

GABRIEL-ERNEST,
AN UNKNOWN BOY
WHO BRAVELY GAVE HIS LIFE
FOR ANOTHER.

Van Cheele usually did what his aunt wanted. But he refused to give any money at all for Gabriel-Ernest's memorial.

Tobermory

It was a cold, rain-washed afternoon in late August. Lady Blemley and her guests were sitting round the tea table. Everyone was listening open-mouthed to Mr Cornelius Appin.

Although he was one of her guests, Lady Blemley did not know Mr Appin well. She had invited him to stay at Blemley House because she had heard that he was clever. But until teatime that day he had not done or said anything clever. He did not play tennis, or sing, or make intelligent conversation. But now Mr Appin was describing a most extraordinary discovery and the other guests were listening with deep interest.

'Are you telling us that you have found a way of teaching animals to talk?' Sir Wilfrid was saying. 'And our dear old Tobermory is your first successful student?'

'I have studied this problem for seventeen years,' said Mr Appin, 'but I didn't have any real success until eight or nine months ago. Of course, I have studied thousands of animals, but recently I have worked only with cats. A cat, of course, is a wild animal who agrees to live with you. All cats are

intelligent, but naturally some cats are more intelligent than others. When I met Tobermory a week ago, I realized at once that here was an extraordinarily intelligent cat, a very special cat indeed. In Tobermory, I found the student I needed. With him I have succeeded in my plan.'

Nobody laughed, and nobody actually said 'Rubbish', although Clovis's lips moved silently . . .

'And have you really taught Tobermory,' asked Miss Resker, 'to say and understand short, easy words?'

'My dear Miss Resker,' said Mr Appin patiently, 'we teach little children and very slow, stupid adults in that way. But Tobermory is a most intelligent cat. He can speak English as well as you or I can.'

This time Clovis said 'Rubbish!' aloud.

Sir Wilfrid was more polite, but it was clear that he did not believe Mr Appin's story.

'Shall we bring the cat in here and hear him for ourselves?' said Lady Blemley.

Sir Wilfrid went off to look for Tobermory.

'Mr Appin will try to be clever,' said Miss Resker happily, 'but if we watch him carefully, we shall see his lips move.'

In a minute Sir Wilfrid returned, looking very excited.

'It's true, you know!' he said. 'I found Tobermory sleeping in the smoking-room, and called out to him to come for his tea. He lifted his head and opened one eye. I said, "Come on, Toby, don't keep us waiting!" and he said calmly, "I'll come when I'm ready!" I couldn't believe my ears!'

The guests all started talking at once, while Mr Appin sat

silently and looked very pleased with himself indeed.

Then Tobermory entered the room and calmly walked over to the tea table. The conversation stopped. Nobody knew what to say to a talking cat. At last Lady Blemley spoke:

'Would you like some milk, Tobermory?' she asked in a high, unnatural voice.

'I don't mind if I do,' answered Tobermory. Lady Blemley's hand shook with excitement and some of the milk went onto the carpet.

'Oh dear! I'm so sorry,' she said.

'I don't mind. It isn't my carpet, after all,' replied Tobermory.

There was another silence, then Miss Resker asked politely, 'Did you find it difficult to learn English, Tobermory?'

