



# Contents

About the Author	6
About the Book	7
<b>FACT FILE</b> Open endings	8
<b>The Garden Party</b>	
Characters	12
Before Reading	14
<i>The Garden Party</i>	19
After Reading	47
<b>Sixpence</b>	
Characters	60
Before Reading	62
<i>Sixpence</i>	67
After Reading	79
<b>LIFE SKILLS</b> What is in a gift?	90

with  
**NEW ACTIVITIES**



# Open endings...

Before you read, check you know the meaning of the following words. What links these words?

conclusion    endings    outcome    resolution


## What is an open ending?

Have you ever finished a story and found yourself wondering, *What happens next?* That feeling usually comes because the story has an open ending. So, what is an open ending? It is a writing technique that leaves the story without one clear ending. The reader must decide for themselves the outcome of the book. Both stories in this book, *The Garden Party* and *Sixpence*, are examples of narratives with open endings. Instead of having a definite conclusion or resolution with an explanation of what is still unclear, the stories seem to end suddenly. This happens in many of Mansfield's stories. They often end at 'unexpected' moments. (More about that on the next page.) What happens next remains unknown. This leaves the reader with a sense of uncertainty and asks them to make their own meaning from clues within the story they have read. What looks like the end on the page is really a new starting point.

Open endings leave questions without an answer, and some parts of the plot unresolved. This invites the reader to take an active part in the story and ask those questions themselves. An open ending creates a sense of curiosity and leaves the story open to interpretation. Unresolved plot mysteries get the reader to think about other probable plot lines. These endings reflect life, with all of its uncertainties and multiple possible plot lines.

## Try for yourself

Finish the following story.

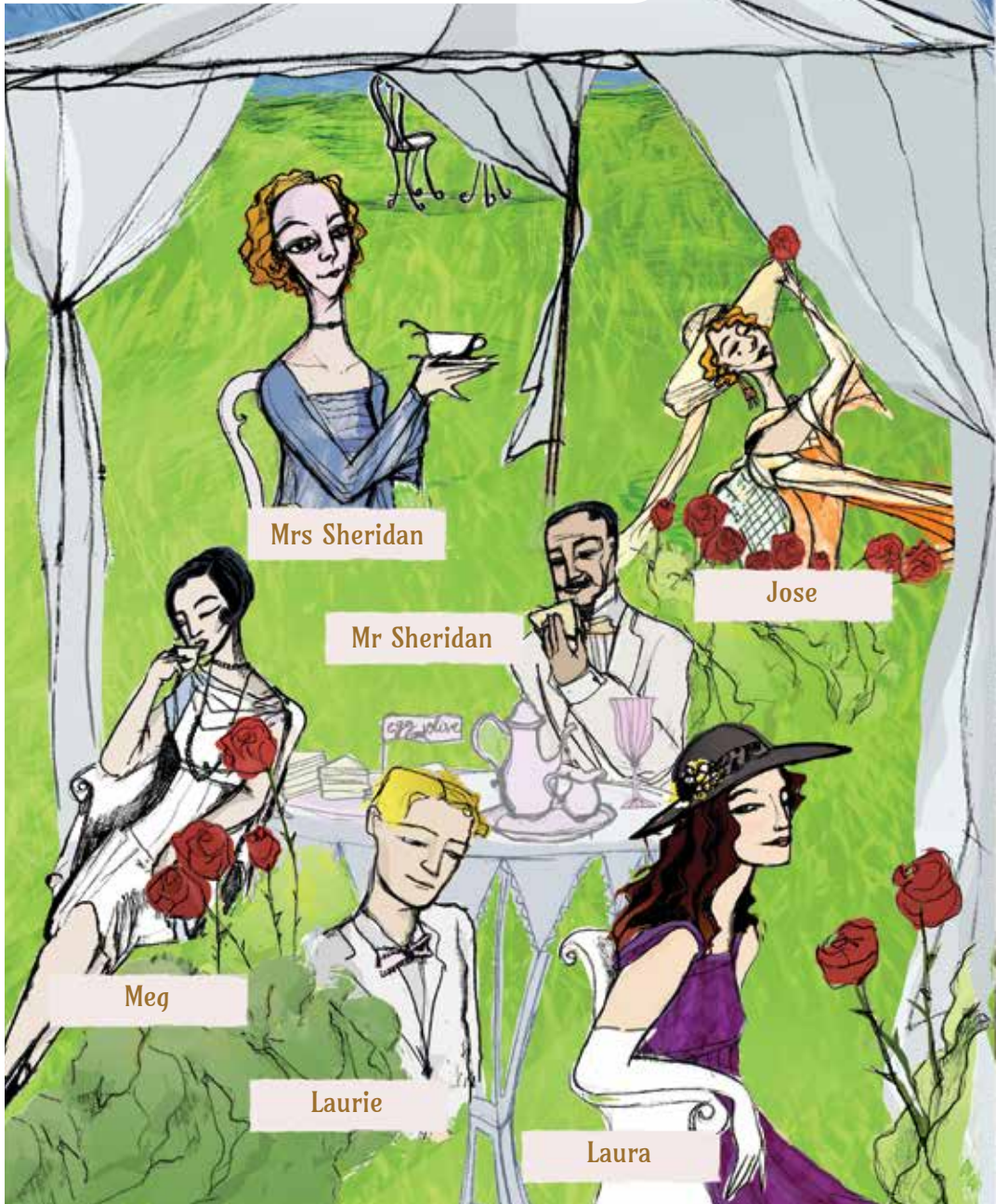
 Then compare stories with a partner.

