

I

DRAGONS CAN BE FUN

Jabberwocky

You may need to apply your knowledge of phonics in figuring out the pronunciations of the mysterious words that appear. “Jabberwocky” is fun, so let yourself go in reading it. If a word puzzles you, divide it into syllables. For example, *brillig* has two syllables *bril* and *lig*. How would you say this?

1. Look at the first stanza. Which words are real? Which are made up?
2. Take any of the following words and decide what you think the poet wants it to mean: *frumious*, *vorpal*, *toves*, *tulgey*.
3. What is the story that is told?

Disenchantment

All the details of German fairy tales — gnomes, kobolds, witches, the Lorelei, ruined castles, and so on—are mentioned. But do they exist in truth or in the narrator’s wishful imagination?

1. Who is the speaker in the poem?
2. What things does he expect to find in the German forest?
3. Why is he disenchanting?

II

IMPLICATIONS

Do you agree with these statements? Why or why not?

1. Although these poems are mostly humorous, the poet nevertheless is saying something important.
2. These poems are making fun of dragons created by our fears.



The sheep had vanished from sight.

Tassie lay dead nearby, and he was utterly alone on the hills. There

was nobody to watch what he did.

The eagle might hurt him, but it could not jeer at him.

The Erne from the Coast

T. O. BEACHCROFT

I

Here’s Harry? Mr. Thorburn came out of the back of the farmhouse. He stood in the middle of the well-kept farmyard. “Here, Harry!” he shouted. “Hi, Harry!”

He stood leaning on a stick and holding a letter in his hand, as he looked round the farmyard.

Mr. Thorburn was a red-faced, powerful man; he wore knee breeches and black leather gaiters.¹ His face and well-fleshed body told you at a glance that Thorburn’s Farm had not done too badly during the twenty years of his married life.

Harry, a fair-haired boy, came running across the yard.

“Harry,” said the farmer to his son, “here’s a letter come for old Michael. It will be about this visit he’s to pay to his sick brother. Nice time of year for this to

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1. gaiters, a leg covering.

happen, I must say. You'd better take the letter to him at once."

"Where to?" said Harry.

"He's up on the hill, of course," said the farmer. "In his hut, or with the sheep somewhere. Your own brains could have told you that. Can't you ever use them? Go on, now."

"Right," said Harry. He turned to go. "Don't take all day," said his father.

Mr. Thorburn stood looking after his son. He leaned heavily on the thorn stick which he always carried. Harry went through the gate in the low gray wall which ran round one side of the yard, where there were no buildings. Directly he left the farmyard, and began to climb. Thorburn's Farm was at the end of a valley. Green fields lay in front of it, and a wide road sloped gently down to the village a mile away; behind, the hill soared up, and high on the ridge of the hill was Michael's hut, three miles off, and climbing all the way.

Harry was thirteen, very yellow-haired and blue-eyed. He was a slip of a boy. It seemed unlikely that he could ever grow into such a stolid, heavy man as his father. Mr. Thorburn was every pound of fourteen stone,² as the men on the farm could have told you the day he broke his leg and they had to carry him back to the farmhouse on a hurdle.³

Harry started off far too fast, taking the lower slopes almost at a run. His body was loose in its movements, and coltish, and by the time the real work began he was already tiring. However, the April day was fresh and rainy, and the cold of it kept him going. Gray gusts and showers swept over the hillside, and between them, with changing light, came faint gleams of sunshine, so that the shadows of the clouds raced along the hill beside him. Presently he cleared the grouse and heather, and came out on to the open hillside, which was bare except

for short, tussocky grass. His home began to look far off beneath him. He could see his mother walking down towards the village with one of the dogs, and the baker's cart coming up from the village towards her. The fields were brown and green round the farmhouse, and the buildings were gray, with low stone walls.