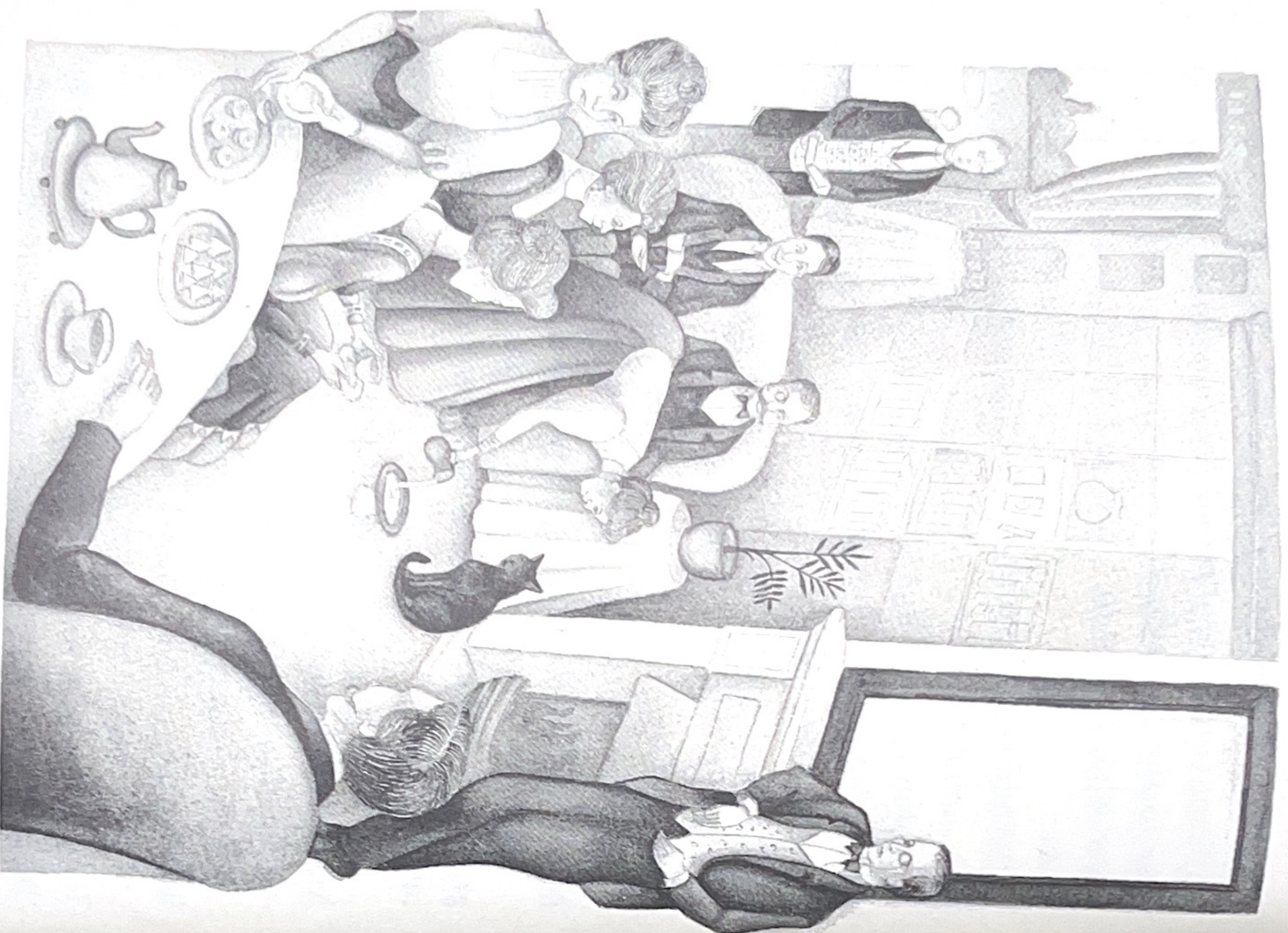
Tobermory looked straight through her with his bright green eyes. Clearly, he did not answer questions that did not interest him.

'What do you think of the intelligence of people?' asked Mavis Pellington.

'Which people's intelligence?' asked Tobermory coldly.

'Well, my intelligence, for example,' said Mavis with a little laugh.

'You make things very uncomfortable for me,' said Tobermory, although he did not look at all uncomfortable. 'When Lady Blemley wanted to invite you here, Sir Wilfrid was not pleased. "Mavis Pellington is the stupidest woman I know," he said. "That's why I want to invite her," Lady



'I don't mind. It isn't my carpet, after all,' replied Tobermory.

Blemley replied. "I want her to buy my old car, and she's stupid enough to do that."

'It isn't true!' cried Lady Blemley. 'Don't believe him, Mavis!'

'If it isn't true,' said Mavis coldly, 'why did you say this morning that your car would be just right for me?'

Major Barfield did his best to help. He tried to start a new conversation. 'How are you getting on with your little black and white lady friend in the garden?' he asked Tobermory. Everybody realized at once that this was a mistake.

Tobermory gave him an icy look. 'We do not usually discuss these things in polite company,' he said. 'But I have watched you a little since you have been in this house. I think perhaps you would not like me to discuss *your* lady friends.'

The Major's face became very red, and all the other guests began to look worried and uncomfortable. What was Tobermory going to say next?

'Would you like to go down to the kitchen now, Tobermory,' asked Lady Blemley politely, 'and see if the cook has got your dinner ready?'

'No, thank you,' said Tobermory. 'I've only just had my tea. I don't want to make myself sick.'

'Cats have nine lives, you know,' said Sir Wilfrid with a laugh.

'Possibly,' answered Tobermory. 'But only one stomach.' 'Lady Blemley!' cried Mrs Cornett, 'don't send that cat to the kitchen. He will talk about us to the cook!'

Everyone was very worried now. They remembered

uncomfortably that Tobermory moved freely all over the house and gardens, at all hours of the day and night. He could look into any of the bedrooms if he wanted to. What had he seen? What had he heard? Nobody's secrets were safe now.

'Oh, why did I come here?' cried Agnes Resker, who could never stay silent for long.

'You know very well why you came here,' said Tobermory immediately. 'You came for the food, of course. I heard you talking to Mrs Cornett in the garden. You said that the Blemleys were terribly boring people, but they had an excellent cook.'