Liam turned the key, and the door opened slowly. It was dark inside the room. A soft voice said his name. He stepped closer—then stopped. Was the voice friendly, or not? He couldn't tell...

- **clues:** something that helps one find an answer
- **creates:** makes
- **curiosity:** state of wanting to know something
- **narratives:** (here) stories
- **plot:** events in a story
- **uncertainty:** situation where something is not known
- **unclear:** not clear or definite
- **unexpected:** that one didn't think was going to happen

THE EN  
D

# The Garden Party



Mrs Sheridan

Jose

Mr Sheridan

Meg

Laurie

Laura




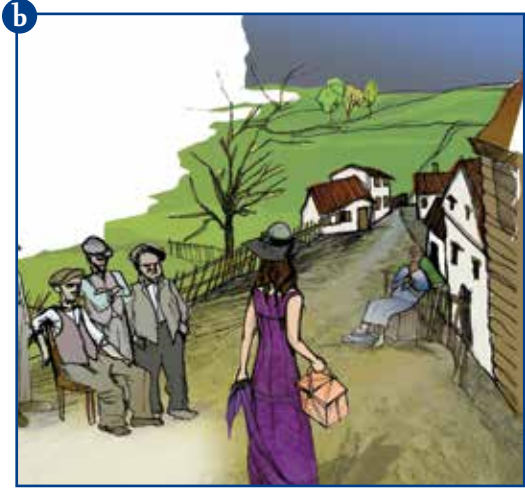
Em's sister


Em Scott

Mr Scott

# BEFORE READING

- 1 Think of your house. Imagine you are walking through it. Describe the rooms and the feeling you get from each individual room.
- 2  Look at these scenes from the story. Discuss the questions below with a partner.



- a Describe the scenes.
  - b What is the atmosphere like in each one?
  - c What is happening in each one?
  - d Who are the people?
- 3  Read the description below. With a partner, talk about your perfect weather for a party.

The weather was ideal. There could not have been a more perfect day for a garden party. Windless, warm, the sky without a cloud. And the blue was thinly covered with a haze of light gold, as it is sometimes in early summer.

