



# THE BOY, THE WITCH & THE QUEEN OF SCOTS

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## TEACHING RESOURCES



# ABOUT THESE RESOURCES:

These resources come in **FOUR PARTS:**

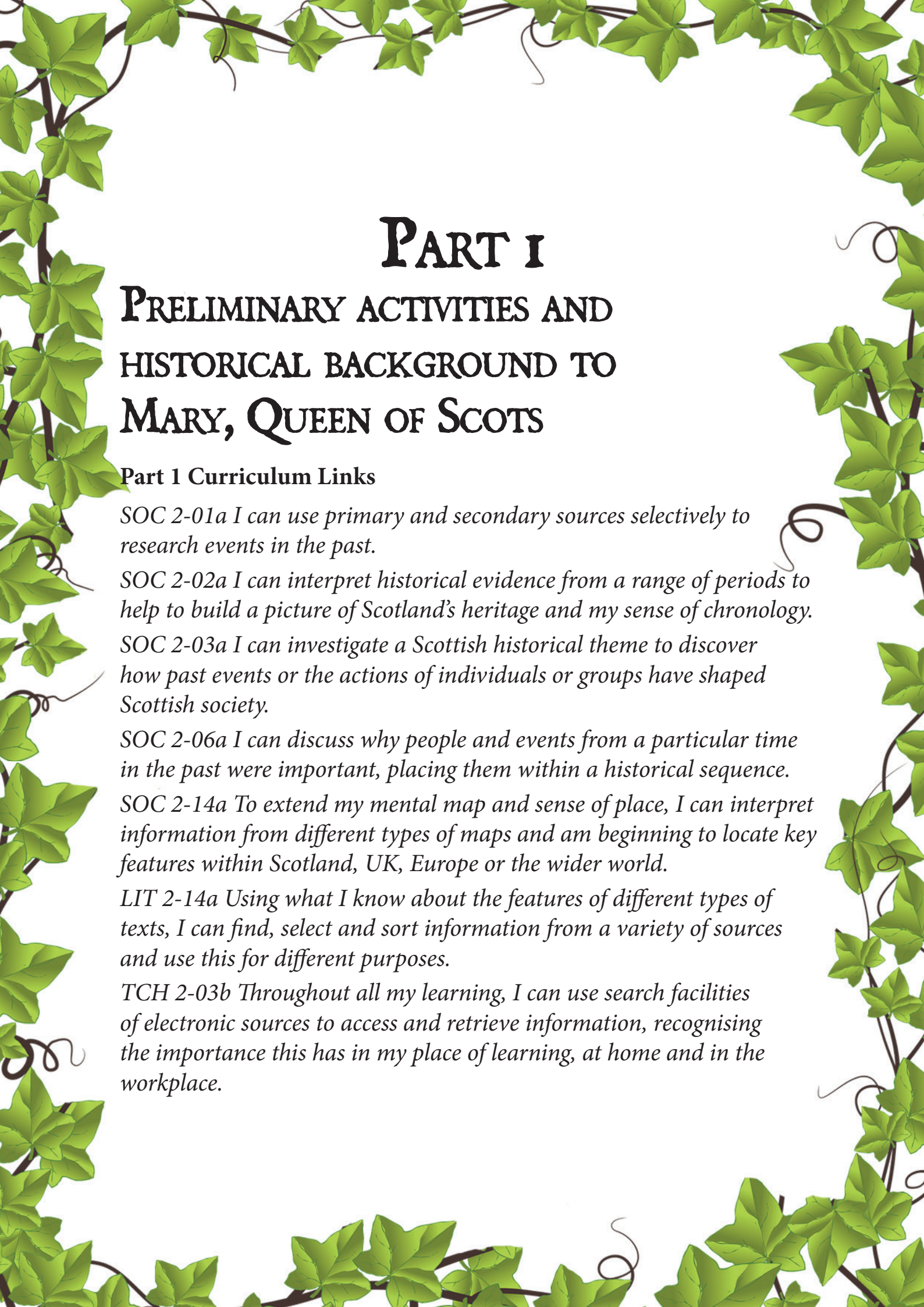
- **Part 1: Preliminary activities and historical background**
- **Part 2: Chapter-by-chapter comprehension/discussion questions for *The Boy, the Witch and the Queen of Scots* – including reflection, inference, evaluation, analysis and VOCP.**
- **Part 3: Classroom activities** (interdisciplinary learning designed to use throughout the novel study)
- **Part 4: Useful links** to Historic Environment Scotland resources relating to Mary Queen of Scots, and to other relevant sites and organisations.

## Note to teachers:

Each activity is directly linked to the Curriculum for Excellence and the specific Experiences and Outcomes covered.

Please feel free to be selective. We have sought to include a wide range of options, but only select what you think will work for your class.





# PART I

## PRELIMINARY ACTIVITIES AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS

### Part 1 Curriculum Links

*SOC 2-01a I can use primary and secondary sources selectively to research events in the past.*

*SOC 2-02a I can interpret historical evidence from a range of periods to help to build a picture of Scotland's heritage and my sense of chronology.*

*SOC 2-03a I can investigate a Scottish historical theme to discover how past events or the actions of individuals or groups have shaped Scottish society.*

*SOC 2-06a I can discuss why people and events from a particular time in the past were important, placing them within a historical sequence.*

*SOC 2-14a To extend my mental map and sense of place, I can interpret information from different types of maps and am beginning to locate key features within Scotland, UK, Europe or the wider world.*

*LIT 2-14a Using what I know about the features of different types of texts, I can find, select and sort information from a variety of sources and use this for different purposes.*

*TCH 2-03b Throughout all my learning, I can use search facilities of electronic sources to access and retrieve information, recognising the importance this has in my place of learning, at home and in the workplace.*

# BEFORE YOU START THE BOOK

## 1. Discussion: Cover

Look at the cover of *The Boy, the Witch and the Queen of Scots*. What type of story do you think it is?

Does anything on the cover surprise or intrigue you?

Is it an effective cover?

What captures your attention? Choose three words to describe the cover.



## 2. Map and Collage Wall Display

Using a quick internet search about Mary Queen of Scots, brainstorm some key words like Stuart dynasty, Scotland, France, Reformation, John Knox, Palace of Holyroodhouse, Stirling Castle, Lord Darnley, Bothwell, Elizabeth I, Lochleven Castle etc and print images or cut up tourist leaflets. Also print off a picture or more of Mary herself and add it to your display.

In addition, find a map of Scotland and either glue it in your jotter or if you have a big map, display it on the classroom wall. As you begin the book, pin a flag on Leith (Chapter 1). As other places are mentioned in the book, pin a flag on those too.

## 3. Understanding the Big Picture – Timeline Display

When did Mary come on the scene? What was Scotland like during her reign? To understand where Mary's story fits into history, you need to create a **timeline**, perhaps around a classroom wall. Put the events on the following pages **in order** along your timeline. The **dates** will help you. You can cut the text boxes out and glue them into place – or copy the content.

*I can use and interpret electronic and paper-based timetables and schedules to plan events and activities and make time calculations as part of my planning.*

MNU 2-10a

**1543**

**9 September:** Mary is crowned Queen of Scots at Stirling Castle. She is only nine months old!

**1586**

**15 October:** Out of options, Mary is tricked into agreeing to the Babington Plot and tried for treason.

**1566**

**9 March:** Mary's secretary, David Rizzio, is murdered in front of her.  
**19 June:** Mary and Darnley's son, James, is born.

**1561**

**14 August:** The young widow Mary leaves France.  
**19 August:** Mary arrives in Edinburgh earlier than expected and in foggy conditions.  
**2 September:** Mary's formal Royal Entry into Edinburgh.

**1560**

**11 June:** Death of Mary's mother, Mary of Guise, back in Scotland. Darnley's son, James, is born.  
**5 December:** Death of Mary's husband, François.

**1558**

**24 April:** Mary's marriage to the French Crown Prince, François, in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris  
**17 November:** Elizabeth I becomes Queen of England.

**1559**

**10 July:** Mary becomes Queen Consort of France when her teenage husband, François, succeeds his father.

**1548**

**7 August:** Five-year-old Mary is taken to France for her own safety, to be raised at the French court alongside her promised husband, the crown prince of France. Henry VIII, King of England, has been at war with Scotland to force a marriage between Mary and his own son Edward, known as the Rough Wooing.

**1587**

**8 February:** Execution of Mary Queen of Scots after 19 years in captivity.

**1562**

**11 August:** Mary rides north to confront Huntly and visit the Highlands.

**11 September:** Mary is refused entry to Inverness Castle.

**28 October:** Battle of Corrichie.

**1560**

**11 June:** Death of Mary's mother, Mary of Guise, back in Scotland

**5 December:** Death of Mary's husband, François.

**1542**

**14 November:** Battle of Solway Moss where Mary's father, James V, suffers a defeat by the English. He travels to Falkland Palace where he is said to have lain down and turned his face to the wall.

**8 December:** Mary is born at Linlithgow Palace. Her parents are James V and his second wife, Mary of Guise, who hails from France.

**14 December:** Death of Mary's father, James V, just six days after the birth of his daughter.

**1567**

**10 February:** Mary's husband, Darnley, is murdered.

**15 May:** Mary marries James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell.

**24 July:** Mary Queen of Scots abdicates, held prisoner in Loch Leven Castle. The rest of her life would be spent in captivity, despite several attempts to escape.

**1565**

**29 July:** Mary's marriage to Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley.

**26 August:** Scottish Lords turn against Mary in the Chaseabout Raid.

**ONCE YOU HAVE ORGANISED EVENTS IN THE RIGHT ORDER, YOU CAN REFER TO YOUR TIMELINE THROUGHOUT YOUR LEARNING**

#### 4. Historical Enquiry – Mary’s Childhood

What questions do you have about Mary’s childhood?

What evidence can you find to answer these?

Research through internet and print sources and present your findings to the class.

<https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/stories/scottish-history-and-archaeology/mary-queen-of-scots/mary-queen-of-scots/life-and-deathline-of-mary-queen-of-scots/> and <https://www.history.com/news/elizabeth-mary-queen-of-scots-imprisonment-death> may be a good start.





# PART 2

## NOVEL STUDY *THE BOY, THE WITCH AND THE QUEEN OF SCOTS*

Chapter-by-chapter comprehension and discussion questions: reflection, inference, evaluation, analysis and VCOP questions (Vocabulary, Connectives, Openings and Punctuation)

### Part 3 Curriculum Links

*ENG 2-12a Through developing my knowledge of context clues, punctuation, grammar and layout, I can read unfamiliar texts with increasing fluency, understanding and expression.*

*LIT 2-16a To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can identify and consider the purpose and main ideas of a text and use supporting detail.*

*ENG 2-17a To show my understanding, I can respond to literal, inferential and evaluative questions and other close reading tasks and can create different kinds of questions of my own.*

### Chapter 1

1. How would you describe the mood in the opening paragraph? Does it make you more interested in the story?
2. How would you sum up events in chapter one in one sentence? Make sure you focus on what is most important.
3. ‘Good. I won’t be found. I must not be found.’ You will notice that some of this chapter is written in italics. Can you guess why? Do you think this is effective?
4. Look at the last paragraph of chapter 1 – is this an effective ending? Why/why not?





## Chapter 2

1. How do you feel about Master Lamb, Betty and Alexander himself? Do you like or dislike them? Do you find them interesting characters? You can begin character cards for them (see Activities section).
2. Why is Betty so nervous? Can you find a word or phrase that is evidence for her nervousness? Is there anyone whose presence would have a similar effect on you today?
3. There is repetition in the last paragraph. Which word is repeated and what does it achieve?

