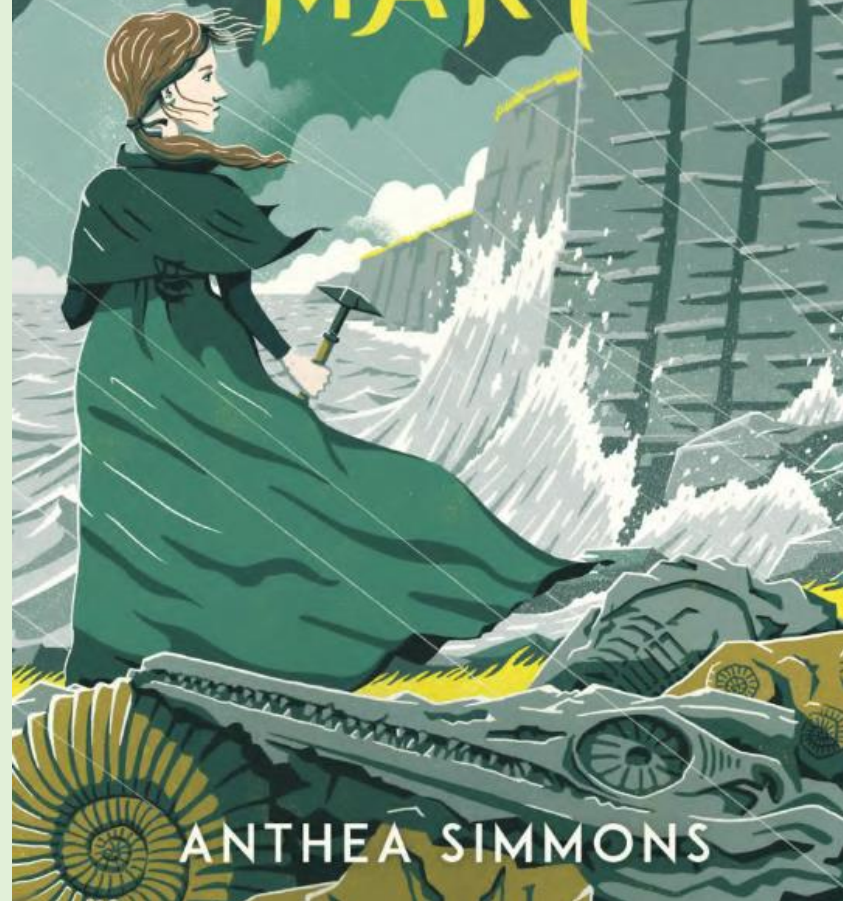


'An intriguing insight into a fascinating figure from history:
Mary is a bold, brilliant and truly inspiring heroine'
KATHERINE WOODFINE

LIGHTNING MARY



ANTHEA SIMMONS

Tisn't everybody gets struck by lightning and lives to tell the tale.

But I did. Not that I recall. I was only a baby. My father wasn't there when it happened but he would have told you the story if you'd asked him and would have recounted how he found me wrapped in a cloth, quite gone from my mind. Like dead. But not.

It was the night the circus came to Lyme Regis. Jugglers and fools. Bearded ladies. Performing monkeys. Dashing riders on powerful steeds, performing amazing acts, so folks said. More like showing off on a pony, if you ask me. A neighbour of ours, Elizabeth Haskings, took me to see the spectacle, perhaps as a kindness to my mother who had just given birth to another stillborn, or so she could use me as a reason to get up close enough to see the riders' handsome faces.

There was an almighty storm. Rain lashing down like something out of the Bible . . . Noah's flood, maybe. The lightning lit up the sky over and over again and the thunder was like ten thousand rocks bouncing down from the cliff face and into the sea. Elizabeth held me tight in her arms as we sheltered under a huge tree with two others. All screaming, no doubt. Except me. I am not, nor ever have been, a screamer.

A bolt of lightning struck that tree, a mighty elm, and split it in two. But it didn't stop there. It struck Elizabeth and the other folk and frizzled them up like fat in a pan. Elizabeth dropped me like a stone when it struck her.

My father heard word that I was dead with the rest of them and he threw his chisel aside and ran up from his workshop fast as he could, with terror in his heart and tears in his eyes. Some folk had carried me back home and put me in a basin of hot water to try to bring me back, but I reckon it was only when I heard my father calling: 'Mary! My Mary! Come back! Come back to me!' that I drew breath again. I think it would have broken his heart to lose two Marys.

It is strange that I should have so nearly been burned. There was another Mary before me. My big sister, she would have been. She burned away in a trice in a terrible fire. Mother never spoke of it, but I know what happened. Left for a moment in a room full of Father's wood shavings, she tipped over the lamp and whoosh, she was gone!

And then I came. They do say I was a dull, sickly child before the Lord smote me with his lightning and that I burned brighter after; but I don't know about that. All I know is, something lit a fire in my being and it wasn't the lightning . . .

1

Which word closely matches the meaning of the word recounted?
Tick one.

described ☐

counted ☐

numbered ☐

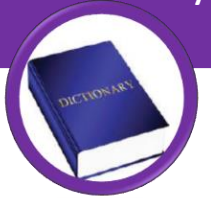
1 mark

Skim and scan to find the word you are given in the text. In this case, the word is recounted.

My father wasn't there when it happened but he would have told you the story if you'd asked him and would have **numbered** how he found me wrapped in a cloth, quite gone from my mind.

If you are unsure of the meaning of the word, try replacing the original word with each of the options. Do any of them make sense?

This question is testing your understanding of vocabulary.