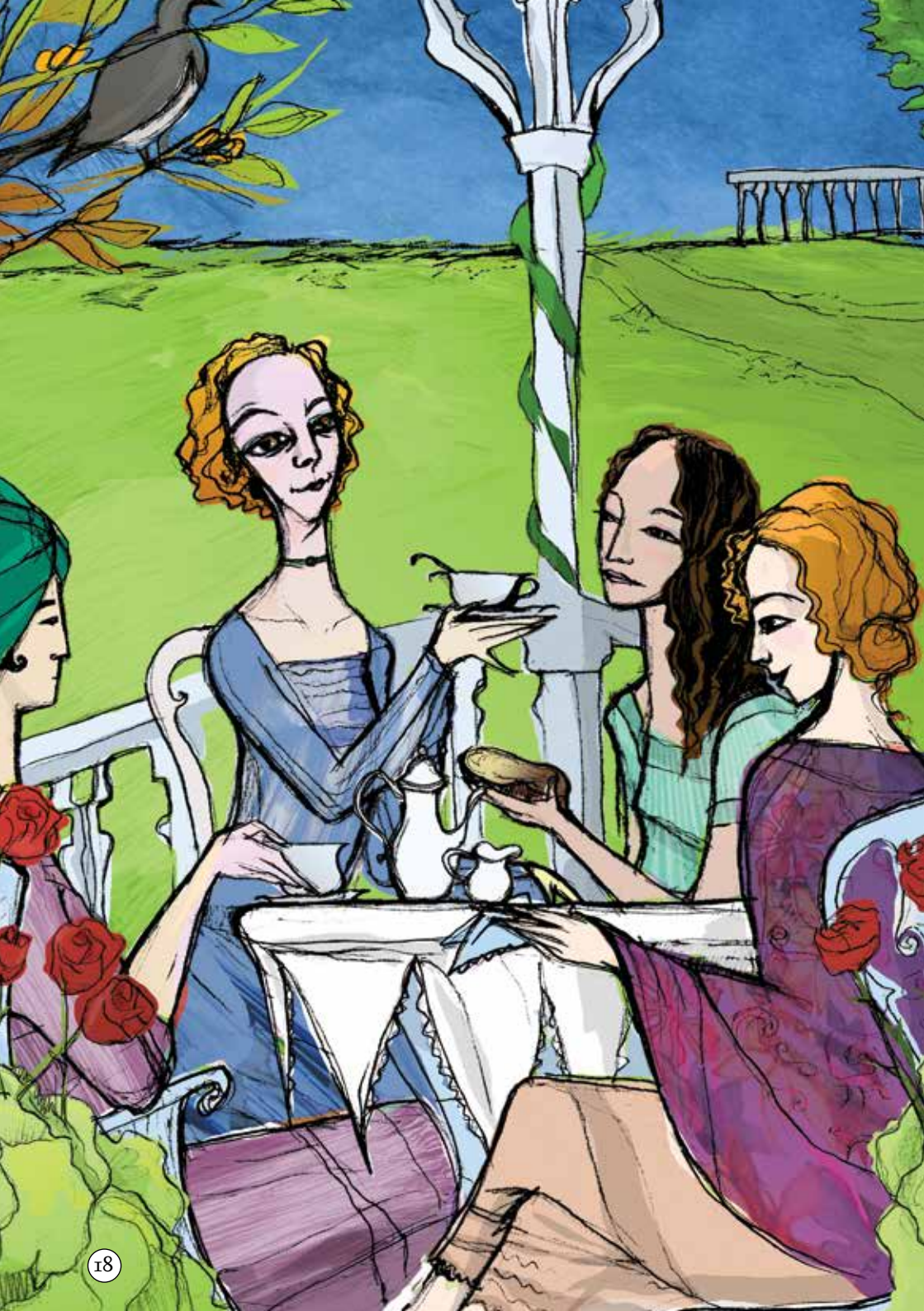



- 4 What is the best party you have ever been to? What made it so good? What did you do there? Who went to the party?
- 5 Look at the following list of parties. With a partner, discuss what you expect to happen at each one. How are they different from each other? What would you wear to each one?
  - a your younger brother/sister's birthday party
  - b your best friend's birthday party
  - c a dinner party
  - d a tea party
  - e a garden party
  - f a fancy dress party
  - g a theme party
- 6 Choose one of the events above. Plan it. Think of times, food, entertainment and dress code.
- 7 Now design an invitation card for the party.

*Come to my Spot Party*

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March**  
**From seven o'clock**

*And don't forget...*  
*... you must wear something spotty!*





The weather was ideal. There could not have been a more perfect day for a garden party. Windless<sup>•</sup>, warm, the sky without a cloud. And the blue was thinly covered with a haze<sup>•</sup> of light gold, as it is sometimes in early summer. The gardener had been up since dawn, cutting the lawns and sweeping<sup>•</sup> them, until the grass seemed to shine. As for the roses, you could not help feeling they understood that roses are the only flowers that impress<sup>•</sup> people at garden parties. The only flowers that everybody is certain of knowing. Hundreds, yes, literally<sup>•</sup> hundreds, had come out in a single night. The green bushes bowed down<sup>•</sup> as though they had been visited by angels.

Breakfast was not over before the men came to put up the big tent.

‘Where do you want the marquee put, Mother?’

‘My dear child, it’s no use asking me. I’m determined to leave everything to you children this year. Forget I am your mother. Treat me as an honoured guest.’

But Meg could not possibly go and supervise<sup>•</sup> the men. She had washed her hair before breakfast, and sat drinking her coffee with a green towel round her head, and a dark wet curl stuck onto each cheek. Jose, the butterfly, came down in a silk petticoat<sup>•</sup> and a kimono jacket.

‘You’ll have to go, Laura; you’re the artistic one.’