## Chapter 3

1. Look at the heading of Chapter 3. The author has introduced a flashback, a jump back in time. Can you think of any other books or films which use this technique?
2. Look at the illustration. Do you recognise what it is? It is a falconer's lure – look up what it was used for.
3. Put flags into Huntly, Leith and Edinburgh on your map. Based on what you know so far, what are some of the contrasts and differences between Alexander's life in the north and his life in Edinburgh?
4. The author writes: 'his mouth in a tight line' – what does this suggest about how Uncle Seton is feeling? Why?
5. How do you think Alexander is feeling about being called to speak with the Earl? How do you know? Give reasons for your answer.
6. Can you think of people nowadays who have the power to make you do things you don't want to do? Can this be a good thing?
7. The Earl delivers a bombshell of a task at the end of the chapter. Why could this be a difficult mission for Alexander?

## Chapter 4

1. In this chapter we meet Master Kerr. Decide on a word you would use to describe him and find a quote in this chapter which shows that character trait. You may want to add him to your character cards (see Activities section)
2. Can you think of other older characters in books you have read, or films you have seen? Are they likeable or not?
3. Do you think Alexander is brave or cowardly to run away to Leith?
4. 'I can read!' I bristle. Do you think Alexander is telling the truth? Why/why not?
5. 'Hunger stabs at my stomach' is a metaphor. What does it suggest about Alexander's situation?



## Chapter 5

1. *'Not the Palace. Anywhere but the Palace.'* This links to an earlier part of the book. Which part and why?
2. How would you describe Alexander's relationship with Master Kerr? Has anything changed since the last time they met?
3. There are elements of humour in this chapter. Which character creates the light-hearted moments, and how?
4. *'But the Almighty has willed it so.'* Can you explain in your own words what Alexander means? Do you agree with him?
5. Why does Alexander's mood change during the *'glorious afternoon'*.

## Chapter 6

1. This chapter gives us an insight into what kind of person Lizzie is. Choose some words to describe her and add them to your character card.
2. *'The scent and the water do their work and I breathe more deeply'* Can you think of another time in the story when Alexander took comfort in scrubbing himself clean? What does it suggest about how confident he feels?
3. Towards the end of the chapter there is an abrupt change of mood. How would you describe the atmosphere in the very last sentence of the chapter?

## Chapter 7

1. *'The door opens a chink and a tall, hooded man glides through the gap and soundlessly closes it behind him. I shiver. The garment he wears looks like an expensive travelling cloak, with a large hood that almost hides his entire face. A golden crucifix dangles from his neck.'* – Time to turn detective. What can you deduce from what you find out about the stranger in this short passage? Is he rich or poor? Well educated? What may his beliefs be and what does the way he moves tell you?
2. Find three quotes in the chapter which make it clear who wields the power in this situation. Who is powerful? Who is powerless?
3. The stranger *'opens the door and oozes out like pus'* What type of imagery is used and what does it suggest? Is it effective?
4. Can you think of an alternative nickname for the scary stranger?

## Chapter 8

1. There is a lot of tension between Catholics and Protestants in Reformation Scotland. If you are unsure, research what these terms mean. Nowadays, there are still places in Scotland where tensions between Catholics and Protestants run high. Find out what the word 'sectarianism' means. The charity Nil By Mouth have some great resources: <https://www.nilbymouth.org/what-is-sectarianism>.
2. Why do you think that Alexander wants to help the Catholic priest? Would you have done the same in his situation? Can you think of a time when you stood up for someone who was in trouble?
3. Queen Mary is Catholic, but being Catholic is illegal in the country she rules. Do you think it's wrong for there to be one rule for ordinary people and another for those in power?

## Chapter 9

1. '*He is not "my" Earl!*' Why is Alexander so upset about this?
2. Think of three words you can use to describe the queen based on this chapter. You can add these to your character card, along with quotes to back them up.
3. In your opinion, how effective is the last sentence of the chapter? Why?

## Chapter 10

1. '*Mostly, I have a feeling in my heart of what is right and what is wrong, and I try to choose the good. That's pretty much it.*' Do you feel the same? Can you think of a situation where you have felt right or wrong about something?
2. Lizzie mimics a French accent in this chapter to make fun of her boss. Can you think of any French words at all? Is it an advantage to know several languages like the Mary and her court did? Why/why not?
3. Alexander first encounters the famous John Knox in this chapter, and he marvels: '*He can deliver a speech, make no mistake.*' Research a famous speech in history and tell all your classmates about it. The book *Talking History*, published by Templar Books, is a great resource for this.
4. Many of the chapters in this book end on cliffhangers, and Chapter 10 is no exception. Do you like or dislike this?

## Chapter 11

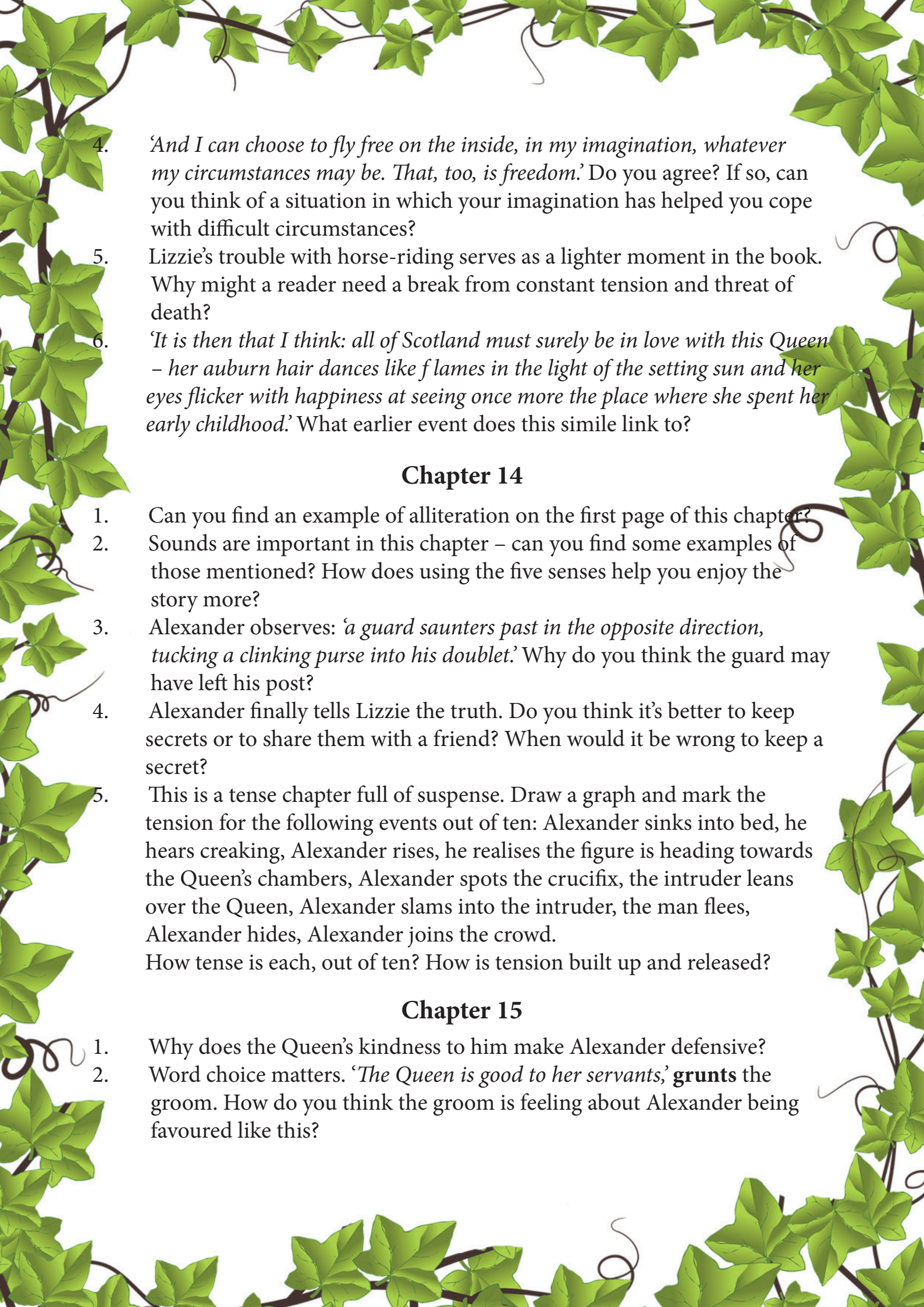
1. The Cloak refers to John Knox as '*the snake*'. What comes into your mind when you hear the word 'snake'? Are these positive or negative things? (These brain-connections are called 'connotations – a posh word you can impress your teacher with!)
2. On page 55, a word is repeated, and put into italics too. What is the word, and why do you think italics were used?
3. The Cloak lists the supposed positive qualities of the Earl's son. Find the passage on page 56 – what do you think the purpose of this speech is? Can you guess why the Earl wants Queen Mary to hear this positive portrayal of the heir to the Huntly lands?
4. The chapter ends with Master Kerr reflecting on '*what kind of bird*' Alexander is. Can you explain what is meant with this extended metaphor?

## Chapter 12

1. Look at the heading of the chapter where alliteration is used (the repetition of a sound at the beginning of a word). Can you find another example of alliteration in this chapter?
2. '*And is he meddling or helping her?!*' How do you feel about the Queen's brother? Is he good or bad? Or a bit of both?
3. '*He watches me narrowly.*' Why is Master Kerr so focused on Alexander's reaction? What might he suspect?
4. Find some clues on the final page of the chapter: what words make you think that the prophecy is not a happy one?

## Chapter 13

1. Look at the illustration at the top of the chapter. The drawing is based on the real crown. Research <https://www.edinburghcastle.scot/see-and-do/highlights/honours-of-scotland> - Mary was crowned with this crown as a baby which is why there is only a triumphal procession, not a coronation, in this chapter. Can you think of a recent event in our history where a procession took place? The best thing is that you can still see this crown when you visit Edinburgh Castle (see the section on suggested school trips).
2. Why is the procession controversial and needs such careful policing?
3. Alexander keeps reflecting on what it may mean to 'fly free'. What would you do in his situation? You could even create a flow-chart about what might happen as a consequence of his actions for each option he has.