'You mustn't believe him!' cried Agnes. 'I never said that, did I, Mrs Cornett?'

'Later, Mrs Cornett repeated your words to Bertie van Tahn,' said Tobermory. 'She said, "That Resker woman will go anywhere for four good meals a day," and Bertie said—'

Just then Tobermory looked out of the window and saw the doctor's big yellow cat crossing the garden. Immediately he disappeared through the open window.

Everyone started talking at once, and Mr Appin found himself in a storm of angry questions.

'You must stop this at once,' everyone said to him. 'What will happen if Tobermory teaches other cats to talk? We shall never have a moment's peace!'

'It's possible that he has taught the gardener's cat,' replied Mr Appin thoughtfully, 'but I don't believe he has had time to teach any other cats.'



Just then Tobermory saw the doctor's big yellow cat crossing the garden.

'Then,' said Mrs Cornett, 'although Tobermory is a valuable cat, he and the gardener's cat must die. Don't you agree, Lady Blemley?'

'You're right,' said Lady Blemley sadly. 'My husband and I love Tobermory – well, we did before this afternoon – but now, of course, he must die as soon as possible.'

'We will poison his dinner,' said Sir Wilfrid, 'and I will kill the gardener's cat myself. The gardener won't like it, but I'll say it has some kind of disease—'

'But what about my discovery?' cried Mr Appin. 'What about all my years of work? Are you going to destroy my only successful student?'

'You can go and teach the cows on the farm,' said Mrs Cornett coldly, 'or the elephants at the zoo. Elephants are very intelligent, they tell me, and elephants don't hide behind chairs or under beds and listen to people's conversations.'

Mr Appin knew when he was beaten.

Dinner that evening was not a success. Sir Wilfrid had had a difficult time with the gardener's cat and later with the gardener. Agnes Resker refused to eat anything, while Mavis Pellington ate her meal in silence. Everyone was waiting for Tobermory. A plate of poisoned fish stood ready for him in the dining-room, but he did not come home. Nobody talked much, and nobody laughed. It was a most uncomfortable meal.

After dinner the Blemleys and their guests sat in the smoking-room. Everyone was quiet and worried and nobody wanted to play cards. At eleven o'clock the cook and the

housekeeper went to bed. They left the kitchen window open for Tobermory as usual, but he did not come.

At two o'clock Clovis spoke:

'He won't come home tonight. He's probably in the newspaper office selling them his story. They'll love it. The story will be the excitement of the year.'

After that everyone went to bed, but nobody slept.

In the morning Tobermory had still not come home. Breakfast was another quiet, uncomfortable meal. Then, half-way through the coffee, the gardener brought in Tobermory's blood-stained body.

