



Oxford
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Lower Secondary

7

English

Student Book



OXFORD

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1

Water, water

How do we use water?

‘Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.’

From ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’
by SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Talk about ...

- Why is water important to us?
- Discuss the ways you use water each day.
- Look at the quotation on the left. How can there be water everywhere that isn't drinkable?



The quotation by Samuel Taylor Coleridge above comes from a poem about a dramatic sea voyage. Before reaching calmer waters, the ship is swept into the stormy seas of the Antarctic.

What do you think it would be like to be on the ship shown in the wood engraving on the right? What would you be able to hear, see, taste and smell?

In this unit, you will learn about how people need, use and feel differently about water around the world.

Wood engraving by Gustave Doré, 1876. It shows the storm described in Coleridge's poem.

- Read a wide range of texts and express opinions
- Think about where words come from

A story about a desert family

In the following text, a 12-year-old girl, Shabanu, describes her morning ritual. She lives with her family and their camels in the Cholistan Desert in Pakistan. Water is extremely precious to them. When their water source dries up, they move on to another part of the desert.



Word origins

Some of the Urdu names in this story have similar translations to some English names.

Shabanu (n), comes from the eighth Islamic month, 'Shaaban'

Phulan (n), meaning 'flower'

Mithoo (n), affectionate name meaning 'sweet'

Morning in the desert

- The sky is pearl-grey when I awake. My sister Phulan pushes me out of bed. Yawning and rubbing my eyes, I tie a piece of soap into the corner of my chador. I pick up two earthen pots and a padded ring to balance one pot on my head. The other fits under my arm, balanced on my hip. My camel, Mithoo, and I set off for the water hole, the toba. Mithoo's small brass bell jingles cheerfully as he moves his head, impatient for me to fold back the reed door which leads from our courtyard to the outside. I make Mithoo carry the empty goatskin to the toba.
- At the toba I look out over our dwindling water supply. We probably have a month, perhaps three weeks, before the water disappears. The monsoon will not begin for another two months. Then will be the time for flowers, mushrooms, weddings and water, but not now. Two-toed camel footprints are baked into the shiny clay at the outer edges of the toba. I lift my skirt with one

Glossary

- chador** shawl or veil worn to cover head and shoulders
- toba** water hole

hand, and the mud squirts between my toes as I enter the water. I push aside the green scum that floats just under the surface and place the edge of my chador over the mouth of the water pot to filter out impurities. I take the filled pot to the bathing rock at the edge of the toba and lift my tunic over my head. I throw my hair forward and pour water over it.

The sun edges over the horizon. I can feel its heat on my back and shoulders as the water trickles over my scalp. I rub the soap into my hair. I squeeze my eyes shut, letting the soapy water drain down my shoulders and neck, rubbing into my skin before rinsing off to preserve every drop. Mama used to bath my sister and me with a single cup of water when we were small.

The sun is extremely hot as I walk back. Over the next week we watch our water dwindle yet further. In the heat of the afternoons, before the daily wind and dust arrive, we dry herbs. As the precious water slips away with the hot desert wind, we also make our preparations for leaving the toba and moving on.

From *Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind* by SUZANNE FISHER STAPLES

Pakistani women carrying water jars in the desert



Comprehension



- 1 What does Shabanu take with her to the water hole?
- 2 How does Shabanu manage to carry two pots to the water hole?
- 3 How will the monsoon change the family's life?
- 4 How does Shabanu make sure that the water she collects in her pot is clean?
- 5 Why do you think the water level is so low?



- 1 Shabanu describes the sky in the morning as 'pearl-grey'. (line 1) Describe the picture this creates in your head.
- 2 What tells you that the water is not very clean? (paragraph 2)
- 3 What descriptive words are used in paragraph 4 to emphasize the conditions?



- 1 Suggest some ideas that would make Shabanu's life easier.

- Use clues in a story to answer questions
- Write organized, structured texts
- Write grammatically correct sentences

Language tip

Notice that this story is written in the **present tense**. To change it to the **past tense**, use the simple past tense form of the verb.

Present tense: 'I make Mithoo carry the empty goatskin.'

Past tense: 'I made Mithoo carry the empty goatskin.'