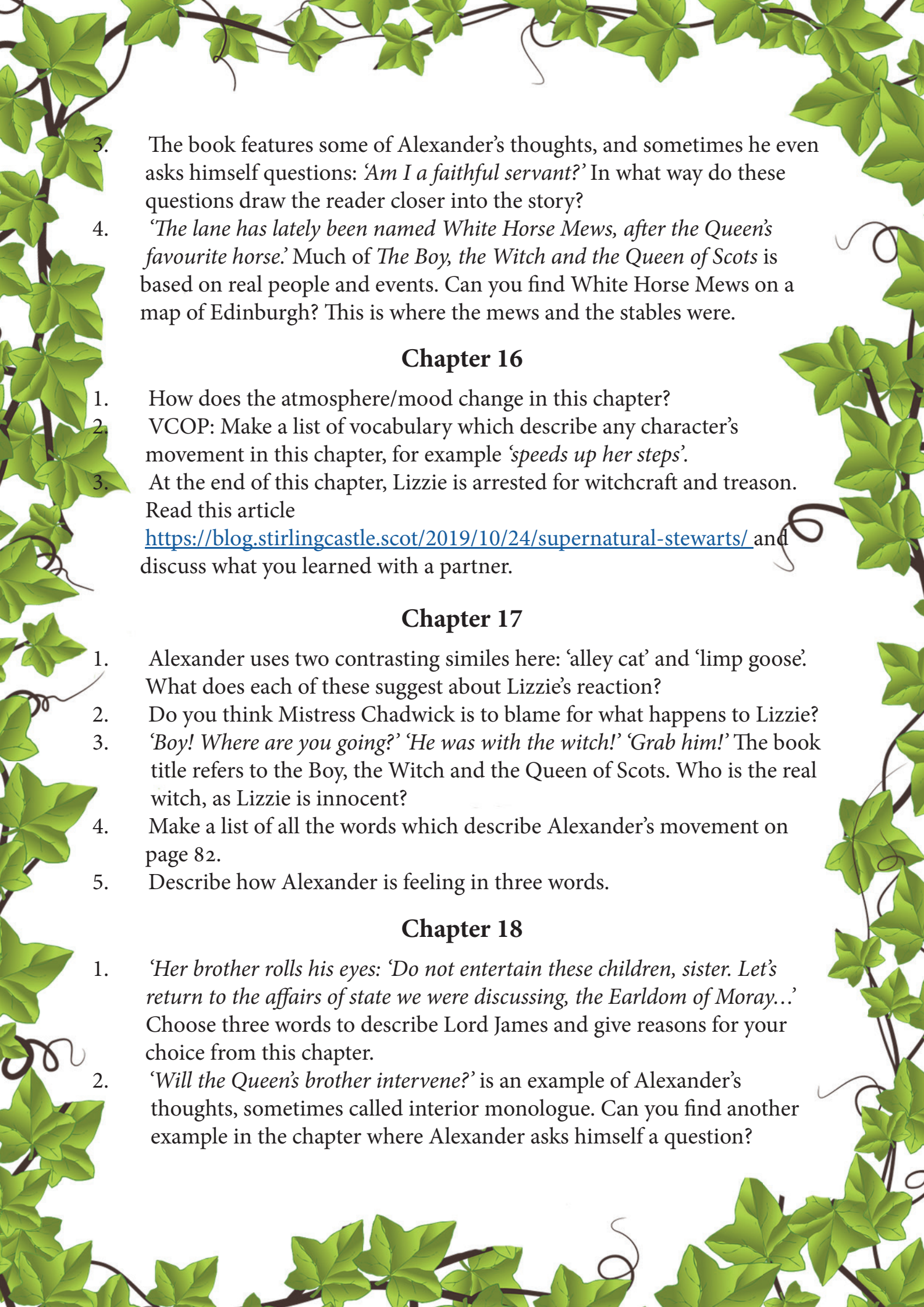
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4. *'And I can choose to fly free on the inside, in my imagination, whatever my circumstances may be. That, too, is freedom.'* Do you agree? If so, can you think of a situation in which your imagination has helped you cope with difficult circumstances?
  5. Lizzie's trouble with horse-riding serves as a lighter moment in the book. Why might a reader need a break from constant tension and threat of death?
  6. *'It is then that I think: all of Scotland must surely be in love with this Queen – her auburn hair dances like flames in the light of the setting sun and her eyes flicker with happiness at seeing once more the place where she spent her early childhood.'* What earlier event does this simile link to?

## Chapter 14

1. Can you find an example of alliteration on the first page of this chapter?
2. Sounds are important in this chapter – can you find some examples of those mentioned? How does using the five senses help you enjoy the story more?
3. Alexander observes: *'a guard saunters past in the opposite direction, tucking a clinking purse into his doublet.'* Why do you think the guard may have left his post?
4. Alexander finally tells Lizzie the truth. Do you think it's better to keep secrets or to share them with a friend? When would it be wrong to keep a secret?
5. This is a tense chapter full of suspense. Draw a graph and mark the tension for the following events out of ten: Alexander sinks into bed, he hears creaking, Alexander rises, he realises the figure is heading towards the Queen's chambers, Alexander spots the crucifix, the intruder leans over the Queen, Alexander slams into the intruder, the man flees, Alexander hides, Alexander joins the crowd.  
How tense is each, out of ten? How is tension built up and released?

## Chapter 15

1. Why does the Queen's kindness to him make Alexander defensive?
2. Word choice matters. *'The Queen is good to her servants,' grunts* the groom. How do you think the groom is feeling about Alexander being favoured like this?

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3. The book features some of Alexander's thoughts, and sometimes he even asks himself questions: *'Am I a faithful servant?'* In what way do these questions draw the reader closer into the story?
  4. *'The lane has lately been named White Horse Mews, after the Queen's favourite horse.'* Much of *The Boy, the Witch and the Queen of Scots* is based on real people and events. Can you find White Horse Mews on a map of Edinburgh? This is where the mews and the stables were.

### Chapter 16

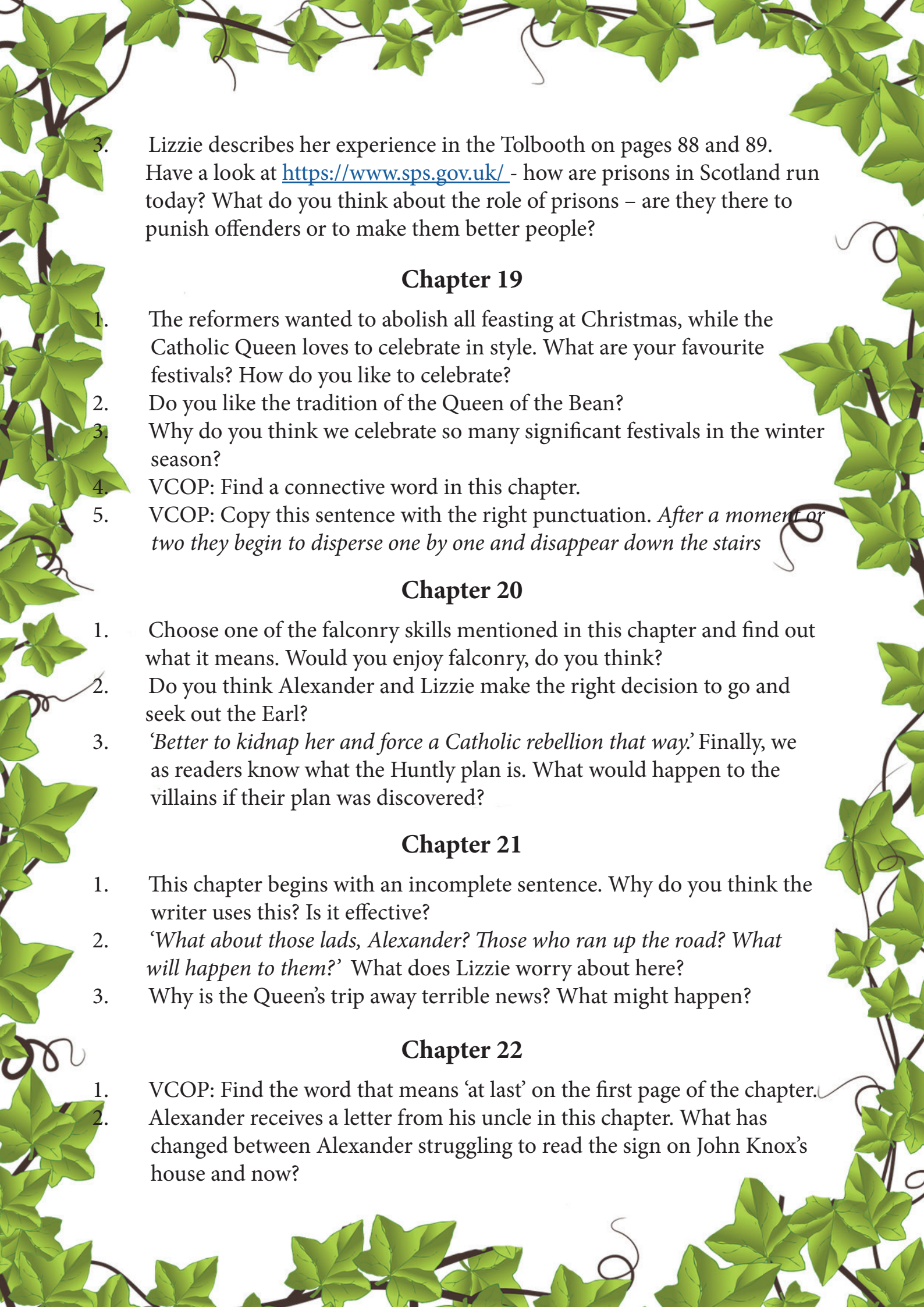
1. How does the atmosphere/mood change in this chapter?
2. VCOP: Make a list of vocabulary which describe any character's movement in this chapter, for example *'speeds up her steps'*.
3. At the end of this chapter, Lizzie is arrested for witchcraft and treason. Read this article <https://blog.stirlingcastle.scot/2019/10/24/supernatural-stewarts/> and discuss what you learned with a partner.

### Chapter 17

1. Alexander uses two contrasting similes here: *'alley cat'* and *'limp goose'*. What does each of these suggest about Lizzie's reaction?
2. Do you think Mistress Chadwick is to blame for what happens to Lizzie?
3. *'Boy! Where are you going?'* *'He was with the witch!'* *'Grab him!'* The book title refers to the Boy, the Witch and the Queen of Scots. Who is the real witch, as Lizzie is innocent?
4. Make a list of all the words which describe Alexander's movement on page 82.
5. Describe how Alexander is feeling in three words.

### Chapter 18

1. *'Her brother rolls his eyes: 'Do not entertain these children, sister. Let's return to the affairs of state we were discussing, the Earldom of Moray...'* Choose three words to describe Lord James and give reasons for your choice from this chapter.
2. *'Will the Queen's brother intervene?'* is an example of Alexander's thoughts, sometimes called interior monologue. Can you find another example in the chapter where Alexander asks himself a question?

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3. Lizzie describes her experience in the Tolbooth on pages 88 and 89. Have a look at <https://www.sps.gov.uk/> - how are prisons in Scotland run today? What do you think about the role of prisons – are they there to punish offenders or to make them better people?

