded from onestopenglish; one copy of the full transcript per student

Summary: The story is set in Burnstow, a seaside town on the east coast of England. It tells the story of how a university professor makes an interesting discovery with disturbing consequences. It is told in seven parts. In Part 3, Professor Parkins walks back to the inn alone, or so he thinks. After a relaxing evening in the company of the other guests, he retires to his bedroom to examine the artefact.

Warmer

Aim: to recap the story so far

1. Explain that the students are going to test one another on the story so far in a competitive game. Put them in teams of three or four, and ask them to write some questions that they can ask the other teams about the story. You might want to suggest one or two to help them get started. For example:

- What's the main character's name?
- Where is he on holiday?

Monitor to suggest questions. You could ensure at this point that the following key questions will be asked:

- What was Parkins doing for most of the day? (*playing golf*)
- What has he just done? (*explored an archaeological site; found an object*)
- What time of day is it? (*evening; It is getting dark.*)
- Where is he going to go now? (*back to the inn*)

2. When each team has a few questions, they can start the game. Pitch one team against another (in a large class, there will be more than one game played at the same time).

Explain that they should alternate asking and answering questions, and get points for correct answers. The team with the most correct answers wins.

Visualization

Aims: to engage students in the idea of the fear of being followed; to make listening to Part 3 easier; to experience a different kind of classroom listening

1. Visualizations are a great way to focus in on the emotions and senses, in this case the feeling of fear that Parkins experiences on his walk home. Visualizations are listening comprehension activities but, instead of asking students to complete a task to show that they have understood, the feedback is more discursive. This visualization asks questions throughout, but the students only think about their answers and don't speak until after the visualization has finished (before you start, you might want to explain this). Tell them that visualizations often work best if they close their eyes, but that, if they don't feel comfortable doing so, they don't have to. Read the text slowly and clearly, pausing frequently to let the students reflect. You may even want to darken the room a little to create a better atmosphere.

Oh, Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad

By M R James

Part 3

I'd like everyone to listen to my voice. Take a deep breath in and breathe out slowly. As you listen, think about what you can see, hear, smell and feel ... OK? You are on the beach in Burnstow. You have had a long day on the golf course and now you have finished. How do you feel? Look around you. The light is fading as night draws near. What do you see on the beach? The temperature has dropped and there is a cool wind in your face. What else can you feel? You can hear yourself breathing, but you can hear other noises, too. What are they? And what can you smell?

You decide to walk back, so you start walking along the beach. You can see the inn, where there is warmth and good food, a place to rest, but it is a long way off in the distance. You can see several low walls between you and the inn. They are groynes and they stretch from the top of the beach all the way into the sea. They look black in the fading light. You keep walking, walking. What do your footsteps sound like when you walk?

You reach the first groyne and climb over it. You put your hands on the wood of the groyne. It is green with algae and slimy to the touch. You can smell the sea on the wood. You jump down on the other side of the groyne and continue walking.

After a few minutes, you look back to see how far you have walked. You see that you have not walked very far, and you still have a long way to go. How do you feel? Now you notice there is someone behind you on the beach, a long way off, but they seem to be following you. What do they look like? How are they moving? Slowly or quickly? Do they look normal or strange in some way? How so? What are you thinking now? How does it make you feel, having this person behind you? What do you think you should do? Ignore them and carry on? Stop to let them catch up? Perhaps start walking faster?

... Now, take a deep breath, open your eyes and have a stretch.

2. Ask the students to recount and compare with a partner their 'journeys' back to the inn.
3. Conduct group feedback. Have the students first describe the beach in sight, sound and

smell. Focus on their feelings and thoughts, especially their reactions to the mysterious follower. Allow speculation as to who it might be and how this figure might fit in to the story. Ask the students whether they have ever had similar experiences.

Listening for gist

Aim: to practise listening for gist

1. Ask the students to listen to the first part of Part 3 and ask them to think in what ways Professor Parkins's attitudes, feelings and thoughts during the journey along the beach are similar to, or different from, their own. Play Track 1.

2. Get the whole class to feed back. In particular, discuss whether they think Parkins is, in fact, afraid, and why (*he is not a superstitious man, but he can't shake certain demonic thoughts about the follower*).

Activity 1

Aims: to raise awareness of the use of short sentences and interjections to simulate internal monologue; to raise awareness of the connection between punctuation and intonation and pausing

1. Hand out the worksheet and ask the students to look at Activity 1, Task a. When they've had a chance to read the extracts, elicit the methods the writer uses to show us what Parkins is thinking.

Key: *Extract 1: The narrator tells us directly what Parkins is thinking. He says, 'He felt ...'; and he uses inverted commas to quote his thoughts. Extract 2: The narrator uses interjection ('yes, certainly it was') to mirror Parkins's excited and fragmented thoughts.*

2. Have the students work in pairs to punctuate the extract in Task b.

3. Ask the students to listen to the extract and decide if their punctuation sounds correct. Play Track 2. In pairs, get them to compare their punctuation in order to discuss the different choices they have made and to decide on the best punctuation.