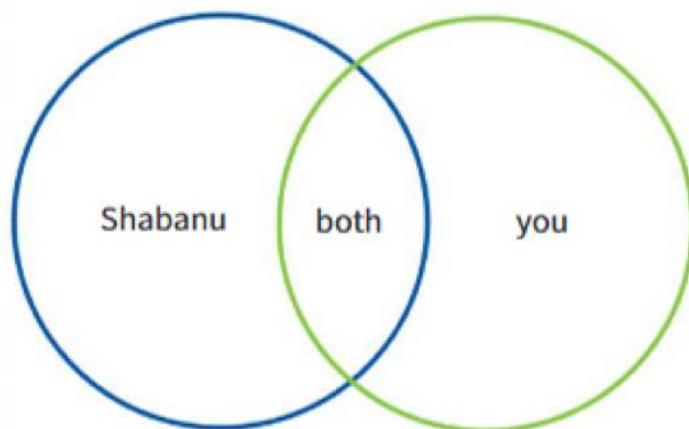
Stretch zone

When you finish reading the story, go back and review words you didn't understand. Examine each of the words in its context in the sentence. Then check the definitions in a dictionary and record the meanings.

Is your way of life the same or different?

In the story *Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind*, water is a luxury for Shabanu and her family and they use as little as possible. When Shabanu was young, her mother washed the children using just one cupful! How is your day similar to Shabanu's day? How is it different?

- Create a Venn diagram, like the one below, that compares Shabanu's way of life to your own. You may have used Venn diagrams in mathematics, but you can also use them to arrange ideas.
- Write three paragraphs in which you compare Shabanu's life with your own. The Venn diagram will help you to decide what to put in each paragraph.



- Read a variety of texts and consider their features

How did people get water in the past?

For thousands of years, people have faced the problem of getting water up from under the ground.

In Britain, there are a lot of old castles and fortifications. Long ago, people lived inside these walls so a source of water was essential. Today, the castles are attractive places for visitors.

Carisbrooke Castle was built in the Middle Ages on the Isle of Wight, an island off the south coast of Britain. The following leaflet is about the donkey-powered well there.

Glossary

Middle Ages period of European history from around 500 to 1500 CE

strongholds fortified places for defence

treadwheel wheel that is kept moving by an animal or person walking on it

Carisbrooke Castle, Isle of Wight

**Have a great day out
and learn about
the island's history!**

Carisbrooke Castle can be found right in the middle of the Isle of Wight. The main castle walls that stand today were built by Norman rulers in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The hill the castle is on was used as a site for several previous strongholds. A hill is a great place to build a castle because it can be defended from enemy attack.

But just as important for the people living in a castle is access to water! At Carisbrooke Castle, you can still see the unique way that water was brought into the castle.



The gatehouse entrance to Carisbrooke Castle

- Read a variety of texts and consider their features

Talk about ...

- Does the leaflet make you think you would like to go there? Why? Or why not?
- Both paragraphs and bullet points are used to organize information in the leaflet. Discuss which style you think is best and why.
- How could the leaflet be improved?

Language tip

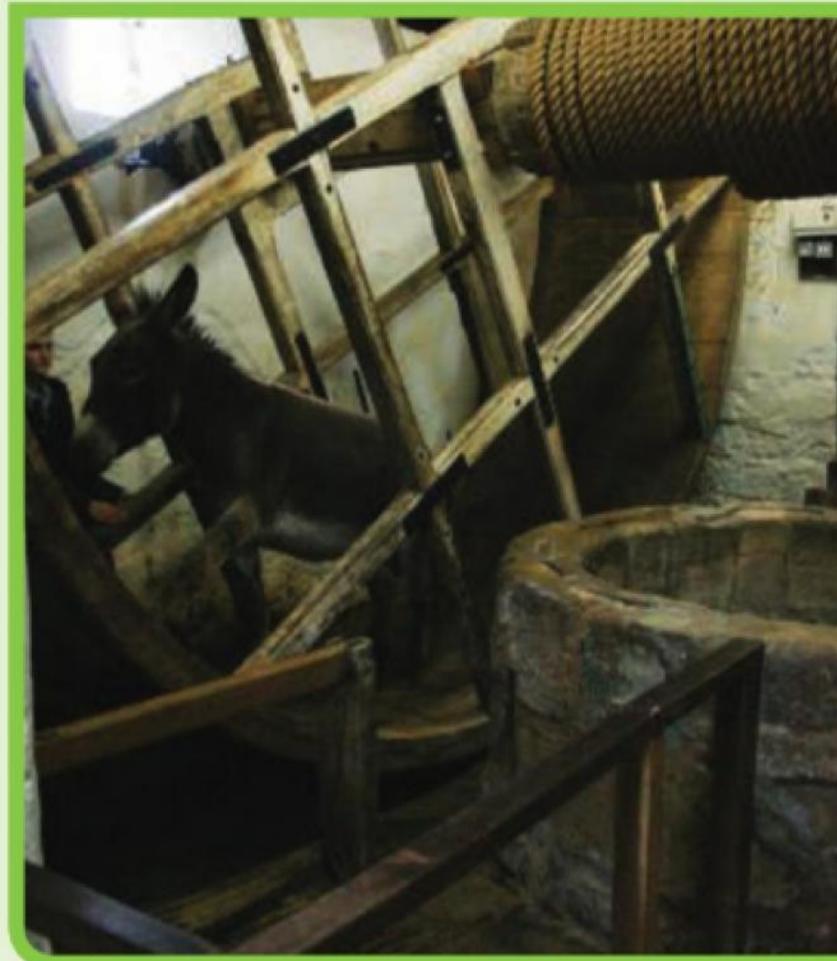
The **passive voice** is useful when you want to describe how something was done to someone or something, without saying who did it.