### Chapter 19

1. The reformers wanted to abolish all feasting at Christmas, while the Catholic Queen loves to celebrate in style. What are your favourite festivals? How do you like to celebrate?
2. Do you like the tradition of the Queen of the Bean?
3. Why do you think we celebrate so many significant festivals in the winter season?
4. VCOP: Find a connective word in this chapter.
5. VCOP: Copy this sentence with the right punctuation. *After a moment or two they begin to disperse one by one and disappear down the stairs*

### Chapter 20

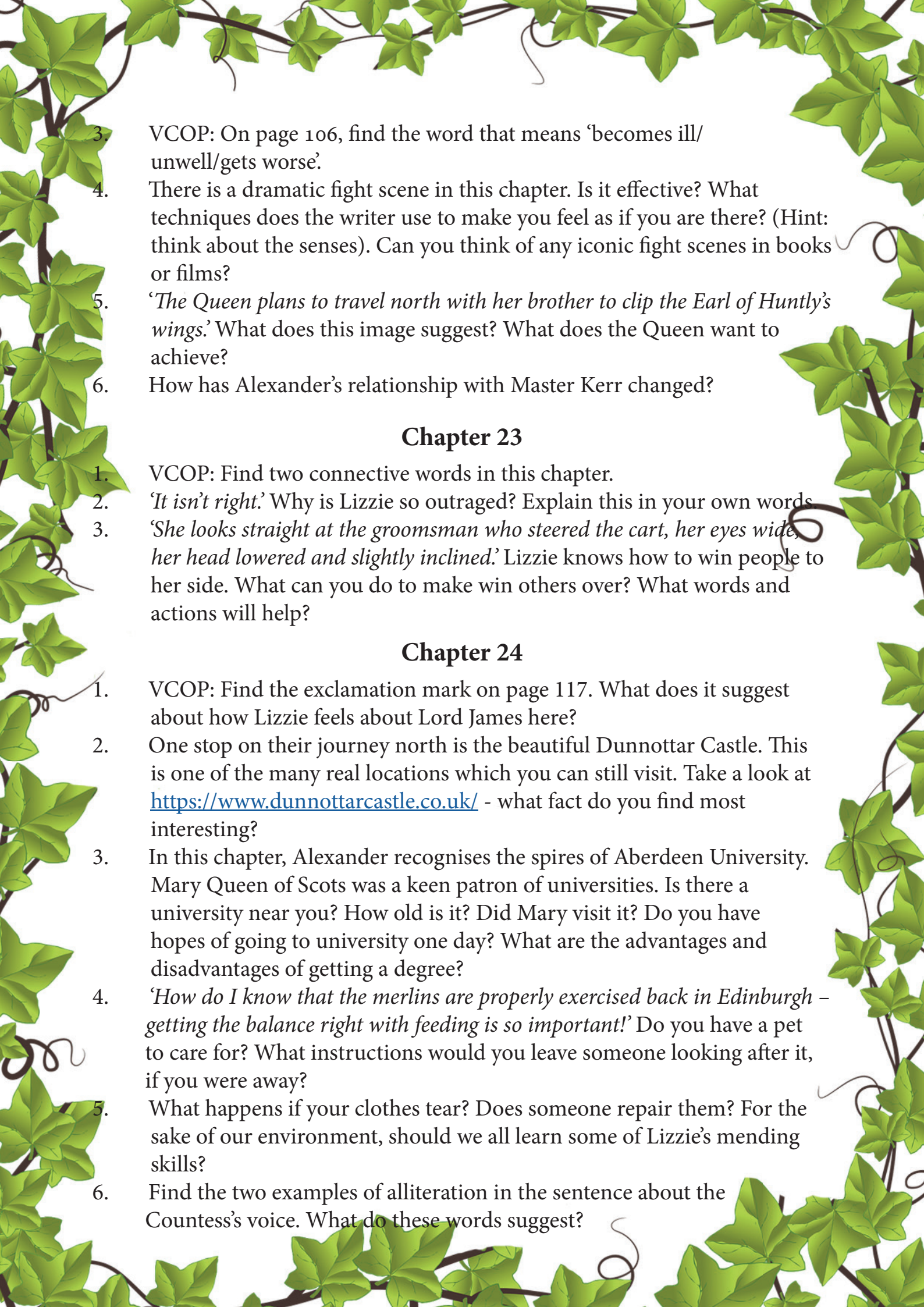
1. Choose one of the falconry skills mentioned in this chapter and find out what it means. Would you enjoy falconry, do you think?
2. Do you think Alexander and Lizzie make the right decision to go and seek out the Earl?
3. *'Better to kidnap her and force a Catholic rebellion that way.'* Finally, we as readers know what the Huntly plan is. What would happen to the villains if their plan was discovered?

### Chapter 21

1. This chapter begins with an incomplete sentence. Why do you think the writer uses this? Is it effective?
2. *'What about those lads, Alexander? Those who ran up the road? What will happen to them?'* What does Lizzie worry about here?
3. Why is the Queen's trip away terrible news? What might happen?

### Chapter 22

1. VCOP: Find the word that means 'at last' on the first page of the chapter.
2. Alexander receives a letter from his uncle in this chapter. What has changed between Alexander struggling to read the sign on John Knox's house and now?

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3. VCOP: On page 106, find the word that means 'becomes ill/unwell/gets worse'.
  4. There is a dramatic fight scene in this chapter. Is it effective? What techniques does the writer use to make you feel as if you are there? (Hint: think about the senses). Can you think of any iconic fight scenes in books or films?
  5. '*The Queen plans to travel north with her brother to clip the Earl of Huntly's wings.*' What does this image suggest? What does the Queen want to achieve?
  6. How has Alexander's relationship with Master Kerr changed?

### Chapter 23

1. VCOP: Find two connective words in this chapter.
2. '*It isn't right.*' Why is Lizzie so outraged? Explain this in your own words.
3. '*She looks straight at the groomsman who steered the cart, her eyes wide, her head lowered and slightly inclined.*' Lizzie knows how to win people to her side. What can you do to make win others over? What words and actions will help?

### Chapter 24

1. VCOP: Find the exclamation mark on page 117. What does it suggest about how Lizzie feels about Lord James here?
2. One stop on their journey north is the beautiful Dunnottar Castle. This is one of the many real locations which you can still visit. Take a look at <https://www.dunnottarcastle.co.uk/> - what fact do you find most interesting?
3. In this chapter, Alexander recognises the spires of Aberdeen University. Mary Queen of Scots was a keen patron of universities. Is there a university near you? How old is it? Did Mary visit it? Do you have hopes of going to university one day? What are the advantages and disadvantages of getting a degree?
4. '*How do I know that the merlins are properly exercised back in Edinburgh – getting the balance right with feeding is so important!*' Do you have a pet to care for? What instructions would you leave someone looking after it, if you were away?
5. What happens if your clothes tear? Does someone repair them? For the sake of our environment, should we all learn some of Lizzie's mending skills?
6. Find the two examples of alliteration in the sentence about the Countess's voice. What do these words suggest?





## Chapter 25

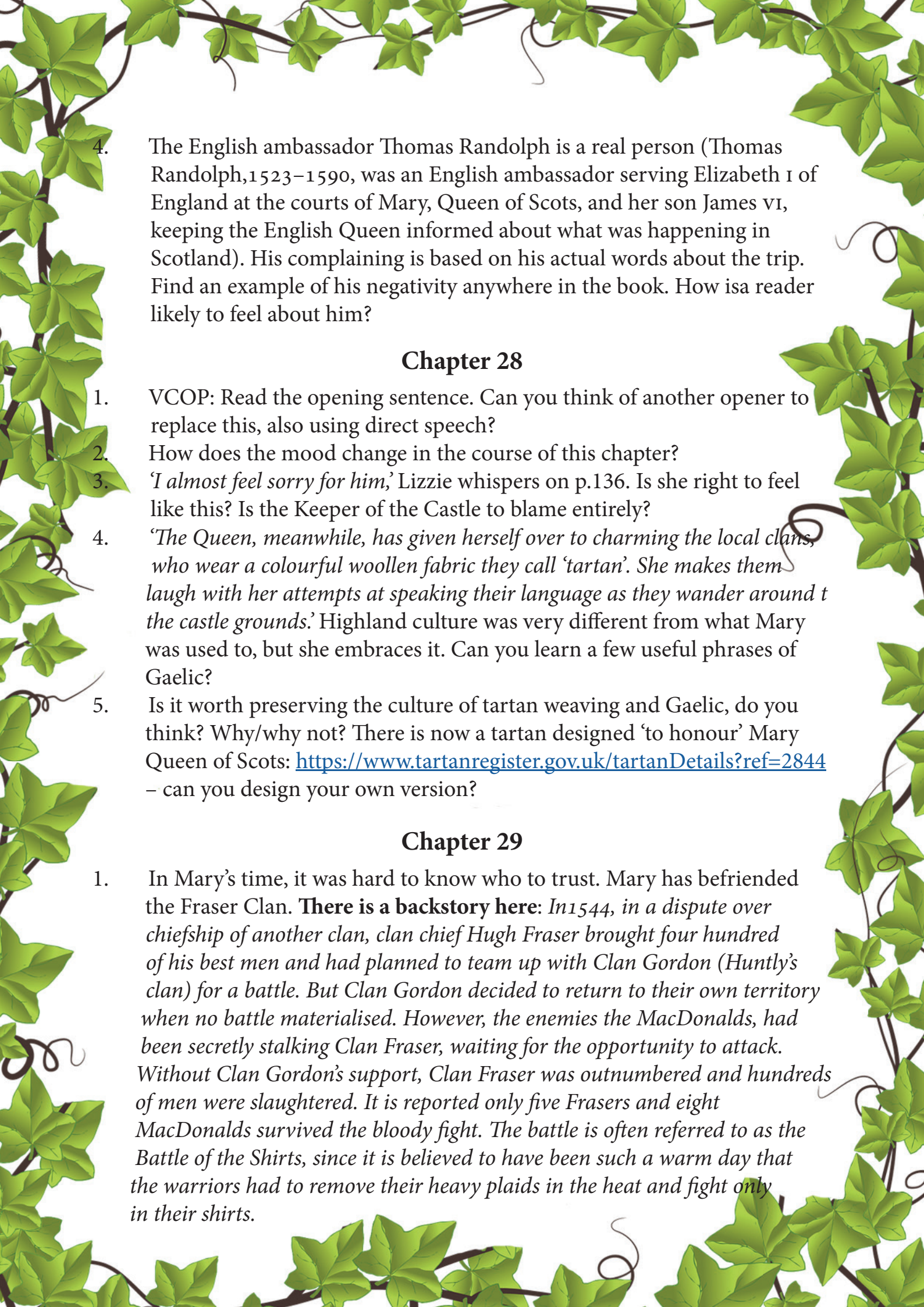
1. VCOP: Insert punctuation and replace *'purrs'* with your own alternative:  
*Your Majesty the Countess purrs curtsying deeply and gracefully*
2. What does the word *'purrs'* (p.122) suggest about the Countess?
3. *'I could not be more distressed.'* – Do you believe the Countess when she says this? Do you feel sympathy for her? Give reasons for your answer.
4. *'The House of Huntly has made its bed, and now it must lie in it.'* Lord James quotes a proverb here. Find out what a proverb is, and with a partner, can you make a list of any other proverbs you can think of? How would you express what Lord James is saying in your own words?
5. Word choice: the writer uses contrast to build tension in the last two paragraphs of the chapter as the groups part company. Find two contrasting words or phrases – how aware is Queen Mary of the danger?

## Chapter 26

1. Alexander fears for his Uncle Seton. What do you think he is worried about?
2. *'... knuckles white as they clutch their swords and daggers'* (p.127) What does this suggest about how the men are feeling? This is a good example of showing, not telling. How could you show that a character is nervous, angry, embarrassed or anxious without actually spelling it out?
3. *'Any pretence of silence is futile.'* Rewrite this sentence in your own words!
4. *'I see birds flying free in the sky... tear her to shreds?'* (p.128-9) – make a list of all the words here which refer to birds and falconry. In what way does Alexander use this terminology to make sense of the Huntly rebellion?
5. Sentence structure – once again, the last sentence of the chapter is a cliffhanger. But it is also an incomplete sentence. How would you complete it using a verb?

## Chapter 27

1. The words the Cloak uses are full of positivity to put the Queen's men at ease. Can you find any of these positive words on p.130?
2. VCOP: *'begone, scoundrel'* – we don't use this old-fashioned language anymore. What would be a modern way of saying this? Can you think of your own word or expression?
3. It says that *'flames of rage dance around in his eyes.'* (p.131) What type of image is used here? Is it effective? Why/why not?