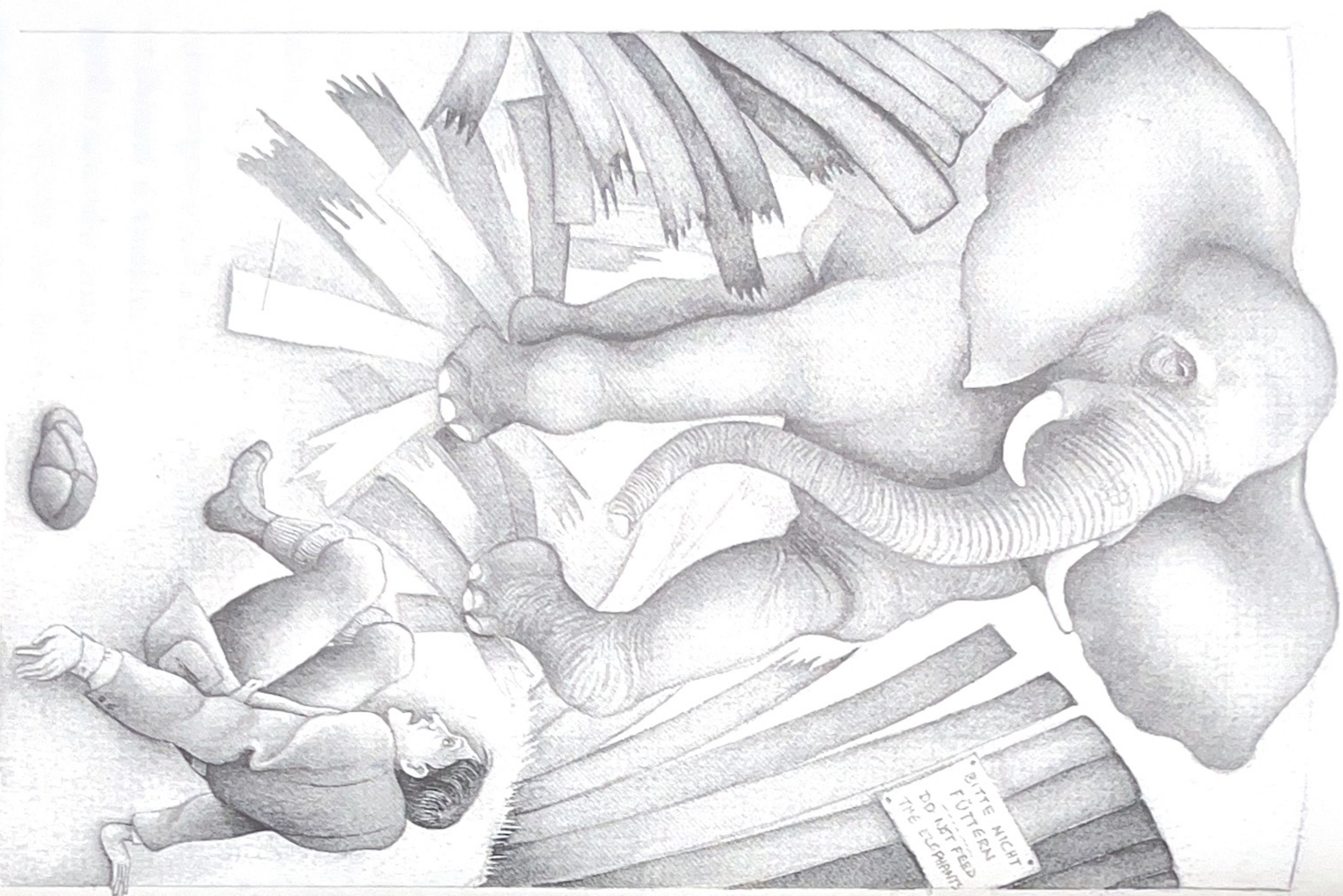
'Look at his claws!' cried Clovis. 'He's been fighting!' And there, on Tobermory's claws, was the yellow hair of the doctor's cat.

By lunchtime most of the guests had left Blemley House. Lady Blemley began to feel better. She took out her pen and paper and wrote a very angry letter to the doctor about the death of her valuable cat.

Tobermory was Mr Appin's only successful student. A few weeks after Tobermory's death an elephant escaped from the Dresden Zoo and killed an English visitor.

The zoo keeper said that the elephant had always been a calm and gentle animal before. But suddenly it seemed to become very angry with the English visitor, who was talking to it.

The dead man's name was reported in the newspapers as Oppin, but his first name was Cornelius.



Suddenly the elephant seemed to become very angry
with the English visitor.

'If Appin was trying to teach the poor elephant to speak German,' said Clovis, 'I'm not surprised it killed him.'

The She-Wolf

To Leonard Bilster the real world was not very agreeable or interesting. He preferred to live in an 'unseen world' of his imagination. Children are often very good at this, but they are happy in their own dream worlds and do not try to make other people believe them. Leonard Bilster talked about 'the unseen world' to anyone who would listen to him.

Nothing very strange happened to Leonard, until one year he travelled by train across Eastern Europe. He had a long conversation with a Russian passenger, who talked about magic and 'hidden powers' in a most interesting way. Leonard listened excitedly. He came home with many stories about the strange, dark mysteries which he called Siberian Magic.

His aunt, Cecilia Hoops, was deeply interested in Leonard's Siberian Magic. When she told her friends about it ('My dears, he took a garden vegetable and changed it into a bird in front of my eyes!'), her friends realized that she also had a wonderful imagination.

Leonard, together with his hidden powers, was invited to Mary Hampton's house-party. Several other people were

also staying in the house, and they all had to listen to Leonard talking about the mysteries of the unseen world. 'Do please change me into a wolf, Mr Bilster,' said Mrs Hampton during lunch on the day of his arrival.

'My dear Mary,' said her husband. 'What a strange idea!' 'A she-wolf, of course,' continued Mrs Hampton. 'I don't want to change into a man as well as an animal!'

'We should not joke about the unseen world,' said Leonard.

'Oh, I'm not joking, I promise you. But don't change me into a wolf tonight. I want to play cards, and there are only eight of us in the house today. I've invited some more people to come here tomorrow. Wait until tomorrow night.'

Leonard was not amused. 'Mrs Hampton, you really must not laugh at these dark mysteries. They can be stronger and more dangerous than we realize.'

Clovie Sangrail listened silently to this conversation, and after lunch he spoke to Lord Pabham in the smoking-room.

'Tell me, Lord Pabham,' began Clovie. 'Have you got a she-wolf in your zoo at Pabham Park? A quiet, friendly she-wolf?'