He stopped several times to look back on the small distant farm. It took him well over an hour to reach the small hut where Michael lived by day and slept during most nights throughout the lambing season. He was not in his hut, but after a few minutes' search Harry found him. Michael was sitting without movement, watching the sheep and talking to his gray and white dog. He had a sack across his shoulders, which made him look rather like a rock with gray lichen on it. He looked up at Harry without moving.

"It's a hildy wildy day," he said, "but there'll be a glent of sunsheen yet."⁴

Harry handed Michael the letter. Michael looked at it, and opened it very slowly, and spread the crackling paper out on his knee with brown hands. Harry watched him for some minutes as he studied the letter in silence.

"Letter'll be aboot my brother," said Michael at length. "I'm to goa and see him." He handed the letter to Harry. "Read it, Harry," he said. Harry read the letter to him twice.

"Tell thy dad," said Michael, "I'll be doon at farm i' the morn. Happen I'll be away three days. And tell him new lamb was born last neet, but it's sickly."

They looked at the small white bundle that lay on the grass beside its mother, hardly moving.

2. stone, English unit of weight equal to 14 pounds.

3. hurdle, a panel of wood and vines, used in combinations to fence in cattle.

4. The characters use a Scots dialect.

"I'll pick up," said Michael. He slowly stood and looked round at the distance.

Michael had rather long hair; it was between gray and white in color, and it blew in the wind. It was about the hue of an old sheep's skull that has lain out on the bare mountain. Michael's clothes and face and hair made Harry feel that he had slowly faded out on the hillside. He was all the color of rain on the stones and last year's bracken.⁵

"I'll make a change," said Michael, "going off and sleeping in a bed."

"Good-bye," said Harry. "You'll be down at the farm tomorrow, then?"

"Aw reet," said Michael.

"Aw reet," said Harry.

Harry went slowly back to the farm. The rain had cleared off, and the evening was sunny, with a watery light, by the time he was home. Michael had been right. Harry gave his father the message, and told him about the lamb.

"It's a funny thing," said Harry, "that old Michael can't even read."

"Don't you be so smart," said Mr. Thorburn. "Michael knows a thing or two you don't. You don't want to go muckering about with an old fellow like Michael — best shepherd I've ever known."

Harry went away feeling somewhat abashed. Lately it seemed his father was always down on him, telling him he showed no sign of sense; telling him he ought to grow up a bit; telling him he was more like seven than thirteen.

He went to the kitchen. This was a big stone-floored room with a huge plain table, where the whole household and several of the farm hands could sit down to dinner or tea at the same time. His mother and his aunt from the village were still lingering over their teacups, but there was no one else in the room except a small tortoise-shell cat, which

was pacing round them asking for milk in a loud voice. The yellow evening light filled the room. His mother gave him tea and ham and bread and butter, and he ate it in silence, playing with the cat as he did so.

II

Next morning at nine o'clock there was a loud rap with a stick at the kitchen door, and there by the pump, with the hens running round his legs, stood Michael.

"Good morning, Mrs. Thorburn," he said. "Is Measter about?"

"Come on in with you," said Mrs. Thorburn, "and have a good hot cup o' tea. Have you eaten this morning?"

Michael clanked into the kitchen, his hobnails striking the flags,⁶ and he sat down at one end of the table.

"Aye," he said, "I've eaten, Missus. I had a good thoom-bit when I rose up, but a cup of tea would be welcome."

As he drank the tea, Mr. Thorburn came in, bringing Harry with him. Michael, thought Harry, always looked rather strange when he was down in the village or in the farmhouse; rather as a pile of bracken or an armful of leaves would look if it were emptied out onto the parlor floor.

Michael talked to Mr. Thorburn about the sheep; about the new lamb; about young Bob, his nephew, who was coming over from another farm to look after the sheep while he was away.

"Tell en to watch new lamb," said Michael; "it's creachy. I've put en in my little hut, and owd sheep is looking roun' t' doorway."

After his cup of tea Michael shook hands all round. Then he set off down

5. bracken, a coarse fern. It and gorse and heather are common ground covers in Scotland.