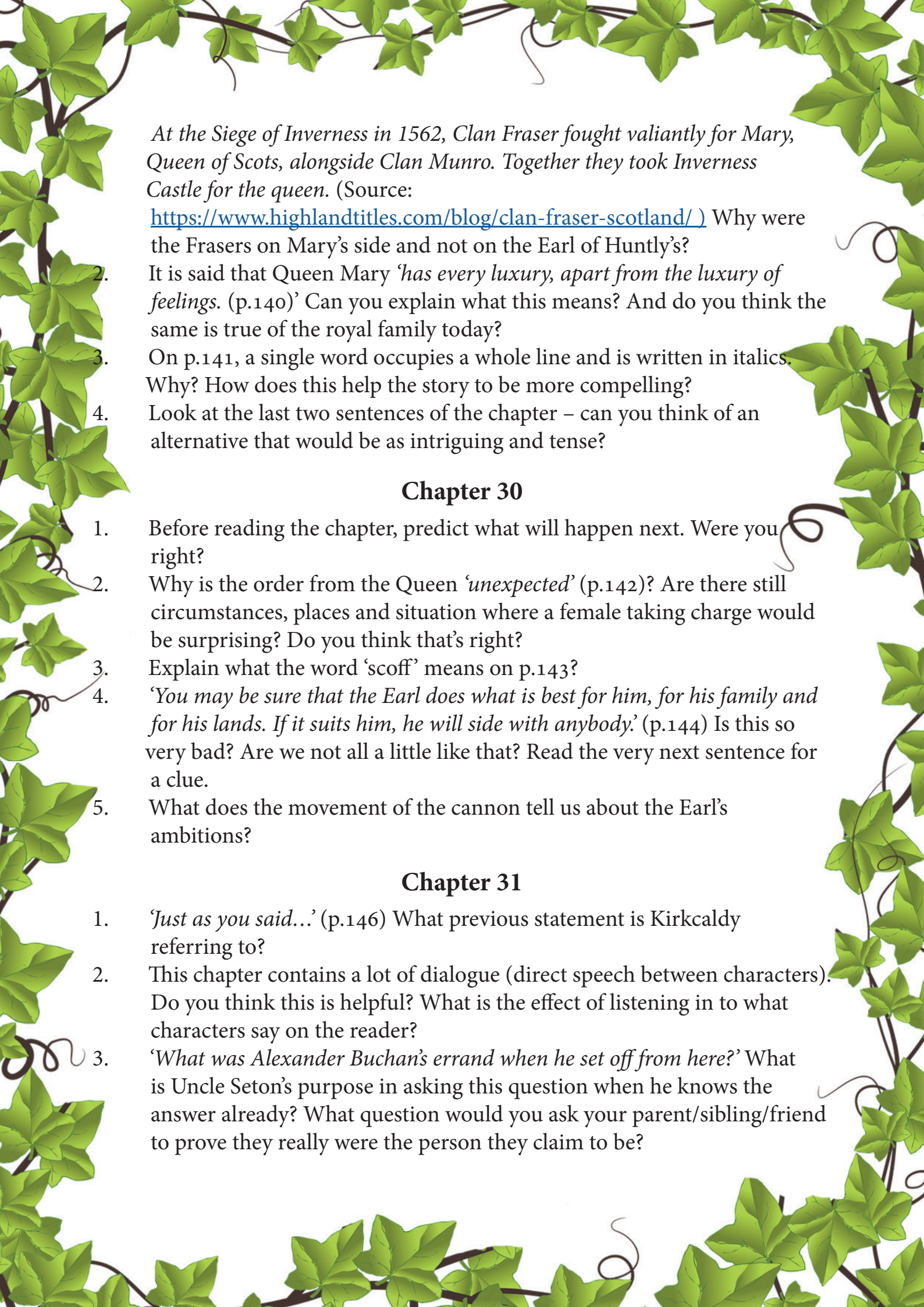
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4. The English ambassador Thomas Randolph is a real person (Thomas Randolph, 1523–1590, was an English ambassador serving Elizabeth I of England at the courts of Mary, Queen of Scots, and her son James VI, keeping the English Queen informed about what was happening in Scotland). His complaining is based on his actual words about the trip. Find an example of his negativity anywhere in the book. How is a reader likely to feel about him?

## Chapter 28

1. VCOP: Read the opening sentence. Can you think of another opener to replace this, also using direct speech?
2. How does the mood change in the course of this chapter?
3. *'I almost feel sorry for him,'* Lizzie whispers on p.136. Is she right to feel like this? Is the Keeper of the Castle to blame entirely?
4. *'The Queen, meanwhile, has given herself over to charming the local clans, who wear a colourful woollen fabric they call 'tartan'. She makes them laugh with her attempts at speaking their language as they wander around the castle grounds.'* Highland culture was very different from what Mary was used to, but she embraces it. Can you learn a few useful phrases of Gaelic?
5. Is it worth preserving the culture of tartan weaving and Gaelic, do you think? Why/why not? There is now a tartan designed 'to honour' Mary Queen of Scots: <https://www.tartanregister.gov.uk/tartanDetails?ref=2844> – can you design your own version?

## Chapter 29

1. In Mary's time, it was hard to know who to trust. Mary has befriended the Fraser Clan. **There is a backstory here:** *In 1544, in a dispute over chiefship of another clan, clan chief Hugh Fraser brought four hundred of his best men and had planned to team up with Clan Gordon (Huntly's clan) for a battle. But Clan Gordon decided to return to their own territory when no battle materialised. However, the enemies the MacDonalds, had been secretly stalking Clan Fraser, waiting for the opportunity to attack. Without Clan Gordon's support, Clan Fraser was outnumbered and hundreds of men were slaughtered. It is reported only five Frasers and eight MacDonalds survived the bloody fight. The battle is often referred to as the Battle of the Shirts, since it is believed to have been such a warm day that the warriors had to remove their heavy plaids in the heat and fight only in their shirts.*



*At the Siege of Inverness in 1562, Clan Fraser fought valiantly for Mary, Queen of Scots, alongside Clan Munro. Together they took Inverness Castle for the queen.* (Source:

<https://www.highlandtitles.com/blog/clan-fraser-scotland/>) Why were

the Frasers on Mary's side and not on the Earl of Huntly's?

2. It is said that Queen Mary '*has every luxury, apart from the luxury of feelings.* (p.140)' Can you explain what this means? And do you think the same is true of the royal family today?

3. On p.141, a single word occupies a whole line and is written in italics. Why? How does this help the story to be more compelling?

4. Look at the last two sentences of the chapter – can you think of an alternative that would be as intriguing and tense?

### Chapter 30

1. Before reading the chapter, predict what will happen next. Were you right?

2. Why is the order from the Queen '*unexpected*' (p.142)? Are there still circumstances, places and situation where a female taking charge would be surprising? Do you think that's right?

3. Explain what the word '*scoff*' means on p.143?

4. '*You may be sure that the Earl does what is best for him, for his family and for his lands. If it suits him, he will side with anybody.*' (p.144) Is this so very bad? Are we not all a little like that? Read the very next sentence for a clue.

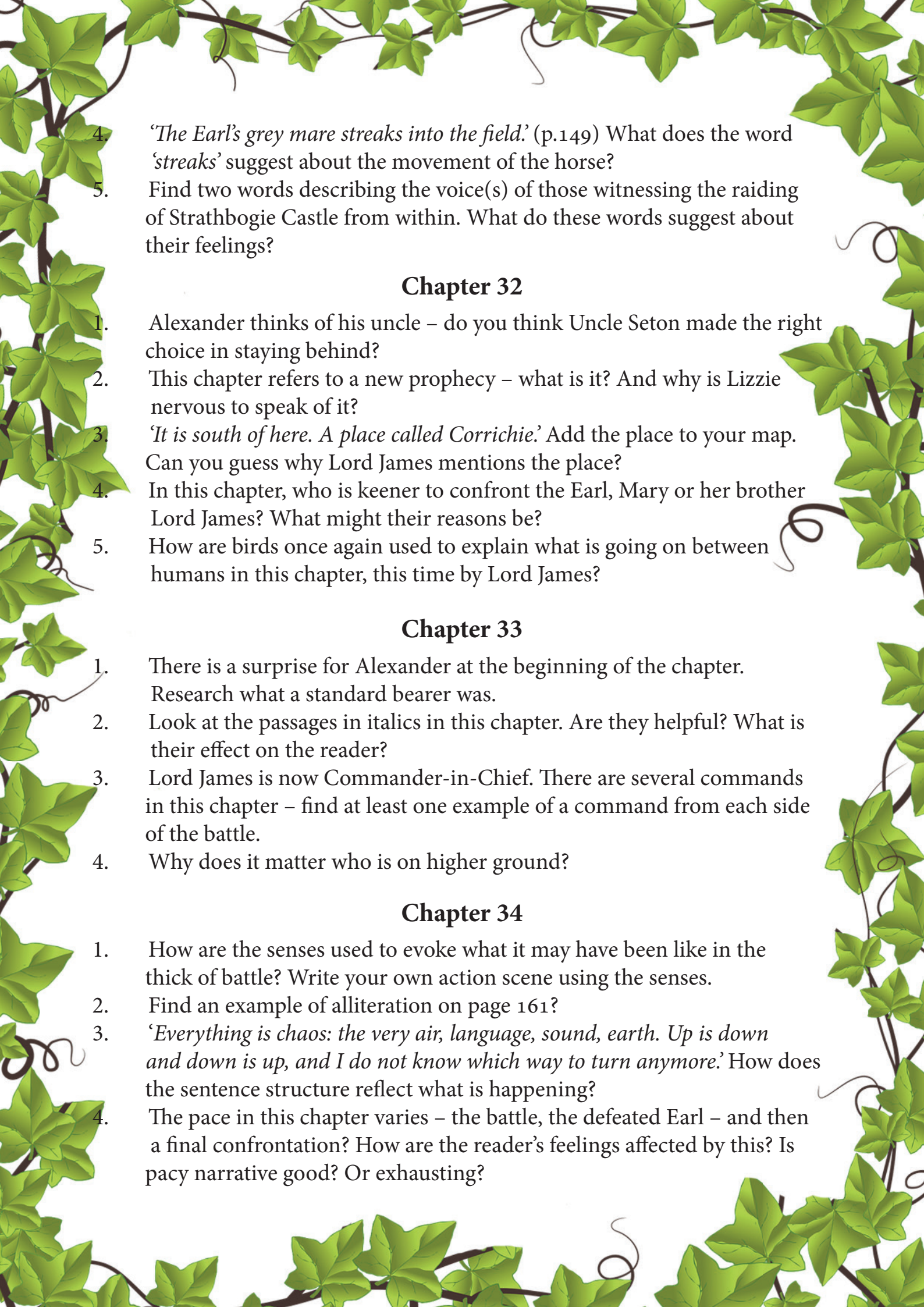
5. What does the movement of the cannon tell us about the Earl's ambitions?

### Chapter 31

1. '*Just as you said...*' (p.146) What previous statement is Kirkcaldy referring to?

2. This chapter contains a lot of dialogue (direct speech between characters). Do you think this is helpful? What is the effect of listening in to what characters say on the reader?

3. '*What was Alexander Buchan's errand when he set off from here?*' What is Uncle Seton's purpose in asking this question when he knows the answer already? What question would you ask your parent/sibling/friend to prove they really were the person they claim to be?