4. Hand out the transcript. Have the students read it to check their ideas with the original.

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Part 3

Teacher's note: Unusually, the exclamation, 'dear me!' is followed by a lower-case 'it's'. An exclamation mark is normally followed by a capital letter; the effect here is to emphasize the disorganization of his thoughts brought about by panicking.

Activity 2

Aim: to practise listening for detail

1. Explain that the students are going to listen to the next part of the story: what happens when Parkins gets back to the inn. Point out Activity 2 on the worksheet. Ask the students to read the statements in preparation. Play Track 3.
2. Allow students a few minutes to check their answers in pairs. At this stage, they should add any notes to explain why they think the statements are true or false. Then, with the whole class, nominate students to explain their answers. If they say the statement is false, ask for the correction, and, if the statement is true, you can ask them to recall what they heard to confirm it. Don't give them any definitive answers at this point; instead, explain that they will get a chance to read the transcript afterwards.
3. Ask the students to refer to the transcript to check their answers.

Key: 1. F. He dresses for dinner first.; 2. T. They play bridge together.; 3. T. 'towards 12 o'clock'; 4. T. In a characteristic understatement, he says that 'life at the Globe would be supportable ...'; 5. F. He has put it in his room, on the chest of drawers.; 6. F. It resembles a dog whistle, but it is a whistle.; 7. F. It is full of sand or earth.; 8. F. He opens it to get rid of the earth inside the whistle.; 9. T. He is surprised to see anyone out so late.; 10. F. There are letters etched on the object.; 11. T. It is in Latin. It means: Who is this who is coming? ; 12. T. He answers the question posed in the inscription by whistling for whoever is coming.

Summarizing the story

Aims: to summarize the story so far; to predict the effect of blowing the whistle

1. Explain that the students should imagine they are Parkins at the end of his first day in Burnstow. Tell them that they are collaboratively going to write an entry in his journal recounting

the events of the day. Write on the board the students' ideas of what Parkins might include in his journal. These could be events we have listened to, such as meeting Colonel Wilson and walking home along the beach, or imagined events, such as his journey to Burnstow or his game of golf. Importantly, they should include what happened when he blew on the whistle. Ask the students to put these topics and events in a suitable order for the journal entry.

2. Allocate the students a topic or event to write about. You will need to work out whether students work alone or in groups, depending on the number of students and the number of topics and events that you have come up with. For example, if you have identified six topics for the journal entry and you have 12 students in the class, group students in pairs and allocate each pair with one topic or event to write about. On the other hand, small classes may mean that students work alone to write about more than one topic.

3. Students write their part of the journal entry. Monitor, encouraging them to think about the topic from Parkins's point of view, and, where possible, write in a style that befits his character.

4. When all the groups are ready, have them read out their sections in the order that they decided on. Afterwards, you might like to discuss which of the events they think are the most significant. Also, you could discuss what the students think is going to happen in the next instalment.

Follow-up tasks

1. In this instalment, Parkins notices someone following him along the beach and, later, someone outside his window. Students imagine that he decides to visit the local police station the following day to report this strange behaviour. They write the dialogue between Parkins and the policeman.

2. Students describe an object of theirs that has some special significance or is unusual in some way. They should describe in detail both its physical attributes and why it is important to them. If they bring the object to the following lesson, they can show it to their classmates and tell them about it.

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Part 3

Activity 1

a. Look at these two extracts from the story. How does the writer show what Parkins is thinking?

1.

When, therefore, he retired towards twelve o'clock, he felt that he had spent his evening in quite a satisfactory way, and that, even for so long as a fortnight or three weeks, life at the Globe would be supportable under similar conditions – “especially,” thought he, “if I go on improving my game.”

2.

It was of bronze, he now saw, and was shaped very much after the manner of the modern dog-whistle; in fact it was – yes, certainly it was – actually no more nor less than a whistle.

b. Punctuate the extract. Use the punctuation marks shown below and capitalize where necessary.

. , ; ? ! “ ”

what should I do now he thought if I looked back and caught sight of a black figure sharply defined against the yellow sky and saw that it had horns and wings I wonder whether I should stand or run for it luckily the gentleman behind is not of that kind and he seems to be about as far off now as when I saw him first well at this rate he won't get his dinner as soon as I shall and dear me it's within a quarter of an hour of the time now I must run

Activity 2

Listen to the story and decide if these statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. Parkins goes straight to dinner when he gets back to the inn.
2. He spends the evening with Colonel Wilson.
3. He goes to his room just before midnight.
4. He is looking forward to the next few days at the Globe Inn.
5. The boots (servant) of the inn gives him something that fell out of his pocket.
6. The object is a small statue of a dog.
7. It is clean and shines in the candlelight.
8. He opens the window because it is hot in his room.
9. When he looks out of the window, there is someone outside the inn.
10. There are drawings etched on the object.
11. There is a sentence written in a foreign language.
12. He decides to blow the whistle.