6. flags, flagstones to floor the room.

to the village, where he was going to fall in with a lift.

Soon after he had gone, Bob arrived at the farm. He was a tall young man with a freckled face, and red hair, big-boned and very gentle in his voice and movements. He listened to all Mr. Thorburn's instructions and then set out for the shepherd's hut.

However, it seemed that Mr. Thorburn's luck with his shepherds was dead out. For the next evening, just as it was turning dark, Bob walked into the farmhouse kitchen. His face was tense with pain, and he was nursing his left arm with his right hand. Harry saw the ugly distorted shape and swelling at the wrist. Bob had fallen and broken the wrist earlier in the day, and by evening the pain had driven him back.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Thorburn," he kept on saying, "I'm a big fule."

The sheep had to be left for that night. Next morning it was again a cold, windy day, and clouds the color of gunmetal raced over the hill. The sun broke through fitfully, filling the valley with a steel-blue light in which the green grass looked vivid. Mr. Thorburn decided to send Harry out to the shepherd's hut for the day and night.

"Happen old Michael will be back some time tomorrow," he said. "You can look to the sheep, Harry, and see to that sick lamb for us. It's a good chance to make yourself useful."

Harry nodded.

"You can feed the lamb. Bob said it didn't seem to suck enough, and you can let me know if anything else happens. And you can keep an eye on the other lambs and see they don't get over the edges. There's no need to fold⁷ them at night; just let the dog round them up and see the flock is near the hut."

"There's blankets and everything in the hut, Harry," said Mrs. Thorburn,

"and a spirit⁸ lamp to make tea. You can't come to harm."

Harry set off up the hill and began to climb. Out on the hilltop it was very lonely, and the wind was loud and gusty, with sudden snatches of rain. The sheep kept near the wooden hut most of the time; it was built in the lee of the ridge, and the best shelter was to be found near it. Harry looked after the sick lamb and brewed himself tea. He had Tassie, the gray and white sheep-dog, for company. Time did not hang heavy. When evening came he rounded up the sheep and counted them, and, true to advice that Michael had given him, he slept in his boots as a true shepherd does, warmly wrapped up in the rugs.

He was awakened as soon as it was light by the dog barking. He went out in the gray dawn light, and found a rustle and agitation among the sheep. Tassie ran to him and back towards the sheep. The sheep were starting up alert, and showed a tendency to scatter. Harry looked round, wondering what the trouble was. Then he saw. A bird was hovering over the flock, and it was this that had attracted the sheep's attention. But what bird was it? It hovered like a hawk, soaring on outstretched wings; yet it was much too big for a hawk. As the bird came nearer Harry was astonished at its size. Once or twice it approached and then went soaring and floating away again. It was larger than any bird he had ever seen before—brownish in color, with a gray head and a hawk's beak.

Suddenly the bird began to drop as a hawk drops. A knot of sheep dashed apart. Tassie rushed towards the bird, his head down and his tail streaming out be-

7. fold, put in the sheep fold or pen.
8. spirit, alcohol.

hind him. Harry followed. This must be an eagle, he thought. He saw it, looking larger still now it was on the ground, standing with outstretched wings over a lamb.

Tassie attacked, snarling in rage. The eagle rose at him. It struck at him with its feet and a flurry of beating wings. The dog was thrown back. He retreated slowly, snarling savagely as he went, his tail between his legs. He was frightened now, and uncertain what to do.

The eagle turned back to the lamb, took it in its talons again, and began to rise. It could not move quickly near the ground, and Harry came up with it. At once the eagle put the lamb on a rock and turned on him. He saw its talons driving towards his face, claws and spurs of steel — a stroke could tear your eyes out. He put up his arms in fear, and he felt the rush of wings round his face. With his arm above his head he sank on one knee.

When he looked up again, the eagle was back on the lamb. It began to fly with long slow wingbeats. At first it scarcely rose, and flew with the lamb almost on the ground.