For example: 'Carisbrooke Castle was built in the Middle Ages.'

Come and see the only donkey-powered well in Britain!

- The well at Carisbrooke Castle was dug in 1136 when the original water source dried up.
- A wooden bucket was used to collect water from the well, which is 49 metres deep.
- A well-house and treadwheel were built in 1291 and donkey power was introduced to the castle.
- In 1587, the treadwheel was rebuilt by later island rulers. You can see one of the six castle donkeys working the treadwheel today!

Water being drawn from the well, just as it was many centuries ago



- Write a non-fiction leaflet using suitable vocabulary

Design a leaflet

Use the information below from a website about the water wheels in Hama, Syria to plan and design a leaflet about them. Do some additional research to add further detail to your leaflet.

- Look at leaflets of places of interest in the country where you live for inspiration. With a partner, draft your own ideas for a leaflet to encourage people to come and see the amazing water wheels.
- When you have finished, compare your leaflet plan with those of others in your class. Which features do you think work best?
- Display your final, colourful version in the classroom.

Glossary

- aqueduct** artificial channel for carrying water
- irrigate** bring water through artificial channels to supplement rainfall and support more intensive farming practices

The water wheels (*norias*) of Hama, Syria

- ▶ Hama is about 140 kilometres from Aleppo in Syria.
- ▶ Settlements in Hama go back to the Bronze Age and the Iron Age.
- ▶ Hama's water wheels (*norias*) are up to 20 metres in diameter, the height of a five-storey building.
- ▶ *Norias* have been in Hama since at least the fifth century.
- ▶ 17 of the 30 *norias* built in the thirteenth century still survive today.
- ▶ The wheels bring up water from the Orontes River, which is lower than the land.
- ▶ *Norias* are driven by the current of the water acting upon the paddles, and they require no other form of power to keep them going.
- ▶ Water fills and drives the wooden boxes that empty into aqueducts at the top of the wheel's rotation.
- ▶ Wheels were used to supply the town with water and for irrigating crops in the surrounding farmland.
- ▶ Although no longer applied to practical use, the wheels still turn in spring and summer for the benefit of tourists.
- ▶ Creaking and groaning as they bring up the water, they are a wonderful sight and a reminder of Syria's fascinating past.



- Read a range of texts and express opinions
- Give own opinions clearly and confidently

Life on the water

When you were discussing ways you use water at the start of the unit, did anyone think of using water as a place to live? Look at the pictures below. What would life be like living in these places? Share your opinions in small groups.



Traditional bamboo house in one of the floating villages of Inle Lake, Myanmar

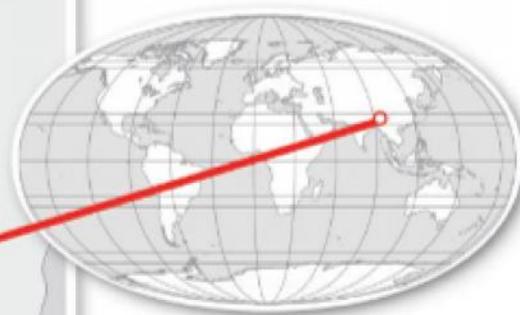


Floating village on Tonlé Sap Lake, Cambodia

On the next page, you will read a story about a group of nomadic people who live and work on their boats in Bangladesh. Look at the map to see just how large the river delta is in Bangladesh. The group of people in this story are known as *Bedeḥ* (the name they have chosen for their clan), or 'river gypsies' to the local people.