'There's Louisa,' said Lord Pabham thoughtfully. 'She's very quiet and gentle. Why do you ask?'

'I'd like to borrow her tomorrow evening,' said Clovie lightly. 'May I, please?'

'Tomorrow night?' repeated Lord Pabham in surprise.

'Yes. Wolves usually sleep during the day, don't they? So a night-time journey won't hurt her. Could you ask one of



Clovis Sangrail listened silently to this conversation.

your men to bring Louisa here when it is dark? Then he can take her quietly into the conservatory at the same time as Mrs Hampton leaves the dining-room.'

Lord Pabham looked at Clovis in surprise. Then he smiled. 'I understand!' he said. 'You're going to try a little Siberian Magic. And has Mrs Hampton agreed to help you?'

'Mary has promised – if your she-wolf is quiet and gentle.'

'Louisa won't give you any trouble,' said Lord Pabham.

The next day several more guests arrived. Leonard Bilster enjoyed telling them all about Siberian Magic and hidden powers. He talked all through dinner. When the coffee arrived at the end of the meal, Leonard's aunt spoke.

'Dear Leonard,' she said, 'please show us your powers. Change something into another shape.' She turned to the other guests. 'He can do it if he wants to,' she told them.

'Oh, please show us,' said Mavis Pellington excitedly.

'Well . . . ' began Leonard. 'If somebody will give me a small coin . . . '

'Oh, surely you aren't going to do stupid things with disappearing coins?' said Clovis. 'We want to see something really surprising.'

'That's right,' said Mary Hampton. 'Why don't you change me into a wolf? You promised!' She got up from the table and walked into the conservatory with a bowl of fruit for her macaws.

'I have already warned you,' said Leonard seriously. 'It is dangerous to joke about these things.'

'I don't believe you can do it!' laughed Mary from the

conservatory. As she spoke, she disappeared behind a large green plant.

'Mrs Hampton—' began Leonard seriously. Then an icy wind seemed to fill the dining-room, and at the same time Mrs Hampton's macaws began to scream.

'What's wrong with those stupid birds, Mary?' asked her husband. Just then, a big grey wolf stepped out from behind the large green plant.

Leonard's aunt saw it first. 'Leonard!' she screamed. 'Bring Mrs Hampton back at once! We don't want a dangerous wild animal in here!'

'I—I don't know how to bring her back,' said Leonard in a small, frightened voice.

'Rubbish!' shouted Mr Hampton. 'You changed my dear wife into a wolf. Now you must bring her back again!'

'Please believe me,' said Leonard. 'I didn't change your wife into a wolf.'

'Then where is she, and how did that animal get into the conservatory?' asked Mr Hampton angrily.

'Of course, we must believe you when you say that you didn't change Mrs Hampton into a wolf,' said Clovis politely. 'But you must agree that it all looks very strange.'

'How can you stand there arguing,' cried Mavis Pellington, 'with a wild animal in the house?'

'Lord Pabham,' began Mr Hampton, 'you know a lot about wild animals . . .'

'I *buy* all my animals,' said Lord Pabham. 'I have never found one in a conservatory before. But this is a wolf, I am



Just then, a big grey wolf stepped out from behind the large green plant.

sure of that. I think it's probably a North American she-wolf—'

'Oh, who cares where it came from!' screamed Mavis, as the wolf came a few steps further into the room. 'Can't you offer it some food, and take it away safely somewhere before it bites somebody?'

'If this animal is really Mrs Hampton,' said Clovis, 'she's just had an excellent dinner. She won't be interested in food.'

'Oh, Leonard,' cried his aunt, 'can't you use your wonderful powers to change this terrible animal into something small and gentle, like a rabbit?'

'I don't think Mr Hampton would like that,' said Clovis. 'You're right!' shouted Mr Hampton. 'I forbid it!'

'All my wolves love sugar,' said Lord Pabham. 'If you like, I'll offer this one a piece.' He took a piece of sugar from the table and pushed it along the floor towards Louisa. She ate it quickly and then, clearly hoping for more sugar, she followed Lord Pabham out of the room.

The guests left the table thankfully and hurried into the conservatory. It was empty. Mrs Hampton had disappeared.

'The door to the garden is locked on the inside!' said Clovis. (He had quickly turned the key while he was pretending to try the lock.)

Everyone turned towards Leonard Bilster.

'If you have not changed my wife into a wolf,' said Mr Hampton, 'will you please explain where she has gone? Clearly she could not go out through a locked door — so where is she?'



The guests left the table thankfully and hurried into the conservatory.

'I tell you, I had nothing to do with it!' repeated Leonard again and again. But nobody believed him.

'I'm leaving,' said Mavis Pellington. 'I refuse to stay another hour in this house.'

Just then Mary Hampton entered the room.