Off Laura went, still holding her piece of bread and butter. It’s so delicious to have an excuse for eating outside, and besides, she loved having to arrange things; she always felt she could do it so much better than anybody else.

## Over to you

What do you love doing?

What can you do better than anybody else?

- **bowed down:** bent over
- **haze:** light fog when it is hot
- **impress:** have a strong effect on
- **literally:** really; exactly that
- **petticoat:** light skirt women wear under a skirt or dress
- **supervise:** watch and check
- **sweeping:** brushing
- **windless:** without any wind

Four men wearing shirts stood grouped together• on the garden path. They carried poles covered with rolls of canvas, and they had big tool bags on their backs. They looked impressive•. Laura wished now that she was not holding that piece of bread and butter, but there was nowhere to put it, and she couldn't possibly throw it away. She blushed and tried to look severe, and even a little bit short-sighted•, as she came up to them.

'Good morning,' she said, copying her mother's voice. But it sounded so awful that she was ashamed, and hesitated•, like a little girl.

'Oh—erm—have you come—is it about the marquee?'

'That's right, miss,' said the tallest of the men, and he moved his tool bag, pushed back his straw hat, and smiled down at her. 'That's it.'



- **grouped together:** standing in a group
- **hesitated:** stopped talking; paused

- **impressive:** important; that one wants to admire
- **short-sighted:** who cannot see things that are far away

His smile was so easy, so friendly, that Laura recovered<sup>•</sup>. What nice eyes he had—small, but such a dark blue! And now she looked at the others, they were smiling, too. ‘Cheer up, we won’t bite,’ their smile seemed to say. How very nice workmen were! And what a beautiful morning! She mustn’t mention the morning. She must be business-like.


‘Well, what about the lily-lawn? Would that do?’

And she pointed to the lily-lawn with the hand that didn’t hold the bread and butter. They turned and stared in that direction. A little fat man pushed his lower lip out, and the tall one frowned.

‘I don’t like it,’ he said. ‘You wouldn’t notice it. You see, with a thing like a marquee,’ and he turned to Laura in his easy way, ‘you want to put it somewhere where it will hit you in the eye. If you understand what I mean.’

## Hit you in the eye

What does the workman mean?

 Discuss in pairs. Do you think it is a good expression? Do you have a similar one in your language?

‘A corner of the tennis court?’ she suggested. ‘But the band’s going to be in one corner.’

‘Um, going to have a band, are you?’ said another of the workmen. He was pale. He had a tired look as his eyes scanned the tennis court. What was he thinking?

‘Only a small band,’ said Laura gently. Perhaps he wouldn’t mind so much if the band was quite small. But the tall man interrupted.

‘Look here, miss, that’s a fine place. Against those trees. Over there. That’ll do fine.’

• **recovered:** felt better

Against the karakas? Then the karaka trees would be hidden. And they were so lovely, with their broad, gleaming• leaves, and their clusters• of yellow fruit. They were like the trees you imagined growing on a desert island: proud, solitary, lifting their leaves and fruit to the sun in a kind of silent splendour•. Must they be hidden by a big tent? They must. Already the men had shouldered• their poles and were going there. Only the tall man was left. He bent down and pinched some lavender leaves, put his thumb and finger to his nose, and sniffed the scent. When Laura saw him do that, she forgot all about the karakas in her wonder at him caring for small things like that. Caring for the smell of lavender. How many of the men that she knew would have done such a thing?

Oh, how extraordinarily nice workmen were, she thought.



Why couldn't she have workmen for friends rather than the silly boys she danced with and who came to Sunday night supper? She would get on much better with men like these. It's all the fault, she decided, as the tall man drew something on the back of an envelope, of these absurd class distinctions. Well, she didn't feel them. Not a bit, not an atom•... And now there came the chock-chock of wooden hammers. Someone whistled, someone called out, 'Are you all right there, matey•?' Matey! The friendliness of it! Just to prove how happy she was, just to show the tall man how comfortable she felt with them, how she despised• stupid conventions, Laura took a big bite of her bread and butter as she stared at his little drawing. She felt just like a workgirl.

## Think

How does Laura react to the workmen?

What are 'class distinctions'?

Why does Laura say they are 'absurd'?

- **atom:** very small unit
- **clusters:** groups
- **despised:** hated
- **gleaming:** shining

- **matey:** (colloquial) friend
- **shouldered:** put on their shoulders
- **splendour:** greatness

‘Laura, Laura, where are you? Telephone, Laura!’ a voice called from the house.