Glossary

- nomadic** moving from one place to another, instead of living in one place
- delta** land formed at the mouth of a river by the mud and sand deposited by water
- clan** large, extended family



Map of Bangladesh, showing its large river system

A story about cobras

The *Bedeh* clan are renowned for their skills in handling snakes. The writer Nick Middleton met them on his travels and the following text recalls an occasion when these skills were put to good use.

The river gypsies

- My friend, Babu, and I stood amongst the crowd watching the river gypsies with their snakes. Beside them were several wooden boxes in which they kept their snakes. From one of these boxes one of the gypsies had produced half a dozen small snakes which were winding themselves round his wrists like bright green bangles. The other gypsy, who wore a purple headscarf tied round his forehead, was dangling his hands in front of a hooded cobra which was rising up from another box. The crowd watched in horror and delight.
- 5
- 10 Suddenly there was a small commotion in the crowd and an old man came forward and spoke to the river gypsies, who immediately began to coax their snakes back into their boxes.
- “The old man has a snake in his house,” Babu explained to me.

Glossary

cobra type of poisonous snake found in Asia and Africa

coax persuade someone or something gently or patiently



- Read a range of texts and express opinions

15 The crowd followed the river gypsies to the old man's house, the backyard of which sloped down to the flooded fields. One of the river men gathered some earth from the entrance and rubbed it between his hands. He smelt it and gave it to his colleague in the purple headscarf to do the same.

20 "If the earth smells of fish, then the men know there's a snake inside," Babu whispered to me.

The river gypsies entered the main room which had a bed on one side, and a neat row of cooking pots hung above a sideboard on the other. The owner of the house, evidently pleased to see a foreigner, beckoned me into his bedroom and pointed to the bed. This was the safest place from which to watch the proceedings. Suddenly there was a commotion beneath the sideboard and the river gypsy with the purple headscarf darted underneath it. He emerged holding a full-sized cobra as long as his arm. The snake hissed as the river gypsy expertly twisted his arm to prevent the snake from striking him. The crowd let out a collective gasp as he began to force the cobra into one of his boxes.

35 But the show was not over yet. The other river gypsy had his head beneath the bed on which I was cowering. He emerged in a flash holding a second cobra, just as long as the first.

"Husband and wife!" cried Babu. "Cobras are faithful partners. They always travel together!"

From *Going to Extremes* by NICK MIDDLETON

Language tip

Writing **direct speech** involves putting quotation marks around the words that are said.

For example:

"The old man has a snake in his house," Babu explained to me.

Indirect speech involves changing the sentence to the past tense, adding the word 'that' and changing the pronoun.

For example:

Babu explained to me that his friend needed the snake catchers.



Comprehension

A 

- 1 What caused the small commotion in the crowd?
- 2 Why do you think the river gypsies immediately started to put their snakes back in their boxes?
- 3 Why didn't the snake from underneath the sideboard bite the man?
- 4 How did the river gypsies know there would be a second cobra in the house?

B 

- 1 What simile is used in the first paragraph? What picture does this create?
- 2 Why has the writer used the words 'horror and delight' to describe the way the crowd was feeling? (line 9)
- 3 What word for 'a disturbance' is used twice?
- 4 What do you think the people in the crowd were thinking when they 'let out a collective gasp'? (line 31)

C 

- 1 How safe do you think the bed was to watch the river gypsies in the house? Give reasons for your answer.
- 2 What do you think the river gypsies will do with the cobras they captured?
- 3 Discuss what action you would take if you found a cobra in or near your house.

- Explain how language features create effects
- Write from a character's point of view
- Use suitable vocabulary
- Use punctuation correctly
- Contribute to discussions and share own ideas

There's a snake in my house!

'The river gypsies' is written in the first person, which is the writer's point of view. The 'I' is the writer himself, and he is retelling the events as he remembers them. He often uses the simple past tense to describe what happened. The text presents things in a chronological order. (That means that things are told in the order in which they happen.)