'What happened?' she asked crossly. 'Someone has been playing a stupid game with me. I found myself in the kitchen, eating sugar from Lord Pabham's hand. I hate stupid games, and my doctor has forbidden me to eat sugar.'

'Well, my dear . . .' began Mr Hampton. Mrs Hampton listened excitedly as he explained.

'So you really did change me into a wolf, Mr Bilisiter?' cried Mrs Hampton.

'No, no,' said Leonard. 'It's all a mistake.'

'Actually, I did it,' said Clovis. 'You see, I spent two years in Russia, and I know a little about Siberian Magic. Of course, I don't like to talk about it. But when other people talk a lot of rubbish about hidden powers, I like to show what Siberian Magic can *really* do . . . May I please have a drink? I feel a little tired now.'

Leonard Bilisiter looked at Clovis with hate in his eyes. At that moment he wished strongly that he could change Clovis into some small helpless animal, and then step on him very hard.

GLOSSARY

- aunt the sister of your father or mother
 bachelor a man who is not married
 bank the ground along the side of a river, lake or pool
 bar a long piece of something hard (bars fixed to a box or cage stop animals from getting out)
 believe to think that something is true
 bush a plant like a short, thick tree, with many branches
 claws the sharp nails on some animals' feet
 clink (v) to make a noise like coins knocking together
 conservatory a room with glass walls and roof, built on the side of a house
 dining-room a room where people eat their meals
 elephant a very big, grey animal with a very long nose
 ferret a small but dangerous animal, used for catching rabbits
 forbidden not allowed or permitted
 god a spirit that people think has power over them and nature
 growl (v) to make a low, angry noise in the throat, like a dog
 guest a person who is invited to stay or eat in somebody's house
 horrible making you very frightened or unhappy
 hunt (v) to chase and catch wild animals for food
 imagination making pictures in your head
 improper rude or unsuitable; wrong for that situation
 intelligence the ability to think, understand and reason
 joke (v) to say things that are funny and amusing, or not serious
 king the man who rules a country and who belongs to a royal family
 lord a title for an important man
 macaw a big noisy bird that can learn to talk

Glossary

- magic strange powers that can make wonderful and unusual things happen
- major a title for an army officer
- medal a piece of metal, like a coin, given to people to show that they have done something special
- memorial a building, a stone, etc. with the name of a dead person, to help people remember him/her
- memory being able to remember things
- milller a man who works in a mill, a building where corn is made into flour
- myrtle bush a green plant with sweet-smelling white flowers
- naked not wearing any clothes
- pig a farm animal with a fat body and short legs
- poison something that will kill you or make you very ill if you eat or drink it
- pool a small lake
- power being able to do things
- rabbit a small animal with long ears, which lives in holes under the ground
- shed a small wooden building in a garden
- slip (v) to slide accidentally and almost fall over
- stain a dirty or coloured mark (e.g. of blood, coffee, etc.) on something
- thought (n) something that you think
- toast (n) bread that is cooked until it is hot and brown
- werewolf an imaginary animal that is a man in the day and a wolf at night
- wolf a wild animal like a big dog, which hunts and kills other animals
- zoo a place where wild animals are kept for people to look at

Tooth and Claw

SHORT STORIES

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES

Before Reading

1 Read the back cover. How much do you know now about Conradin? For each sentence, circle Y (Yes) or N (No).

- 1 Conradin is a boy. Y/N
- 2 Conradin lives with his mother and father. Y/N
- 3 Conradin loves his aunt. Y/N
- 4 Conradin keeps an animal in his bedroom. Y/N
- 5 Conradin prays to the animal. Y/N

2 Conradin asks the animal to do one thing for him. Can you guess what it is? Choose one of these answers.

- 1 to give him a lot of money
- 2 to kill someone for him
- 3 to find his mother and father
- 4 to change his aunt into an animal

3 Now read the story introduction on the first page of the book. Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 There is a wild animal in each of the stories.
- 2 The stories happen in wild places.
- 3 People never want wild animals in their homes.
- 4 These stories will sometimes make you laugh.

ACTIVITIES

While Reading

Read *Sredni Vashtar* up to page 5, and answer these questions.

- 1 What kept Conradin alive?
- 2 Why did Conradin hate his aunt?
- 3 Where did Conradin play?
- 4 Who was Conradin's best friend?
- 5 What kind of animal did Conradin keep in the box in the shed?
- 6 How did Conradin feel about the animal in the box?
- 7 What did Conradin's aunt do with the chicken?
- 8 Why didn't Conradin eat the toast?
- 9 What was the name of Conradin's god?
- 10 What did Conradin think that his aunt was going to do when she went to the shed for the second time?

Before you read the end of the story, can you guess what is going to happen? For each sentence, circle Y (Yes) or N (No).