‘Coming!’ Away she skimmed<sup>•</sup>, over the lawn, up the path, up the steps, across the veranda and into the porch. In the hall, her father and Laurie were brushing their hats, ready to go to the office.

‘I say, Laura,’ said Laurie very fast, ‘you might just have a look at my coat before this afternoon. See if it needs pressing<sup>•</sup>.’

‘I will,’ she said. Suddenly, she couldn’t stop herself. She ran over to Laurie and gave him a small, quick squeeze. ‘Oh, I do love parties, don’t you?’ she gasped.

‘Rather<sup>•</sup>,’ said Laurie’s warm, boyish voice, and he squeezed his sister, too, and gave her a gentle push. ‘Dash<sup>•</sup> off to the telephone, old girl<sup>•</sup>!’

The telephone. ‘Yes, yes; oh yes—Kitty? Good morning, dear. Come to lunch? Do, dear. Delighted<sup>•</sup>, of course. It will only be a very simple meal—just sandwich crusts and broken meringues and what’s left over. Yes, it’s a perfect morning! Your white? Oh, I certainly should. One moment—hold the line. Mother’s calling.’ And Laura sat back. ‘What, Mother? Can’t hear!’

Mrs Sheridan’s voice came floating down the stairs. ‘Tell her to wear that sweet hat she had on last Sunday.’

‘Mother says you’re to wear that sweet hat you had on last Sunday. Good. One o’clock. Bye-bye.’

- **dash:** run
- **delighted:** very happy
- **old girl:** (affectionate) dear

- **pressing:** ironing
- **rather:** (here) Yes, I do
- **skimmed:** moved quickly and lightly


Laura put back the telephone, flung• her arms over her head, took a deep breath, stretched, and let them fall. ‘Huh,’ she sighed, and sat up quickly. She stood still, listening. All the doors in the house seemed to be open. The house was alive with soft, quick steps and running voices. The green cloth-covered door that led• to the kitchen swung• open and shut with a soft thud•. And now there came a long, strange sound. It was the heavy piano being moved on its stiff• little wheels. But the air! If you stopped to notice, was the air always like this? Little light winds were playing chase, coming in at the tops of the windows, going out at the doors. And there were two tiny spots of sun, one on the inkpot•, one on a silver photograph frame, playing, too. Darling little spots. Especially the one on the inkpot lid. It was quite warm. A warm little silver star. She could have kissed it.



## The inkpot

Why does Laura want to kiss the inkpot lid?

Think of a time that something you saw made you feel very happy.

 Share with a partner.

The front door bell rang and Sadie’s skirt rustled• on the stairs. A man’s voice murmured; Sadie answered, careless, ‘I’m sure I don’t know. Wait. I’ll ask Mrs Sheridan.’

‘What is it, Sadie?’ Laura came into the hall.

‘It’s the florist, Miss Laura.’

- **flung**: threw
- **inkpot**: container for ink
- **led**: brought
- **rustled**: made the sound of material like silk moving
- **stiff**: not easy to move
- **swung**: opened wide
- **thud**: low dull noise



It was indeed. There, just inside the door, stood a wide, shallow• tray full of pink lilies. No other kind. Nothing but lilies, canna lilies, big pink flowers, wide open, radiant, almost frighteningly alive on bright crimson• stems.

‘O—Oh, Sadie!’ said Laura, and the sound was like a little moan. She bent down as if to warm herself at that bright mass• of lilies; she felt they were in her fingers, on her lips, growing inside her.

‘It’s some mistake,’ she said faintly•. ‘Nobody ever ordered so many. Sadie, go and find Mother.’ But at that moment, Mrs Sheridan joined them.

‘It’s quite right,’ she said calmly. ‘Yes, I ordered them. Aren’t they lovely?’ She pressed Laura’s arm. ‘I was passing the shop yesterday, and I saw them in the window. And I suddenly thought that, for once in my life, I shall have enough canna lilies. The garden party will be a good excuse.’

- **crimson:** dark red
- **faintly:** in a low voice

- **mass:** big number
- **shallow:** not deep

‘But I thought you said you didn’t want to interfere•,’ said Laura. Sadie had gone. The florist’s man was still outside, by his van. She put her arm round her mother’s neck, and gently, very gently, bit her mother’s ear.

‘My darling child, you wouldn’t like a logical mother, would you? Don’t do that. Here’s the man!’ He carried even more lilies, another whole tray.

‘Pile• them up, just inside the door, on both sides of the porch, please,’ said Mrs Sheridan. ‘Don’t you agree, Laura?’