Harry ran, throwing a stone. He shouted. Tassie gave chase, snapping at the eagle as it went. But the eagle was working towards a chasm, a sheer drop in the hillside where no one could follow it. In another moment it was floating in the air, clear and away. Then it rose higher, and headed towards the coast, which was a few miles away over the hill.

Harry stood and watched it till it was out of sight. When it was gone, he turned and walked slowly back to the hut. There was not a sound to be heard now except the sudden rushes of wind. The hillside was bare and coverless except for the scattered black rocks. Tassie walked beside him. The dog was very

subdued and hardly glanced to right or left.

It took some time to round the sheep up, or to find, at least, where the various parts of the flock had scattered themselves. The sick lamb and its mother had been enclosed all this time in a small fold near the hut. The ewe was still terrified.

An hour later Harry set off down the mountain side to the farm. Tassie looked after him doubtfully. He ran several times after him, but Harry sent him back to the hut.

It was the middle of the morning when Harry came back to the farmyard again. His father was standing in the middle of the yard, leaning on his stick, and giving advice to one of his cowmen. He broke off when he saw Harry come in through the gate, and walk towards him across the farmyard.

"Well," he said, "anything wrong, Harry? I thought you were going to stay till Michael came back."

"We've lost a lamb," said Harry, breathlessly. "It's been carried off by an eagle. It must have been an eagle."

"An eagle?" said Mr. Thorburn. He gave a laugh which mocked Harry. "Why didn't you stop it?"

"I tried," said Harry. "But I . . ."

Mr. Thorburn was in a bad mood. He had sold some heifers the day before at a disappointing price. He had had that morning a letter from the builders about repairs to some of the farm buildings, and there was work to be done which he could hardly afford. He was worried about Michael's absence. He felt as if the world were bearing down on him, and he had too many burdens to support.

He suddenly shouted at Harry, and his red face turned darker red.

"That's a lie!" he said. "There's been no eagle here in my lifetime. What's happened? Go on — tell me."

Harry stood before him. He looked at his father, but said nothing.

"You've lost that lamb," said Thorburn. "Let it fall down a hole or something. Any child from the village could have watched those sheep for a day. Then you're frightened, and come back here and lie to me."

Harry still said nothing.

"Come here," said Thorburn suddenly. He caught him by the arm and turned him round. "I'll teach you not to lie to me," he said. He raised his stick and hit Harry as hard as he could; then again and again.

"It's true," began Harry, and then cried out with pain at the blows.

At the third or fourth blow he wrenched himself away. Thorburn let him go. Harry walked away as fast as he could, through the gate and out of the yard without looking round.

"Next time it will be a real beating," his father shouted after him. "Bring the eagle back, and then I'll believe you."

III

As soon as Harry was through the gate, he turned behind one of the barns where he was out of sight from the yard. He stood trembling and clenching his fists. He found there were tears on his face, and he forced himself not to cry. The blows hurt, yet they did not hurt very seriously. He would never have cried for that. But it had been done in front of another man. The other man had looked on, and he and his father had been laughing as he had almost run away. Harry clenched his fists; even now they were still talking about him.

He began to walk and then run up the hillside towards the hut. When he reached it, he was exhausted. He flung himself on the mattress and punched it again and again and clenched his teeth.

The day passed and nobody came from the farm. He began to feel better, and presently a new idea struck him, and with it a new hope. He prayed now that old Michael would not return today; that he would be able to spend another night alone in the hut; and that the eagle would come back next morning and attack the sheep again, and give him one more chance.

Harry went out and scanned the gray sky, and then knelt down on the grass and prayed for the eagle to come. Tassie, the gray and white sheepdog, looked at him questioningly. Soon it was getting dark, and he walked about the hill and rounded up the sheep. He counted the flock, and all was well. Then he looked round for a weapon. There was no gun in the hut, but he found a thick stave⁹ tipped with metal, part of some broken tool that had been thrown aside. He poised the stave in his hand and swung it; it was just a good weight to hit with. He would have to go straight at the eagle without hesitation and break its skull. After thinking about this for some time, he made himself tea, and ate some bread and butter and cold meat.