- 1 Conradin's aunt will kill the ferret. Y/N
- 2 Conradin will die. Y/N
- 3 The ferret will kill Conradin's aunt. Y/N
- 4 The ferret will frighten Conradin's aunt and she will agree to let Conradin keep it. Y/N

Read *The Story-Teller*. Who said this, and to whom? Who or what were they talking about?

- 1 'Don't do that, Cyril.'
- 2 'Why is it better?'
- 3 'That was the stupidest story I've ever heard.'
- 4 'Was she pretty?'
- 5 'Bertha always wore them on her dress, and they clinked as she walked along.'
- 6 'He is still alive, so we don't know if the dream was true or not.'
- 7 'Black with white faces, white with black faces, all black ...'
- 8 'He was grey, with a black tongue and angry yellow eyes.'
- 9 'Oh, why did I come here?'
- 10 'You have destroyed years of careful teaching.'
- 11 'And they didn't do that for you.'

Read *Gabriel-Ernest*. Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)? Rewrite the false ones with the correct information.

- 1 Van Cheele told Cunningham that there was a wild animal in the woods.
- 2 When Van Cheele first saw the boy, he was swimming in the pool.
- 3 People said that the miller's son fell into the river.
- 4 The boy said that he slept in the woods at night.
- 5 When the boy said that he ate children, Van Cheele thought that he was telling the truth.
- 6 The boy said that he hunted at night on four feet.
- 7 Van Cheele liked the boy.

- 8 When Van Cheele saw the boy in his sitting-room, the boy was wearing his underclothes.
- 9 Van Cheele's dog liked the boy but Miss Van Cheele was frightened of him.
- 10 Cunningham told Van Cheele that when the sun went down, the boy disappeared and a wolf appeared.
- 11 Miss Van Cheele asked Gabriel-Ernest to take Jack Toop home.
- 12 Miss Van Cheele thought that Gabriel-Ernest killed Jack Toop.

Read *Tobermory*. Choose the best question-word for these questions and then answer them.

How / What / Who / Why

- 1 ... did Lady Blemley invite Mr Cornelius Appin to stay at her house?
- 2 ... had Mr Appin studied for seventeen years?
- 3 ... had Mr Appin taught Tobermory to do?
- 4 ... did everyone stop talking when Tobermory came into the room?
- 5 ... did Lady Blemley invite Mavis Pellington to stay?
- 6 ... asked Tobermory about his lady friend?
- 7 ... was everyone very worried about Tobermory?
- 8 ... came to stay with the Blemleys because they had a good cook?
- 9 ... did Sir Wilfrid kill the gardener's cat?
- 10 ... did Tobermory die?
- 11 ... did Cornelius Appin die?

ACTIVITIES: While Reading

Read *The She-Wolf*. Match these halves of sentences and put them in the right order to make a summary of the story. Begin with number 3.

- 1 After dinner, Mary Hampton again asked Mr Bilster to change her into a she-wolf,
- 2 After Clovis Sangrail heard this,
- 3 After Leonard Bilster met a Russian on a train,
- 4 and told them that she had found herself in the kitchen eating sugar.
- 5 Mary Hampton asked him to change her into a she-wolf.
- 6 but Leonard said that he couldn't bring her back.
- 7 Leonard Bilster wanted to kill him.
- 8 and as she spoke, she disappeared behind a big plant.
- 9 When Clovis said that he had changed her into a wolf using Siberian Magic,
- 10 and found that the door was locked.
- 11 he asked to borrow a quiet she-wolf from Lord Pabham's zoo the next evening.
- 12 he talked about Siberian Magic all the time.
- 13 Then a cold wind seemed to fill the room
- 14 and she followed him out of the room, hoping for more sugar.
- 15 Just then, Mary Hampton came into the room
- 16 Leonard's aunt told him to bring Mrs Hampton back
- 17 So Lord Pabham gave the wolf a piece of sugar
- 18 and a big grey wolf appeared from behind the plant.
- 19 The guests hurried into the conservatory
- 20 So when Mr Bilster was staying with the Hamptons,

ACTIVITIES

After Reading

- 1 Here is a newspaper report about Bertha's death. Fill in the gaps. Use one word in each gap.

A young girl called Bertha was killed yesterday while she was walking in the _____ gardens. She was extraordinarily _____ and always _____ her teachers and her parents. She was never dirty and she never _____ lies. She had three _____, which she always _____ on her dress: one because she was never _____, one because she was always _____, and one because she was the _____ Child in the World. The medals _____ as she walked along and everybody knew that she was extra good. When the _____ heard about her, he said that she could come and walk in his gardens every Friday _____. Children were usually _____ to walk in the gardens, which were very beautiful. There were lakes and trees and birds, but no _____, because the king had lots of little _____ running around everywhere. The king's _____ opened the gates for Bertha, but they never saw her again. They found her shoes, a few _____ of her dress, and her medals on the ground near some _____ bushes. They think that perhaps a _____ came to get a pig for its _____, but ate Bertha instead.