Now pretend that you are the old man who had the snakes taken from his home. You meet a neighbour who was away when the river gypsies came, and she asks you to explain what happened.

- Write an account from the old man's perspective. Make it sound very exciting.
- Remember to write in the first person and mainly use the past tense – but watch out for any irregular verbs.

You will need to make use of the details from the text, including what Babu says.



- Identify and discuss ideas in poems
- Explore how setting and character are developed

Can you make this poem into a picture?

The following poem was written by Shafi Ahmed, who was born in Bangladesh in 1937. The first-person 'I' in this poem is a member of the *Bedeh* clan in Bangladesh.

Poetry often creates images in your head. After you have read or listened to the poem, choose some lines from 'Bedeh'. Illustrate the lines you have chosen using pictures and sketches. You may choose to make the words part of your illustration.

Bedeh

This is the name of my clan.
I am a water-gypsy
on the turbulent rivers of Bangladesh.
My boat is home

5 to me, my wife, and our children.

I have some knowledge of words
and wild herbs.

I treat snake-bites, drive out evil spirits,
and attempt things which others dare not.

10 Tigers, robbers, snakes, demons, storms
all seem to leave me alone!

My needs are small and simple.
They are easily met
from day to day, from hand to mouth,
15 from one river settlement
to the next.

Sometimes in fine weather
I row out to the river's end.
I meet many ships at the anchorage.

20 The crew exchanges foodstuffs,
old clothes, newspapers,
empty cans and bottles
with my beads, bangles,
bamboo-toys and seashells.

25 Once I had a chance to board
an English ship.
I marvelled at the ocean-going craft.



- Identify and discuss ideas in poems
- Discuss how language features create effects

But the Captain, he marvelled: at me,
at the size of my boat,
30 at how we had survived, at how we live!
He wrote down our names,
and other things in his notebook.
He said, one day he would write about us.

I cannot imagine
35 Why anyone would want
To do that!

SHAFI AHMED



What do you think would be the biggest disadvantages of living on a boat? What advantages are there?

Comprehension



- 1 Apart from treating snake-bites, what does the river gypsy do?
- 2 What does the river gypsy do when the weather is good?
- 3 What is it about the river gypsy that causes the Captain to marvel at him?
- 4 What is the Captain doing with the notes in his book?



- 1 The river gypsy describes the rivers of Bangladesh as 'turbulent'. In what ways would turbulent rivers make life difficult for the river gypsy? (line 3)
- 2 The river gypsy lives a 'hand-to-mouth' existence. What does this expression mean? (line 14)



- 1 What gives the reader the impression that the river gypsy has a humble opinion of himself?

How can water make us feel?

While you have been thinking about the ways we use water, have you considered going to the beach or doing water sports? Can water be exciting, relaxing, or both?

The painting on the next page is by the French artist Edgar Degas, and it was painted in the nineteenth century. Degas liked to paint ordinary people enjoying their free time. In this image, a woman combs the hair of a young girl, who has fallen asleep in the sun, listening to the sound of the waves.

- Explore how setting and character are developed
- Explain how language features create effects
- Contribute to discussions and share own ideas

Painting a scene with words

In this painting, Degas uses paint instead of words to describe the beach scene and create an effect.

Now describe the scene on the beach, including the characters, to a partner using descriptive language. How is the effect created by words different to the effect of the painting?



Beach Scene by Edgar Degas, painted between 1869–70

Talk about ...

- As a group, tell the story of what is happening in the painting.
- Why do you think the woman and the young girl have come to the seaside today?
- What do you think the people in the painting might be thinking and feeling?

Stretch zone

How would you describe the colour palette the artist uses? Write notes on how it affects the mood and atmosphere of the painting. Is it true that 'a picture is worth a thousand words'?

- Read a range of texts and express opinions
- Explore how setting and character are developed

Life on a country farm in the US

This is the story of a family of settlers who travelled to the western part of America in the nineteenth century before it was part of the United States. Many families joined 'wagon trains' in search of wealth, excitement and a better life. Here the father of the family, Pa (or Mr Ingalls) finds trouble while digging a well. His neighbour, Mr Scott, is helping him dig the well.

Fresh water to drink

Every morning, before Pa would let Mr Scott go down the rope, he set a candle in a bucket and lighted it and lowered it to the bottom. Once Laura peeped over the edge and she saw the candle brightly burning, far down in the dark hole in
5 the ground.