- 
4. *'The Earl's grey mare streaks into the field.'* (p.149) What does the word *'streaks'* suggest about the movement of the horse?
  5. Find two words describing the voice(s) of those witnessing the raiding of Strathbogie Castle from within. What do these words suggest about their feelings?

### Chapter 32

1. Alexander thinks of his uncle – do you think Uncle Seton made the right choice in staying behind?
2. This chapter refers to a new prophecy – what is it? And why is Lizzie nervous to speak of it?
3. *'It is south of here. A place called Corrichie.'* Add the place to your map. Can you guess why Lord James mentions the place?
4. In this chapter, who is keener to confront the Earl, Mary or her brother Lord James? What might their reasons be?
5. How are birds once again used to explain what is going on between humans in this chapter, this time by Lord James?

### Chapter 33

1. There is a surprise for Alexander at the beginning of the chapter. Research what a standard bearer was.
2. Look at the passages in italics in this chapter. Are they helpful? What is their effect on the reader?
3. Lord James is now Commander-in-Chief. There are several commands in this chapter – find at least one example of a command from each side of the battle.
4. Why does it matter who is on higher ground?

### Chapter 34

1. How are the senses used to evoke what it may have been like in the thick of battle? Write your own action scene using the senses.
2. Find an example of alliteration on page 161?
3. *'Everything is chaos: the very air, language, sound, earth. Up is down and down is up, and I do not know which way to turn anymore.'* How does the sentence structure reflect what is happening?
4. The pace in this chapter varies – the battle, the defeated Earl – and then a final confrontation? How are the reader's feelings affected by this? Is pacy narrative good? Or exhausting?

5. Look at the final fight between the Cloak and Alexander. What lessons can you learn about depicting a confrontation in your own writing? Create a handy sheet of five top writing tips for action scenes.

### Chapter 35

1. *'For most of the day I have sat here and embroidered and talked and talked and talked, as I do when I fret.'* What other mannerisms or habits may be clues that someone is worried, as Lizzie is in this chapter? What do **you** do when you are worried?
2. At last, we find out why the Cloak acted in the way he did. Explain his motivation in your own words.
3. What two sounds herald the arrival of the Queen at the bottom of p.166?
4. In what way is Lizzie's need met in this chapter?
5. What do you think Alexander may have asked of the Queen? And in what way are his expectation surpassed in the Queen's gift?





# PART 3

## CLASS ACTIVITIES

**Throughout: Reading the text and discussion questions**  
(see part 2)

*Through developing my knowledge of context clues, punctuation, grammar and layout, I can read unfamiliar texts with increasing fluency, understanding and expression. ENG 2-12a*

*Using what I know about the features of different types of texts, I can find, select and sort information from a variety of sources and use this for different purposes. LIT 2-14a*

*To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can identify and consider the purpose and main ideas of a text and use supporting detail. LIT 2-16a*

*To show my understanding, I can respond to literal, inferential and evaluative questions and other close reading tasks and can create different kinds of questions of my own. ENG 2-17a*

### **Throughout: Character Cards**

*I can make notes, organise them under suitable headings and use them to understand information, develop my thinking, explore problems and create new texts, using my own words as appropriate. LIT 2-15a*

At the end of each chapter, pupils should **add information to the character cards**. Any new information or quotes build up a picture while also preparing the pupils for the Top Trumps task at the end. The best ones should be displayed in the classroom. Alternatively, they can be completed as a class and used for wall display.

A suggestion for a possible layout is included overleaf, but pupils may want to create their own layout, and use the back of the card for quotes and page references. The more detail they add to these cards during the reading, the easier the tasks at the end will be.

# Character Traits

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## External (Outside) Traits

What you see on the outside.

## Internal (Inside) Traits

Thoughts, feelings, actions, and dialogue.

Character's Name:

Character's  
Picture:

## At key points throughout: Hot-seating (Drama Activity)

*I can show my understanding of what I listen to or watch by responding to literal, inferential, evaluative and other types of questions, and by asking different kinds of questions of my own. LIT 2-07a*

*When listening and talking with others for different purposes, I can: • share information, experiences and opinions • explain processes and ideas • identify issues raised and summarise main points or findings • clarify points by asking questions or by asking others to say more. LIT 2-09a*

At key points in the book, the teacher can choose somebody to be **interviewed as Alexander, Lizzie, Queen Mary and other characters**, as if on TV or radio. This may involve dressing up with a key costume item or prop and if you have a spotlight available, it really helps to add to the occasion. The actor should improvise answers while classmates can create questions for the interview after the reading of the relevant chapters.

## After chapter 1: STEM Activity – Creating Fog

*I can apply my knowledge of how water changes state to help me understand the processes involved in the water cycle in nature over time. SCN 2-05a*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOD4CN8o9-Q&t=8s>

The foggy conditions on the day of Mary's arrival in Scotland led to speculation that her reign was cursed from the beginning. What are the real reason fog forms? Why not experiment by creating fog in the classroom as the above video explains.

There are more resources at <https://www.whatdowedoallday.com/fog-in-a-bottle-unplugged-project-weather/> and <https://pacificsciencecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/cah-fog-jar.pdf>.

## After Chapter 1: Shadow Puppetry of Queen Mary's Arrival (Drama/Art)

All you need is a large picture frame or even a cereal box with a window cut out. Cover the frame with a thin light cloth or thin paper. Now cut your ships and figures out from black card – only the shapes will be seen, so you can draw the outlines in pencil and cut around it without being too precise. Shine a light source onto your screen from behind and gently hold your ships against the screen from behind – if you keep them at a little distance, they will look fuzzier. Your shapes work best if you mount them on sticks using masking tape. There are loads of YouTube clips on how to do shadow puppetry, including <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsdMqNIcrls>.





## After Chapter 2: Beremeal Bannocks

*I am developing dexterity, creativity and confidence when preparing and cooking food. TCH 2-04a*

*I enjoy eating a diversity of foods in a range of social situations. HWB 3-29a*

*The 'old housekeeper speedily warms... this morning's bannocks.' (p.16)*

Here is a **recipe** for the type of bannocks Betty would have made that morning:

You'll need: 2 cups of beremeal (from health food shops or online)

1 cup of plain flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon cream of tartar

pinch of salt

(1 tablespoon of sugar if desired)

Mix thoroughly, add milk, water or buttermilk to make a stiff but soft dough, roll out on a floured (mixture of flour and beremeal) board to form the bannocks (this will make 2 or 3, or more mini ones for small portions), then cook on a hot, ungreased girdle 5 minutes or so each side until both sides are browned and the middle is cooked. Alternatively, bake in a hot oven for 15-20 minutes. Practice will make perfect. Consume with copious amounts of butter and cheese, or jam!

## After Chapter 3: Drama Activity: Flashback

*I have created and presented scripted or improvised drama, beginning to take account of audience and atmosphere. EXA 2-14a*

At the beginning of Chapter 3 there is a flashback, a jump back in time.

In groups, take a well-known, simple story like Little Red Riding Hood. Instead of telling it from beginning to end in a linear way, experiment with a **flashback**, beginning the performance in the middle and adding a flashback to feed in how it all began. You can even add a sound effect to highlight the jump in time. Jumping forward in time is called a **flashforward**.

Perform your stories to the class.

## After Chapter 4: Birds of Prey

*LIT 2-14a Using what I know about the features of different types of texts, I can find, select and sort information from a variety of sources and use this for different purposes.*

*I can identify and classify examples of living things, past and present, to help me appreciate their diversity. I can relate physical and behavioural characteristics to their survival or extinction. SCN 2-01a*

These chapters contain a lot of information about Alexander's work as a trainee falconer. Research different birds of prey used in falconry, paying particular attention to birds found here in this country, and choose one kind. Prepare a fact-file on your chosen bird and illustrate it. What have you learned? Which fact or figure surprises you most?

If you can, organise a visit to a falconry display. There is more information at <https://www.falconryscotland.co.uk/schools-education.php>. For this book, the author consulted Andy Bunting of Manor Falconry who gives regular falconry displays at Dunrobin Castle.

## After Chapter 5: Music Activity: 16th Century Choirsong

*I can sing and play music from a range of styles and cultures, showing skill and using performance directions, and/or musical notation. EXA 2-16a*

Chapter 5 refers to 'choristers from St Giles – they often rehearse in the cloisters in the evening.' Why not have a go at learning a very simple 16th century melody that can be sung in the round, creating lovely harmonies? There is a nice example at <https://www.8notes.com/scores/22905.asp> – a 16th century melody which Mary Queen of Scots may well have sung with her friends.



## After Chapter 8: RMPS Activity – Invite Catholic and Protestant visitors



*I am increasing my knowledge and understanding of different forms of Christian worship and artefacts and can explain their importance for Christians. RME 2-03a*

Scotland at the time of Mary, Queen of Scots is divided – only for the past year, the country has been officially Protestant – and Catholic worship was banned. Thankfully, our society is much more tolerant nowadays. Why not invite a Catholic priest and a Protestant minister from local churches to visit and answer some of your questions? They will be able to explain some of the differences in their beliefs, as well as the many things they have in common.

## After Chapter 9: Science Activity – Birdwatching

*I can identify and classify examples of living things, past and present, to help me appreciate their diversity. I can relate physical and behavioural characteristics to their survival or extinction. SCN 2-01a*

A lot of birds are mentioned in this chapter. Make a list of the ones which appear in these pages! Alexander is very interested in birds. Perhaps you can do a playground birdwatch, spending a period of time outside and listing the kids of birds you can spot. There are some great resources for this at <https://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/get-ready-for-big-schools-birdwatch>.

## After Chapter 10: Arts & Crafts Activity – Lizzie’s Embroidery Sampler

*I have the opportunity to choose and explore an extended range of media and technologies to create images and objects, comparing and combining them for specific tasks. EXA 2-02a*

*Through observing and recording from my experiences across the curriculum, I can create images and objects which show my awareness and recognition of detail. EXA 2-04a*

In Chapter 10, Lizzie is frustrated with the Wardrobe Master: *'And he won't let me near the embroidery – he says that it's a man's job!'* (p.51)

Lizzie is very skilled at embroidery. Have a go and learn some basic embroidery stitches yourself, creating a sampler of your own. It could look something like this:



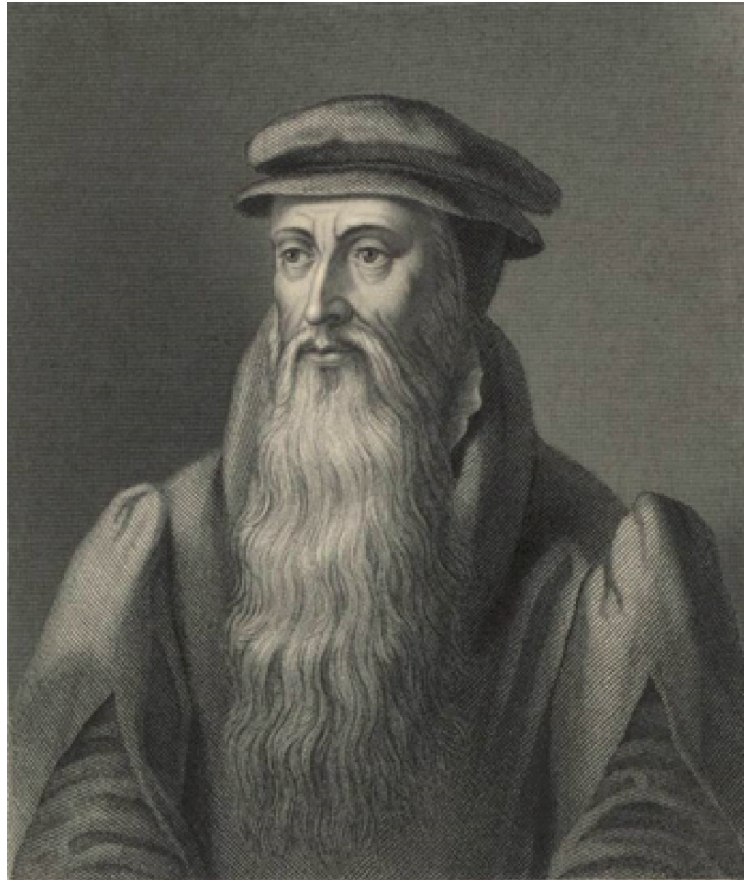
You can find out more information at <https://rainbow-creations-blog.blogspot.com/2013/08/embroidery-stitches-for-children.html> and there is a fab video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU5GR4EE4XY>.