Down at the farm Mr. Thorburn in the evening told his wife what had happened. He was quite sure there had been no eagle. Mrs. Thorburn did not say much, but she said it was an extraordinary thing for Harry to have said. She told her husband that he ought not to have beaten the boy, but should have found out what the trouble really was.

"But I dare say there is no great harm done," she ended, philosophically.

Harry spent a restless night. He slept and lay awake by turns, but, sleeping or waking, he was tortured by the same images. He saw all the events of the day

9. stave, staff.

before. He saw how the eagle had first appeared above him; how it had attacked; how it had driven off Tassie and then him. He remembered his fear, and he planned again just how he could attack the eagle when it came back. Then he thought of himself going down towards the farm and he saw again the scene with his father.

All night long he saw these pictures and other scenes from his life. In every one of them he had made some mistake; he had made himself look ridiculous, and grown men had laughed at him. He had failed in strength or in common sense; he was always disappointing himself and his father. He was too young for his age. He was still a baby.

So the night passed. Early in the morning he heard Tassie barking.

He jumped up, fully clothed, and ran outside the hut. The cold air made him shiver; but he saw at once that his prayer had been answered. There was the eagle, above him, and already dropping down towards the sheep. It floated, poised on huge wings. The flock stood nervously huddled. Suddenly, as before, the attacker plunged towards them. They scattered, running in every direction. The eagle followed, and swooped on one weakly running lamb. At once it tried to rise again, but its heavy wingbeats took it along the earth. Near the ground it seemed cumbersome and awkward. Tassie was after it like a flash; Harry seized his weapon, the stave tipped with iron, and followed. When Tassie caught up with the eagle it turned and faced him, standing over the lamb.

Harry, as he ran, could see blood staining the white wool of the lamb's body; the eagle's wings were half spread out over it, and moving slowly. The huge bird was grayish-brown with a white head and tail. The beak was yellow, and the legs yellow and scaly.

It lowered its head, and with a fierce movement threatened Tassie; then, as the dog approached, it began to rock and stamp from foot to foot in a menacing dance; then it opened its beak and gave its fierce, yelping cry. Tassie hung back, his ears flattened against his head, snarling, creeping by inches towards the eagle; he was frightened, but he was brave. Then he ran in to attack.

The eagle left the lamb. With a lunging spring it aimed heavily at Tassie. It just cleared the ground and beat about Tassie with its wings, hovering over him. Tassie flattened out his body to the earth and turned his head upwards with snapping jaws. But the eagle was over him and on him, its talons plunged into his side, and a piercing scream rang out. The eagle struck deliberately at the dog's skull three times; the beak's point hammered on his head, striking downwards and sideways. Tassie lay limp on the ground, and, where his head had been, a red mixture of blood and brains flowed on the grass. When Harry took his eyes away from the blood, the eagle was standing on the lamb again.

Harry approached the eagle slowly, step by step. He gripped his stick firmly as he came. The eagle put its head down. It rocked on its feet as if preparing to leap. Behind the terrific beak, sharp as metal, was a shallow head, flat and broad as a snake's, glaring with light yellow unanimal eyes. The head and neck made weaving movements towards him.

At a pace or two from the eagle Harry stood still. In a second he would make a rush. He could break the eagle's skull, he told himself, with one good blow; then he could avenge Tassie and stand up to his father.

But he waited too long. The eagle tried to rise, and with its heavy sweeping beats was beginning to gain speed along the ground. Harry ran, stumbling

over the uneven ground, among boulders and outcroppings of rock, trying to strike at the eagle as he went. But as soon as the eagle was in the air it was no longer heavy and clumsy. There was a sudden rush of wings and buffeting about his head as the eagle turned to drive him off. For a second he saw the talons sharp as metal, backed by the metal strength of the legs, striking at his face. He put up his arm. At once it was seared with a red-hot pain, and he could see the blood rush out.