2 A policeman asked Miss Van Cheele some questions about Gabriel-Ernest. Put the conversation in the correct order and add the names. The policeman speaks first (number 13).

- 1 ____ 'And so Mr Van Cheele ran after them?'
- 2 ____ 'Did he tell you that his name was Gabriel-Ernest?'
- 3 ____ 'He was on his way back from London. He arrived just after the boys had left the church hall.'
- 4 ____ 'And what happened at the end of the party?'
- 5 ____ 'I'm not really sure. He just appeared one day in our sitting-room.'
- 6 ____ 'And where was Mr Van Cheele at that time?'
- 7 ____ 'He was naked? Didn't you think that was strange?'
- 8 ____ 'No, he'd lost his memory, so I gave him a name.'
- 9 ____ 'Didn't he have a name on his clothes?'
- 10 ____ 'Not at all. I thought he was a very nice boy. So I asked him to help me with the children's tea party.'
- 11 ____ 'I'm afraid he wasn't wearing any clothes.'
- 12 ____ 'Worried about what?'
- 13 ____ 'Who exactly was this Gabriel-Ernest?'
- 14 ____ 'Well, it was getting late, so I asked dear Gabriel-Ernest to take little Jack Toop home.'
- 15 ____ 'Worried about an accident, I think. And he was right. Poor little Jack fell into the river, and dear, brave Gabriel-Ernest jumped in after him.'
- 16 ____ 'Yes. He seemed very worried.'

The policeman then made some notes about questions to ask Van Cheele. Use these words to make four questions. Then write a fifth question of your own.

- 1 when / meet / Gabriel-Ernest?
- 2 why / go / London?
- 3 why / run / after the boys?
- 4 what / find / in the road?

3 Tobermory made people very uncomfortable. Here are some of the things that he said and did. Complete the sentences in your own words.

- 1 When Sir Wilfrid called him to tea, he _____.
- 2 When Miss Resker asked if it was difficult to learn English, he _____.
- 3 He told everyone that Sir Wilfrid said that Mavis Pellington was the _____.
- 4 Then he said that Lady Blemley wanted to invite Mavis to stay because _____.
- 5 When Major Barfield asked about his lady friend, he _____.
- 6 When Lady Blemley asked if he would like to go down to the kitchen for his dinner, he _____.
- 7 He told everyone that Agnes Resker thought the Blemleys _____ and she only came _____.
- 8 He said that Mrs Cornett repeated this to Bertie van Tahn, and added _____.

4 A famous writer once said, 'Saki did not like aunts.' Do you agree? Match these sentences with the aunts in the stories. What do they tell us about the aunts?

- 1 She sold the chicken.
- 2 She told her friends that Leonard had changed a vegetable into a bird.
- 3 She thought that the strange, naked boy was sweet.
- 4 When she spoke to the children, she always began with 'Don't...'

5 Match the animals with the descriptions. You can check with the glossary after you have finished. Then say which animal you prefer, and why.

cat, chicken, cow, elephant, ferret, macaw, pig, rabbit, sheep, wolf

- 1 a long, low, yellow and brown animal
- 2 a bird that can learn to talk
- 3 a bird that people keep for its eggs, and also eat
- 4 a fat, farm animal that people kill and eat
- 5 an animal that people keep in their homes
- 6 a big, grey animal with a very long nose
- 7 a wild animal like a big dog
- 8 a small animal with long ears, which lives in holes under the ground
- 9 a farm animal that people keep for milk and also eat
- 10 a farm animal that people keep for wool and also eat

6 Do you agree (A) or disagree (D) with these sentences? Explain why.

- 1 It is wrong to keep wild animals in boxes or zoos.
- 2 It is wrong to eat animals.
- 3 An animal can be a good friend.
- 4 Cats are more intelligent than other animals.
- 5 Animals can understand what people say.

7 Here are some new titles for the stories. Which titles go with which stories? Which titles do you prefer? Why?

Sredni Vashtar / The Story-Teller / Gabriel-Ernest / Tobermory / The She-Wolf

The Werewolf	Siberian Magic
A Boring Train Journey	The Ferret-God
Uncomfortable Secrets	Bertha and the Wolf
The Boy Who Killed his Aunt	A Clever Joke
The Boy Who Ate Children	Toast for Tea
The Best Child in the World	The Talking Cat
Louisa and the Sugar	Death of a Brave Boy
Mr Appin's Successful Student	

8 Which story did you prefer? Write a few sentences to explain why.