2

Write down three acts which could be seen at the circus.

Jugglers
Fools
Bearded ladies

You need all 3 for the mark!

1 mark

This is a retrieval question- the answer can be found in the text.



Skim and scan for the sentence/s where we are told about the circus.

It was the night the circus came to Lyme Regis. Jugglers and fools. Bearded ladies. Performing monkeys. Dashing riders on powerful steeds, performing amazing acts, so folks said. More like showing off on a pony, if you ask me. A neighbour of ours, Elizabeth Haskings, took me to see the spectacle, perhaps as a kindness to my mother who had just given birth to another stillborn, or so she could use me as a reason to get up close enough to see the riders' handsome faces.

Underline any acts you see, then choose 3 to write down.

WARNING!
This sentence includes two acts.

3

What type of tree did the lightning strike?

1 mark

This is a retrieval question- the answer can be found in the text.



Skim and scan for the sentence/s where we are told about the lightning.

A bolt of lightning struck that tree, a mighty elm, and split it in two. But it didn't stop there. It struck Elizabeth and the other folk and frizzled them up like fat in a pan.

Now look for the mention of a tree.

It doesn't give the name of the tree, so look at the next part of the sentence. If you know that an elm is a type of tree, you will have found the answer (Ruby's dad's pub is the Elm Tree at Heath). However, if you didn't know, you can see that parenthesis has been used- more information has been dropped into the sentence. The writer is telling us more about the tree in the rest of the sentence. Therefore, we can have a good guess that the extra information here is the type of tree.

4

Look at the paragraph beginning, '*It was the night the circus came to Lyme Regis..*'

How can you tell that Mary was not impressed by the performers?

This is an inference question. You will need to use the evidence you have to make a 'clever guess'.



1 mark

Find the paragraph mentioned and read it carefully. Underline anything that suggests Mary's feelings towards the show.

It was the night the circus came to Lyme Regis. Jugglers and fools. Bearded ladies. Performing monkeys. Dashing riders on powerful steeds, performing amazing acts, so folks said. More like showing off on a pony, if you ask me. A neighbour of ours, Elizabeth Haskings, took me to see the spectacle, perhaps as a kindness to my mother who had just given birth to another stillborn, or so she could use me as a reason to get up close enough to see the riders' handsome faces.

This sentence is Mary giving her opinion. From what is written we can make a good guess about her feelings. When someone is 'showing off' it is seen to be a negative thing in most instances.

5

Read the paragraph beginning, '*It is strange I should have so nearly been burned*'. Why was this such a coincidence?

1 mark

This is a retrieval question- the answer can be found in the text.



Skim and scan for the paragraph.

It is strange that I should have so nearly been burned. There was another Mary before me. My big sister, she would have been. She burned away in a trice in a terrible fire. Mother never spoke of it, but I know what happened. Left for a moment in a room full of Father's wood shavings, she tipped over the lamp and whoosh, she was gone!

What other details are we given?

There was another Mary, who was Mary's older sister.

She was killed in a fire.

Why is this so strange? What makes it a coincidence?

6

How did Mary's father feel when he received the news of the lightning strike. Give evidence from the text to support your answer.

Mary's father felt desperate as the news came to him that his daughter had been killed. He could not lose another daughter, he was overcome with sadness and terrified of what he would find. I know this because it says in the text that he 'ran as fast as he could' and had 'tears in his eyes'.

2 marks

This is an inference question. You will need to use the evidence you have to make a 'clever guess'.



Skim and scan for the paragraph explaining when Mary's father is told about the lightning.

My father heard word that I was dead with the rest of them and he threw his chisel aside and ran up from his workshop fast as he could, with terror in his heart and tears in his eyes.

He was in a rush.
Feeling desperate.

He was terrified
of losing his
daughter.

He was upset. On
the verge of tears.

Look for the information we are given.
DON'T just say sad.

Put together an answer which includes all of these elements.

7

Which of the following would be the best headline for a news report about the events?

The circus
visit.

Lightning
Strikes!

Forlorn
Father.

1 mark

This is a summarising question. It is testing how you can summarise the WHOLE text effectively.



Be careful! All 3 of the answers could be possibilities for parts of the text. But look carefully, which one summarises the WHOLE text?

Lightning strikes. The first part of the text gives us information of the events leading up to the lightning strike, which is then explained in detail, before the events that took place afterwards.

8

What impressions do you get of Elizabeth Haskings from the extract? Give **two** impressions using evidence to support your answer.

[illegible]

This is an inference question. You will need to use the evidence you have to make a 'clever guess'.



Find information about Elizabeth. It will be easier to work backwards through this question.

Elizabeth Haskings, took me to see the spectacle, perhaps as a kindness to my mother who had just given birth to another stillborn, or so she could use me as a reason to get up close enough to see the riders' handsome faces.

She was kind and
sympathetic.

She was single.

Elizabeth held me tight in her arms as we sheltered under a huge tree with two others.

She tried to
protect Mary.

The bits you have underlined are the evidence and the writing in red are your impressions.
Use these to complete the table.

8

What impressions do you get of Elizabeth Haskings from the extract?
Give **two** impressions using evidence to support your answer.

Impression	Evidence
<i>Elizabeth was kind and sympathetic and felt sorry for Mary's mother who was going through a hard time.</i>	<i>'Elizabeth Haskings took me to see the spectacle perhaps as a kindness to my mother'.</i>

This is an inference question. You will need to use the evidence you have to make a 'clever guess'.



Your answers must be detailed as this is a 3 mark question.

3 marks