He stepped back, and back again. The eagle, after this one fierce swoop at him, went round in a wide, low circle, and returned to the lamb. Harry saw that his coat sleeve was in ribbons, and that blood was running off the ends of his fingers and falling to the ground.

He stood panting; the wind blew across the empty high ground. The sheep had vanished from sight. Tassie lay dead near by, and he was utterly alone on the hills. There was nobody to watch what he did. The eagle might hurt him, but it could not jeer at him. He attacked it again, but already the eagle with its heavy wingbeats had cleared the ground; this time it took the lamb with it. Harry saw that it meant to fly, as it had flown yesterday, to an edge; and then out into the free air over the chasm, and over the valley far below.

Harry gave chase, stumbling over the broken ground and between the boulders — striking at the eagle as he went, trying to beat it down before it could escape. The eagle was hampered by his attack; and suddenly it swooped onto a projection of rock and turned again to drive him off. Harry was now in a bad position. The eagle stood on a rock at the height of his own shoulders, with the lamb beside it. It struck at his chest with its talons, beating its wings as it did so. Harry felt clothes and flesh being torn; buffeting

blows began about his head; but he kept close to the eagle and struck at it again. He did not want simply to frighten it away, but to kill it. The eagle fought at first simply to drive Harry off; then, as he continued to attack, it became ferocious.

Harry saw his only chance was to keep close to the eagle and beat it down; but already it was at the height of his face. It struck at him from above, driving its steel claws at him, beating its wing about him. He was dazed by the buffeting which went on and on all round him; then with an agonizing stab he felt the claws seize and pierce his shoulder and neck. He struck upwards desperately and blindly. As the eagle drove its beak at his head, his stick just turned the blow aside. The beak struck a glancing blow off the stick, and tore away his eyebrow.

Harry found that something was blinding him, and he felt a new sickening fear that already one of his eyes was gone. The outspread beating wings and weight of the eagle dragged him about, and he nearly lost his footing. He had forgotten, now, that he was proving anything to his father; he was fighting for his eyes. Three times he fended off the hammer stroke of the beak, and at these close quarters the blows of his club found their mark. He caught the eagle's head each time, and the bird was half stunned.

Harry, reeling and staggering, felt the grip of the claws gradually loosen, and almost unbelievably the body of his enemy sagged, half fluttering to the ground. With a sudden spurt of new strength, Harry attacked, and rained blows on the bird's skull. The eagle struggled, and he followed, beating it down among the rocks. At last the eagle's movements stopped. He saw its skull was broken, and that it lay dead.

He stood for many minutes panting

and unmoving, filled with a tremendous excitement; then he sat on a boulder. The fight had taken him near a steep edge a long way from the body of Tassie.

His wounds began to ache and burn. The sky and the horizon spun round him, but he forced himself to be firm and collected. After a while he stooped down and hoisted the eagle onto his shoulder. The wings dropped loosely down in front and behind. He set off towards the farm.

IV

When he reached his home, the low gray walls, the ploughed fields, and the green pasture fields were swimming before his eyes in a dizzy pattern. It was still the early part of the morning, but there was plenty of life in the farmyard, as usual. Some cows were being driven out. One of the carthorses was standing harnessed to a heavy wagon. Harry's father was talking to the carter and looking at the horse's leg.

When they saw Harry come towards them they waited, unmoving. They could hardly see at first who or what it was. Harry came up and dropped the bird at his father's feet. His coat was gone. His shirt hung in bloodstained rags about him; one arm was caked in blood; his right eyebrow hung in a loose flap, with the blood still oozing stickily down his cheek.

"Good God!" said Thorburn, catching him by the arm as he reeled.