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Part 3

Bleak and solemn was the view on which he took a last look before starting homeward. A faint yellow light in the west showed the links, on which a few figures moving towards the club-house were still visible, the squat **martello tower**, the lights of Aldsey village, the pale ribbon of sands intersected at intervals by black wooden **groynes**, the dim and murmuring sea. The wind was bitter from the north, but was at his back when he set out for the Globe. He quickly **rattled** and **clashed** through the shingle and gained the sand, upon which, but for the groynes which had to be got over every few yards, the going was both good and quiet. One last look behind, to measure the distance he had made since leaving the ruined Templars' church, showed him a prospect of company on his walk, in the shape of a rather indistinct **personage**, who seemed to be making great efforts to catch up with him, but made little, if any, progress. I mean that there was an appearance of running about his movements, but that the distance between him and Parkins did not seem materially to lessen. So, at least, Parkins thought, and decided that he almost certainly did not know him, and that it would be absurd to wait until he came up. For all that, company, he began to think, would really be very welcome on that lonely shore, if only you could choose your companion. In his unenlightened days he had read of meetings in such places which even now would hardly bear thinking of. He went on thinking of them, however, until he reached home, and particularly of one which catches most people's fancy at some time of their childhood. "**Now I saw in my dream that Christian had gone but a very little way when he saw a foul fiend coming over the field to meet him.**" "What should I do now," he thought, "if I looked back and caught sight of a black figure sharply defined against the yellow sky, and saw that it had horns and wings? I wonder whether I should stand or run for it. Luckily, the gentleman behind is not of that kind, and he seems to be about as far off now as when I saw him first. Well, at this rate he won't get his dinner as soon as I shall; and, dear me! it's within a quarter of an hour of the time now. I must run!"

Parkins had, in fact, very little time for dressing. When he met the Colonel at dinner, Peace – or as much of her as that gentleman could manage – reigned once more in the military bosom; nor was she put to flight in the hours of **bridge** that followed dinner, for Parkins was a more than respectable player. When, therefore, he **retired** towards twelve o'clock, he felt that he had spent his evening in quite a satisfactory way, and that, even for so long as a fortnight or three weeks, life at the Globe would be supportable under similar conditions – "especially," thought he, "if I go on improving my game."

As he went along the passages he met the **boots** of the Globe, who stopped and said:

"Beg your pardon, sir, but as I was a-brushing your coat just now there was somethink fell out of the pocket. I put it on your chest of drawers, sir in your room, sir – a piece of a pipe or somethink of that, sir. Thank you, sir. You'll find it on your chest of drawers, sir – yes, sir. Good night, sir."

Track 1

Track 2

Track 3

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Part 3

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Transcript

The speech served to remind Parkins of his little discovery of that afternoon. It was with some considerable curiosity that he turned it over by the light of his candles. It was of bronze, he now saw, and was shaped very much after the manner of the modern dog-whistle; in fact it was – yes, certainly it was – actually no more nor less than a whistle. He put it to his lips, but it was quite full of a fine, caked-up sand or earth, which would not yield to knocking, but must be loosened with a knife. Tidy as ever in his habits, Parkins cleared out the earth on to a piece of paper, and took the latter to the window to empty it out. The night was clear and bright, as he saw when he had opened the **casement**, and he stopped for an instant to look at the sea and note a belated wanderer stationed on the shore in front of the inn. Then he shut the window, a little surprised at the late hours people kept at Burnstow, and took his whistle to the light again. Why, surely there were marks on it, not merely marks, but letters! A very little rubbing rendered the deeply-cut inscription quite legible, but the Professor had to confess, after some earnest thought, that the meaning of it was as obscure to him as the writing on the wall to **Belshazzar**. There were **legends** both on the front and on the back of the whistle. The one read thus:

FLA
FUR FLE
BIS

The other:

QUIS EST ISTE QUI UENIT

“I ought to be able to make it out,” he thought; “but I suppose I am a little rusty in my Latin. When I come to think of it, I don’t believe I even know the word for a whistle. The long one does seem simple enough. It ought to mean, ‘Who is this who is coming?’ Well, the best way to find out is evidently to whistle for him.”

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By M R James

Part 3

Glossary

martello tower a short, circular tower made of brick, built for defence purposes during the Napoleonic Wars in the early 19th century

groynes a low wall, built on the sand, pointing out to sea, used to protect beaches from being damaged by waves

rattle if something rattles, it makes short, sharp knocking sounds as it moves or shakes

clash if two metal objects clash, they hit each other and make a loud sound

personage (formal) a person

"Now I saw in my dream ..." a reference to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, a classic of English literature, published in 1678

bridge a card game for four players who make two teams

retire (mainly literary) to go to bed at the end of the day in order to sleep

boots (old-fashioned) a man servant at the hotel

casement a window that swings open like a door

Belshazzar the son of the last king of Babylon. According to the Biblical story, while Belshazzar and his court were feasting, a mysterious hand wrote a message on the wall. Belshazzar could not read the writing and had to ask a servant to translate it. The writing warned Belshazzar of his imminent defeat and death.

legend a short piece of writing on an object such as a coin or work of art