‘Oh, I do, Mother.’

In the drawing room, Meg, Jose and good little Hans had at last succeeded in moving the piano.

‘Now, if we put this sofa against the wall and move everything out of the room except the chairs, don’t you think?’

‘Yes.’

‘Hans, move these tables into the smoking-room, and bring a sweeper to take these marks off the carpet, and—one moment, Hans—’ Jose loved giving orders to the servants, and they loved obeying her. She always made them feel as if they were taking part in some drama.

‘Tell Mother and Miss Laura to come here at once.’

‘Very good, Miss Jose.’

She turned to Meg. ‘I want to hear what the piano sounds like, just in case I’m asked to sing this afternoon. Let’s try “This Life is Weary•”’

• **interfere:** organize or change something that is not your business

• **pile:** put one on top of the other  
• **weary:** tiring

Pom! Ta-ta-ta-*taa* Tee-ta! The piano burst out• so passionately that Jose’s face changed. She clasped• her hands. She looked mournfully• and enigmatically• at her mother and Laura as they came in.

This life is weary,  
A tear—a sigh.  
A love that changes,  
This life is weary,  
A tear—a sigh.  
A love that changes,  
And then... goodbye!

But at the word “goodbye”, although the piano sounded more desperate than ever, her face broke into a brilliant, dreadfully• unsympathetic• smile. ‘Aren’t I in good voice, Mummy?’ she beamed•.

This life is weary,  
Hope comes to die.  
A dream awakening.

But now Sadie interrupted them. ‘What is it, Sadie?’

‘If you please, madam, Cook asks if you have got the flags• for the sandwiches?’

‘The flags for the sandwiches, Sadie?’ echoed Mrs Sheridan dreamily. And the children knew by her face that she hadn’t got them. ‘Let me see.’ And she said to Sadie firmly, ‘Tell Cook I’ll let her have them in ten minutes.’

Sadie went.

- **beamed:** said happily
- **burst out:** (here) made a loud noise
- **clasped:** held tightly together
- **dreadfully:** (here) very

- **enigmatically:** in a mysterious way
- **flags:** (here) name labels
- **mournfully:** sadly
- **unsympathetic:** not caring for others



## AFTER READING VOCABULARY

### 1 Use five of the words in the box to complete the sentences.

bear dusky heartless icing plumes  
puzzled shudder streams

- a Cook began arranging the cream puffs, shaking off the extra ..... sugar.
- b 'Mother, isn't it really terribly ..... of us to have a party?' Laura asked.
- c Soon after that, people began coming in .....
- d It was just growing ..... as Laura shut the garden gates.
- e Cream puffs so soon after breakfast. The very idea made Laura .....

### 2 Write three sentences with the words left out in Exercise 1.

### 3 Choose the correct preposition from the box to complete the sentences.

against down on onto out over through

- a Some of the guests were bending ..... to smell flowers.
- b She had a green towel round her head, and a dark wet curl stuck ..... each cheek.
- c The tall man suggested they put up the marquee ..... the karakas.
- d One of the workers called ....., 'Are you all right there, matey?'
- e The house-front was covered all ..... with tiny birdcages.
- f 'Why do you children insist ..... giving parties?' asked Mrs Sheridan.
- g She walked straight ..... into the bedroom, where the dead man was lying.

**P** B1 Preliminary English Test Reading Part 5**1** Complete the sentence by choosing the correct answer (A, B, C or D).

- 1 She knew all ..... it was a mistake.  
A well                    B and                    C over                    D along
- 2 What did it mean? What was it all ..... ?  
A over                    B wrong                    C this                    D about
- 3 There ..... not have been a more perfect day for a garden party.  
A must                    B could                    C should                    D -
- 4 What nice eyes he had—small, but ..... a dark blue!  
A such                    B in                    C with                    D also
- 5 Why couldn't she have workmen for friends ..... than the silly boys she danced with?  
A other                    B rather                    C better                    D instead
- 6 And now ..... came the *chock-chock* of wooden hammers.  
A it                    B off                    C there                    D only
- 7 Mother wanted her to wear that sweet hat she had ..... last Sunday.  
A on                    B here                    C also                    D over
- 8 The door that led to the kitchen ..... open and shut with a soft thud.  
A flung                    B did                    C was                    D swung
- 9 The children knew ..... her face that she hadn't got the flags for the sandwiches.  
A on                    B in                    C well                    D by
- 10 She always made them feel as if they were ..... part in some drama.  
A being                    B taking                    C having                    D getting