Then Pa would say, "Seems to be all right," and he would pull up the bucket and blow out the candle.

"That's all foolishness, Ingalls," Mr Scott said. "The well was all right yesterday."

10 "You can't ever tell," Pa replied. "Better safe than sorry."

Laura did not know what danger Pa was looking for by that candle-light. She did not ask, because Pa and Mr Scott were busy. She meant to ask later, but she forgot.

One morning Mr Scott came while Pa was eating breakfast.
15 They heard him shout: "Hi, Ingalls! It's sun-up. Let's go!" Pa drank his coffee and went out.

The windlass began to creak and Pa began to whistle. Laura and Mary were washing the dishes and Ma was making the big bed, when Pa's whistling stopped. They heard him say,
20 "Scott!" He shouted, "Scott! Scott!" Then he called: "Caroline! Come quick!"

Ma ran out of the house. Laura ran after her.

"Scott's fainted, or something, down there," Pa said. "I've got to go down after him."

25 "Did you send down the candle?" Ma asked.

Glossary

- windlass** tool for lifting heavy weights
Pa Father
Ma Mother

- Read a range of texts and express opinions
- Explore how setting and character are developed

“No. I thought he had. I asked him if it was all right, and he said it was.” Pa cut the empty bucket off the rope and tied the rope firmly to the windlass. “Charles, you can’t. You mustn’t,” Ma said.

30 “Caroline, I’ve got to.”

“You can’t. Oh, Charles, no!”

“I’ll make it all right. I won’t breathe till I get out. We can’t let him die down there”

35 [...] “Charles, if I can’t pull you up – if you keel over down there and I can’t pull you up –”

“Caroline, I’ve got to,” Pa said. He swung into the well. His head slid out of sight, down the rope.

Ma crouched and shaded her eyes, staring down into the well.

40 All over the prairie meadowlarks were rising, singing, flying straight up into the sky. The wind was blowing warmer, but Laura was cold.

Suddenly Ma jumped up and seized the handle of the windlass. She tugged at it with all her might. The rope strained and the windlass creaked. Laura thought that Pa had keeled over, down
45 in the dark bottom of the well, and Ma couldn’t pull him up. But the windlass turned a little, and then a little more.

Pa’s hand came up, holding to the rope. His other hand reached above it and took hold of the rope. Then Pa’s head came up. His arm held on to the windlass. Then somehow he got to the
50 ground and sat there. [...]

Glossary

keel over fall over, collapse



- Read a range of texts and express opinions
- Explore how setting and character are developed

The rope slowly wound itself up, and the bucket came up out of the well, and tied to the bucket and the rope was Mr Scott. His arms and legs and his head hung and wobbled, his mouth was partly open and his eyes half shut. [...]

55 “He’s breathing,” Pa said. “He’ll be all right, in the air. I’m all right, Caroline. I’m plumb tuckered out, that’s all.” [...]

That was a terrible day.

“I don’t want a well,” Ma sobbed. “It isn’t worth it. I won’t have you running such risks!”

60 Mr Scott had breathed a kind of gas that stays deep in the ground. It stays at the bottom of wells because it is heavier than the air. It cannot be seen or smelled, but no one can breathe it very long and live. Pa had gone down into that gas to tie Mr Scott to the rope so that he could be pulled up out of the gas.

65 When Mr Scott was able, he went home. Before he went he said to Pa: “You were right about that candle business, Ingalls. I thought it was all foolishness and I would not bother with it, but I’ve found out my mistake.”

70 “Well,” said Pa, “where a light can’t live, I know I can’t. And I like to be safe when I can be. But all’s well that ends well.”

Pa rested awhile. He had breathed a little of the gas and he felt like resting. But that afternoon he unravelled a thread from a tow sack, and he took a little powder from his powder-horn. He tied the powder in a piece of cloth with one end of the tow string in the powder.

75 “Come along, Laura,” he said, “and I’ll show you something.”

They went to the well. Pa lighted the end of the string and waited until the spark was crawling quickly along it. Then he dropped the little bundle into the well.

80 In a minute they heard a muffled bang! and a puff of smoke came out of the well. “That will bring the gas,” Pa said.

When the smoke was all gone, he let Laura light the candle and stand beside him while he let it down. All the way down in the dark hole the little candle kept on burning like a star. [...]

Glossary

plumb tuckered out
completely exhausted

tow sack cloth sack