He led the boy into the kitchen. There they gave him a glass of brandy and sponged him with warm water. There was a deep long wound in his left forearm. His chest was crisscrossed with cuts. The flesh was torn away from his neck where the talons had sunk in.

Presently the doctor came. Harry's wounds began to hurt like fire, but he talked excitedly. He was happier than he

had ever been in his life. Everybody on the farm came in to see him and to see the eagle's body.

All day his father hung about him, looking into the kitchen every half hour. He said very little, but asked Harry several times how he felt. "Are you awreet?" he kept saying. Once he took a cup of tea from his wife and carried it across the kitchen in order to give it to Harry with his own hands.

Later in the day old Michael came back, and Harry told him the whole story. Michael turned the bird over. He said it was an erne, a white-tailed sea eagle from the coast. He measured the wing span, and it was seven and a half feet. Michael had seen two or three when he was a boy—always near the coast—but this one, he said, was easily the largest.

Three days later Mr. Thorburn took Harry, still stiff and bandaged, down to the village inn. There he set him before a blazing fire all the evening, and in the presence of men from every cottage and farm Thorburn praised his son. He bought him a glass of beer and made Harry tell the story of his fight to everyone.

As he told it, Thorburn sat by him, hearing the story himself each time, making certain that Harry missed nothing about his struggle. Afterwards every man drank Harry's health, and clapped Thorburn on the back and told him he ought to be proud of his son.

Later, in the silent darkness, they walked back to the farm again, and neither of them could find anything to say. Harry wondered if his father might not refer to the beating and apologize. Thorburn moved round the house, raking out fires and locking up. Then he picked up the lamp and, holding it above his head, led the way upstairs.

"Good night, Harry," said his father

at last, as he took him to his bedroom door. "Are you aw reet?"

His father held the lamp up and looked into Harry's face. As the lamplight fell on it, he nodded. He said nothing more.

"Aye," said Harry, as he turned into his bedroom door, "I'm aw reet."

I

PLAIN SENSE

Disbelief, a Terrible Dragon

Strange motives may force some people on to fight their dragons. Harry had resented, but accepted, his father's belittling of everything he did. But to be whipped before a hired hand for telling the truth was a humiliation too deep to bear. Harry's anger is like Gawaine's word *Rumplesnitz*. It gives him courage to prove himself right.

1. Where does Michael's but lie in relation to the farm?
2. What size boy is Harry? What is his father's attitude toward him?
3. Why is Harry sent to tend the sheep?
4. What happens in the first attack by the eagle?
5. What does Mr. Thorburn do when he hears of the lost lamb?
6. What does Harry use as a weapon against the eagle? What happens to Tassie in the second fight?
7. How does Harry kill the eagle?
8. What is his father's reaction to this feat?

II

IMPLICATIONS

Do you feel the story supports or denies the following statements?

1. Adults and children are natural enemies because of growing up in different times.

2. Most people plunge off to fight their dragons completely unaware of what may be involved.

3. When people are angry, they may perform acts that common sense would tell them are impossible.

4. Most parents find it impossible to tell their children they've been wrong.

5. Harry was proving something to himself as well as to his parents.

III

READING LITERATURE

Reading Between the Lines

1. What does Beachcroft suggest about the characters in the following lines?

a. "... Nice time of year for this to happen, I must say . . ." (Mr. Thorburn)

b. "I'll make a change," said Michael, "going off and sleeping in a bed." (Michael)

c. "It's a funny thing," said Harry, "that old Michael can't even read." (Harry)

d. "Good night, Harry," said his father at last, as he took him to his bedroom door. "Are you aw reet?" (Mr. Thorburn)

2. What action is predicted by this remark?

"Next time it will be a real beating," his father shouted after him. "Bring the eagle back, and then I'll believe you."

3. At the end of the story Harry says, "I'm aw reet." What is the literal meaning of his words? What else does Harry mean?

IV

WORDS

Reread the description of the eagle's second attack (page 345). What words create a picture? What words are sound words? Are these words well-chosen? Why?