### **After Chapter 10: Research John Knox**

*I can use primary and secondary sources selectively to research events in the past SOC 2-01a*

*I can discuss why people and events from a particular time in the past were important, placing them within a historical sequence. SOC 2-06a*

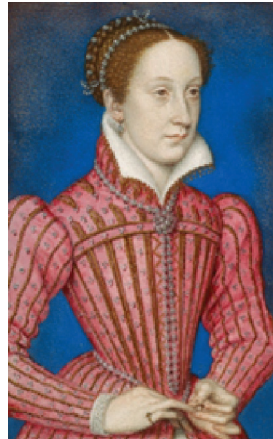
Prepare a short fact file or presentation about one of the most influential people in Scottish history.



### After Chapter 13: Art Activity: Portrait of Mary Queen of Scots

*Inspired by a range of stimuli, I can express and communicate my ideas, thoughts and feelings through activities within art and design. EXA 2-05a*

In Chapter 13, Alexander reflects: *'all of Scotland must surely be in love with this Queen.'* Can you create your own **portrait** of the Queen based on what you have learned about Mary?



## After Chapter 14: Fire Safety Fact File

*Using what I know about the features of different types of texts, I can find, select and sort information from a variety of sources and use this for different purposes. LIT 2-14a*

*I can make notes, organise them under suitable headings and use them to understand information, develop my thinking, explore problems and create new texts, using my own words as appropriate. LIT 2-15a*

*I am learning to assess and manage risk, to protect myself and others, and to reduce the potential for harm when possible. HWB 2-16a*

There is a fire in Queen Mary's bedchamber at Stirling Castle in this chapter. Research fire safety and create a poster with some tips of how to keep yourself safe in case you are unlucky enough to find yourself in such a situation. There are lots of fire safety resources, but this video is a good start:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9Uky6wacwI>.

## After Chapter 16: The Family Crest

*I am learning to use language and style in a way which engages and/or influences my reader. ENG 2-27a*

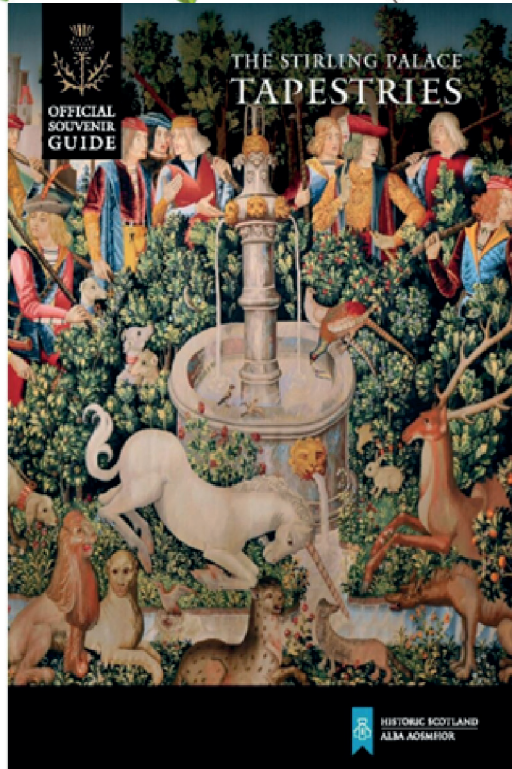
*By considering the type of text I am creating, I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in an appropriate way for my purpose and use suitable vocabulary for my audience. LIT 2-26a*

*I consider the impact that layout and presentation will have and can combine lettering, graphics and other features to engage my reader. LIT 2-24a*



In this chapter, Alexander and Lizzie come face to face with the Gordon family crest.

In the time of Queen Mary, noble families had a family crest and a Latin motto like the House of Huntly, the Gordon family. Theirs were *Bydand* (“abiding/stay and fight”) and *Animo non astutia* (“By courage, not by cunning”). The crest featured a stag. What would your family crest and motto be? You can use Google Translate to turn it into Latin!



## After Chapter 18: Mock Trial: Is Elizabeth, the seamstress, guilty of witchcraft and treason?

*When I engage with others, I can respond in ways appropriate to my role, show that I value others' contributions and use these to build on thinking. LIT 2-02a*

*I can make notes, organise them under suitable headings and use them to understand information, develop my thinking, explore problems and create new texts, using my own words as appropriate. LIT 2-15a*

If Lizzie had not been freed by Lord James, she may have faced trial. Witchcraft on its own did not become a crime until 1563, but people were deeply worried about witchcraft and magic at the time, and the crime of treason carried a punishment of death.

Allow pupils a realistic amount of research/preparation time to stage the trial above. They should use information in the book and/or find statistics and evidence elsewhere. A pupil or team of pupils should prepare a prosecution case (a arguing the defendant is guilty) and another pupil or team should prepare a defence (someone who argues the defendant is not guilty). Both sides should make introductory short speeches to persuade the audience, and they can call witnesses too (more fun with costumes or basic props). The class (as the jury) should then vote to find the defendant guilty, or not guilty.

Facts and figures about witchcraft and witch hunts in Scotland can be found at <https://witches.hca.ed.ac.uk/faq/>

## After Chapter 28: Persuasive speech about Gaelic

*To help me develop an informed view, I can identify and explain the difference between fact and opinion, recognise when I am being influenced, and have assessed how useful and believable my sources are. LIT 2-18a*

*I can show my understanding of what I listen to or watch by responding to literal, inferential, evaluative and other types of questions, and by asking different kinds of questions of my own. LIT 2-07a*

*To help me develop an informed view, I can distinguish fact from opinion, and I am learning to recognise when my sources try to influence me and how useful these are. LIT 2-08a*

The Queen befriends some Highlanders on her visit north – these spoke Gaelic rather than the fashionable French, or Scots. You might be surprised at Gaelic words which have made their way into English: trousers, whisky, bog, capercaillie, galore to name but a few.

With a partner, create a speech rousing modern Scotland to embrace Gaelic again.

Some of the techniques you may want to use: Lists of three, alliteration, repetition, rhetorical questions, addressing your audience directly... the choice is yours. But your speech does not have to be long to have an impact.

## After Chapter 30: STEM Activity – The Cannon

*By investigating forces on toys and other objects, I can predict the effect on the shape or motion of objects. SCN 1-07a*

*By investigating how friction, including air resistance, affects motion, I can suggest ways to improve efficiency in moving objects. SCN 2-07a*

Alexander reflects: ‘The cannon? I cannot imagine the Earl ever parting with it. He loves that piece of metal like he loves his wife and children – more, probably.’ (p.144)

The cannon was the Earl’s treasured possession because it was a symbol of power – it says: ‘don’t mess with me; I can defend myself!’

Have a go at creating a cannon of your own. There are several ways you can do this. Here are some ideas:

<https://www.fun-science.org.uk/vortex-cannon-kids-experiment/>

<https://www.steampoweredfamily.com/catapult-cannon-stem-activity/>

<https://www.fabscience.co.uk/rubber-band-cannons/>



## After Chapter 34: Drama Activity –Slow motion battle

*I can create, adapt and sustain different roles, experimenting with movement, expression and voice and using theatre arts technology. EXA 2-12a*

The Battle of Corrichie was the decisive victory over the Earl of Huntly. Stage your own version of a slow-motion battle, perhaps using up to ten sentences from these chapters to be narrated – and play some super-dramatic music in the background! This is most effective if actors not only attack in slow motion, but react, too – think exaggerated facial expressions, fleeing, ducking, sidestepping. It works best if ‘warriors’ on both sides are assigned a partner to fight – that way, pairs can rehearse their movements in advance. This can be filmed and shared with parents too.

## At the end: Photo Story Comic

*I can make notes, organise them under suitable headings and use them to understand information, develop my thinking, explore problems and create new texts, using my own words as appropriate. LIT 2-15a*

Pupils should brainstorm the 10-12 main events in the novel *The Boy, the Witch and the Queen of Scots*. Once they are in the right order, pupils can be given minimal dressing up/props and a camera to take **freeze-frame photographs of these key dramatic moments**.



Once printed, the photographs can be displayed with captions and speech bubbles. Don't forget the sound effects either!

## At the end: Nook Review

*I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. LIT 1-20a / LIT 2-20a*

Pupils should write a short online book review to post up on Amazon, Waterstones and/or Goodreads, or on the school/class blog. They should check their work throughout the process, making sure that it makes sense at first reading.

## At the end: top Trumps Cards

*I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. LIT 1-20a / LIT 2-20a*

**Pupils** should list as many characters from The Boy, the Witch and the Queen of Scots as they can. Using their own judgment about format, allow each group to create a **Top Trumps card game**. Each character should get a score for four categories. Possible categories include:

Courage  
Strength,  
Wisdom  
Kindness  
Wealth  
Likeability

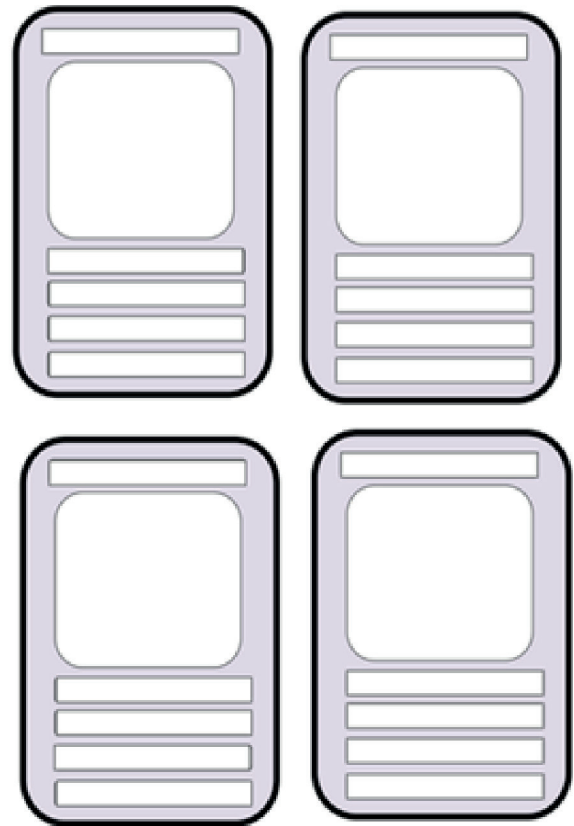
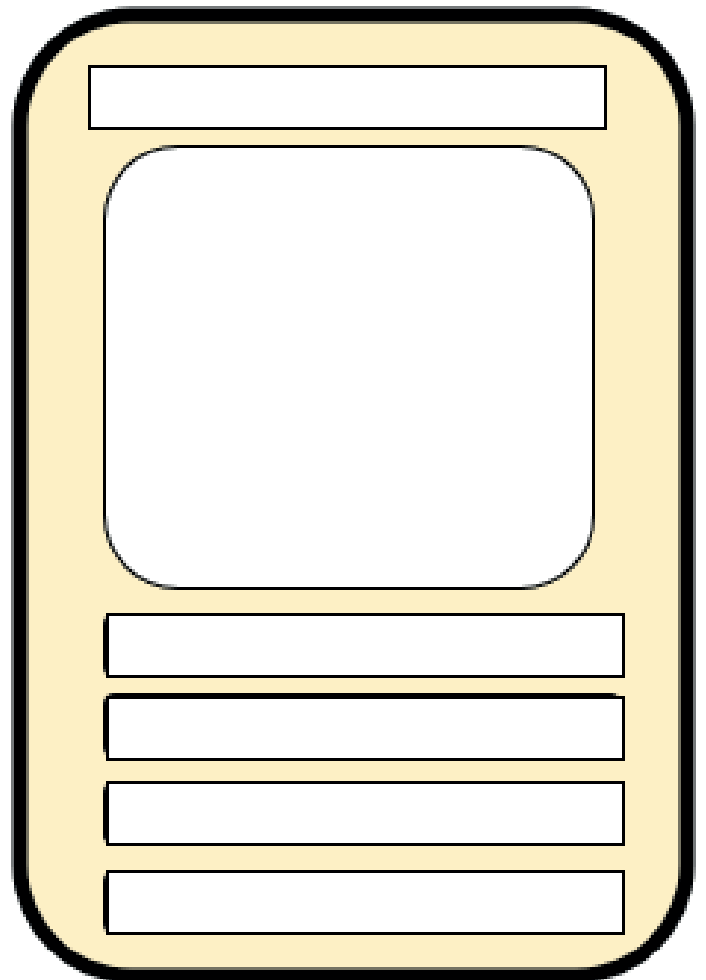
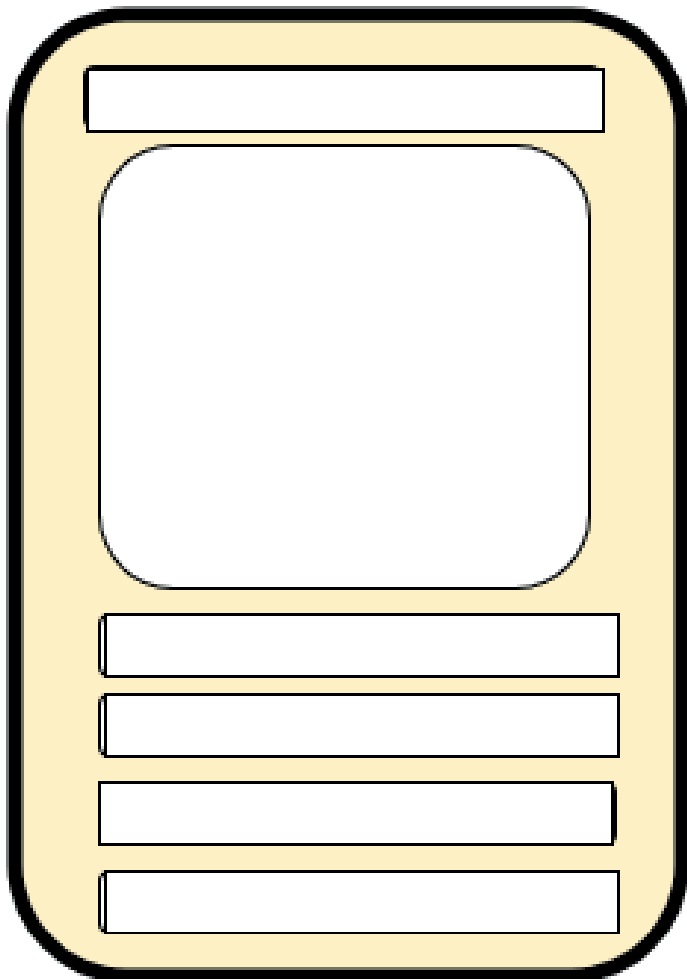
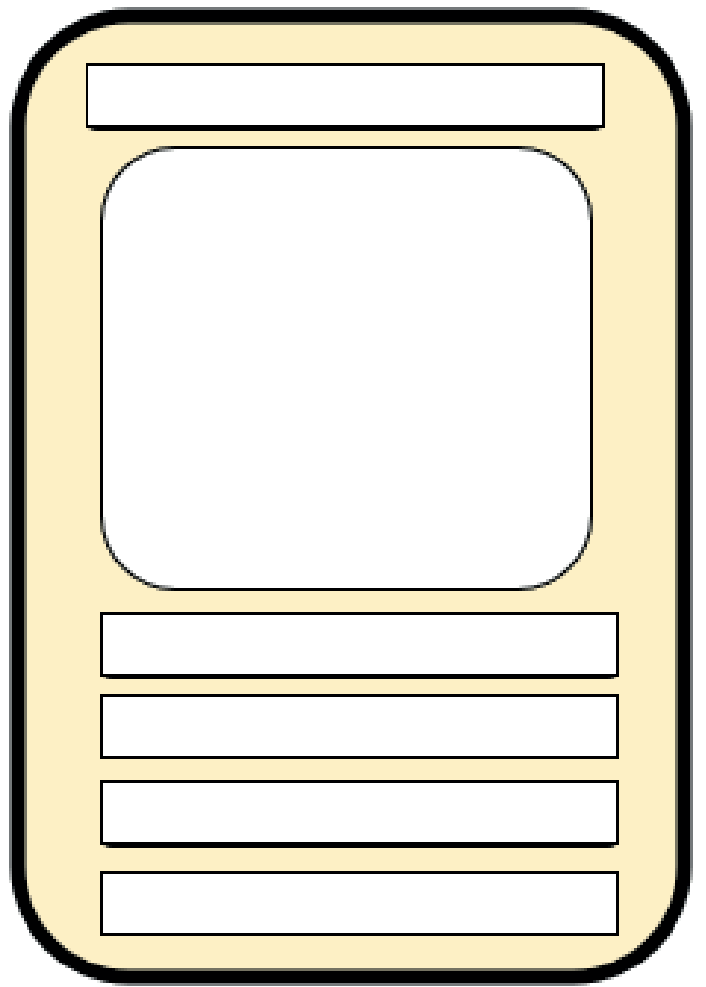
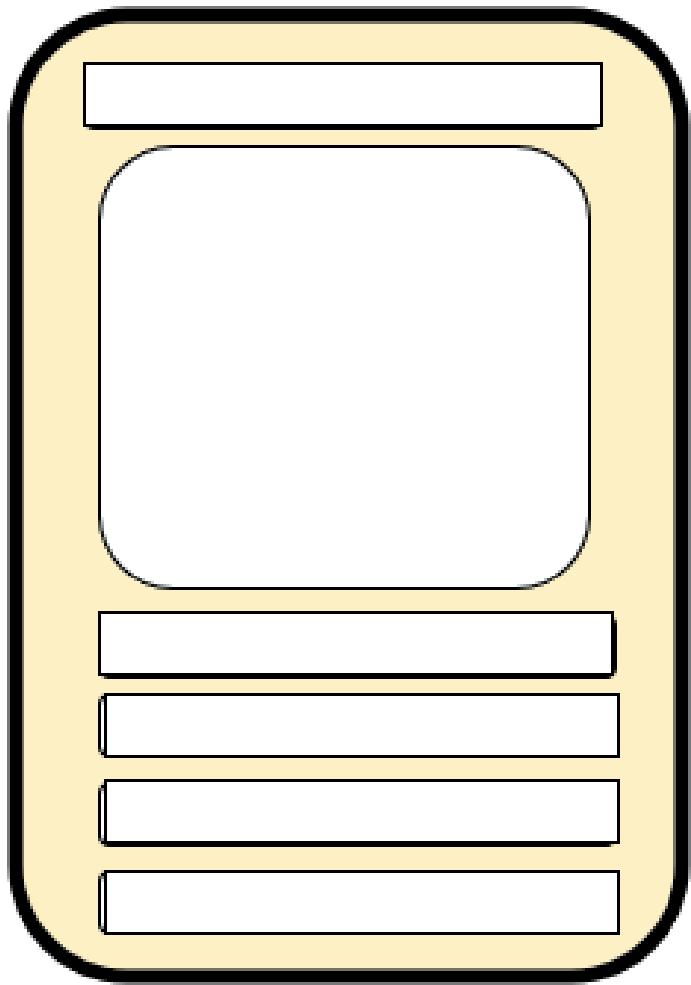


Figure 1 Source TES. Image can be enlarged. <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/blank-educational-top-trumps-template-6036598>



# PART 4

## USEFUL LINKS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### School Visits

*Historic Environment Scotland offer some FREE learning visits. For more information, visit <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/learn/free-learning-visits/>*

**Locations** featured in *The Boy, the Witch and the Queen of Scots*:

- Historic Environment Scotland - Information about visiting **Huntly Castle**:  
<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/huntly-castle/>
- Historic Environment Scotland - Information about learning visits to **Stirling Castle**: <https://www.stirlingcastle.scot/learn/learning-visits/>
- Historic Environment Scotland - Information about learning visits to **Linlithgow Palace**:  
<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/linlithgow-palace/>
- Royal Collection Trust: Information about school visits to the **Palace of Holyroodhouse**: <https://www.rct.uk/schools/palace-of-holyroodhouse>
- **St Giles Cathedral**: <https://www.stgilescathedral.org.uk/visitor-information>

### Digital Resources

- **Historic Environment Scotland: Child-friendly virtual tour of Stirling Castle** with junior tour guides:  
<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/about-us/news/explore-linlithgow-palace-virtually-with-the-junior-tour-guides/>
- **Historic Environment Scotland: Child-friendly virtual tour of Linlithgow Palace** with junior tour guides:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nk2taAMITYU>
- **Historic Environment Scotland: Mary's arrival – Diary entries as imagined by author Maisie Chan**:  
<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/learn/inspired-by-the-past/mary-queen-of-scots-return-by-maisie-chan/>

- **Royal Collections Trust: A range of resources on Mary, Queen of Scots** at <https://www.rct.uk/discover/school-resources/mary-queen-of-scots> which includes a resource on the Royal Mile as Mary would have known it, <https://www.rct.uk/resources/activity-challenge-edinburghs-royalmile-in-the-time-of-mary-queen-of-scots>
- **Archaeology Scotland: Resource Portal on Mary Queen of Scots:** <https://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/heritage-resources-portal/category/topic/mary-queen-of-scots/>
- **School History: Facts and information activity worksheet pack:** <https://schoolhistory.co.uk/early-modern/mary-queen-of-scots/>
- **National Museums of Scotland:** <https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/stories/scottish-history-and-archaeology/mary-queen-of-scots/>
- **Chronology:** <https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/stories/scottish-history-and-archaeology/mary-queen-of-scots/mary-queen-of-scots/life-and-deathline-of-mary-queen-of-scots/>
- **Scottish Archives - Mary's letter to her mother:** <https://www.scottisharchivesforschools.org/LettersAndDiaries/MaryQueenOfScots.asp>
- **Horrible Histories – Mary Queen of Scots Report:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ls0AE0GNE8E>

