

Watership Down (1972) - Richard Adams

Lesson 1

Before reading...

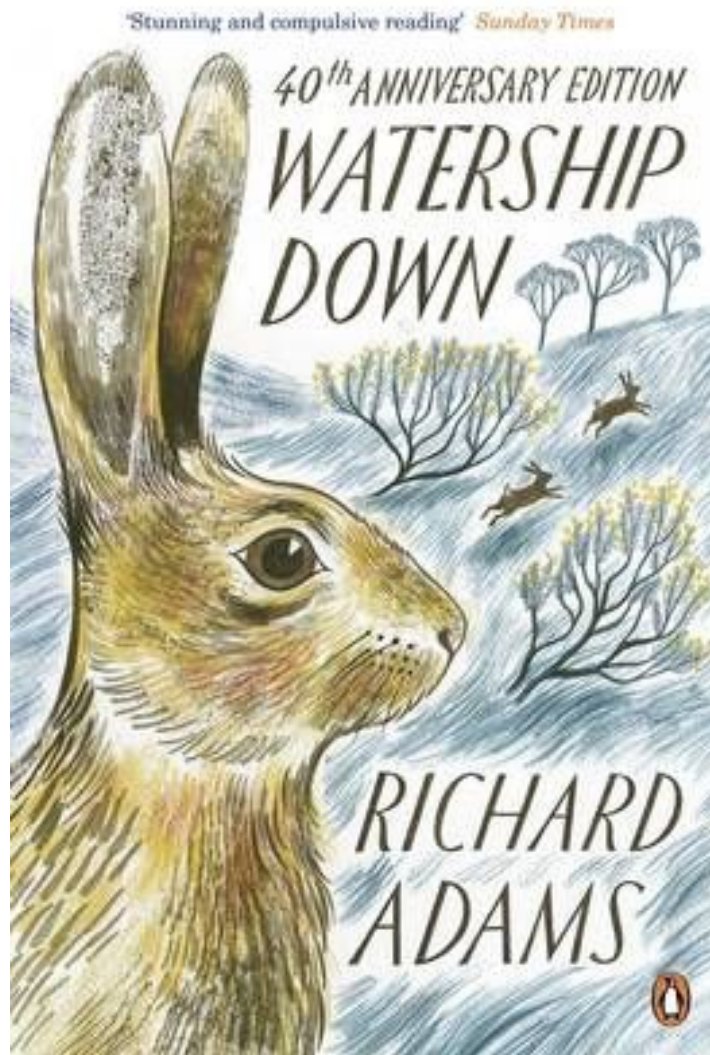
Look at the front cover.

- What do you think the book will be about?
- What things can you see on the front cover?
- What sort of story will it be?
- Who might enjoy it?

Now read the blurb...

- Were any of your predictions correct?

Front Cover



The Opening Lines

Read the first lines of the book (below):

PART I
The Journey
1. The Notice Board

CHORUS: Why do you cry out thus, unless at some vision of horror?

CASSANDRA: The house reeks of death and dripping blood.

CHORUS: How so? 'Tis but the odor of the altar sacrifice.

CASSANDRA: The stench is like a breath from the tomb.

Aeschylus, Agamemnon

The primroses were over. Toward the edge of the wood, where the ground became open and sloped down to an old fence and a brambly ditch beyond, only a few fading patches of pale yellow still showed among the dog's mercury and oaktree roots. On the other side of the fence, the upper part of the field was full of rabbit holes. In places the grass was gone altogether and everywhere there were clusters of dry droppings, through which nothing but the ragwort would grow. A hundred yards away, at the bottom of the slope, ran the brook, no more than three feet wide, half choked with kingcups, watercress and blue brooklime. The cart track crossed by a brick culvert and climbed the opposite slope to a five barred gate in the thorn hedge. The gate led into the lane. The May sunset was red in clouds, and there was still half an hour to twilight.

Comprehension

1. What is Fiver's gift?
2. Why won't the Chief listen to Fiver?
3. Would you believe Fiver?
4. Would you leave the burrow?
5. Who is El-ahrairah?
6. What was unusual about the burrow they first moved to?
7. What happened to the rabbits at the first burrow they moved to?
8. How did the rabbits cross the water?
9. What did the rabbits need to get in order to survive at Watership Down?
10. How would you describe Fiver?

Vocabulary

1. Alight
2. Parry
3. Gully
4. Composed
5. Impertinence
6. Lope
7. Inexplicable
8. Bemused
9. Palty
10. Sable
11. Azure
12. Lithe
13. Precarious
14. Punt
15. Thwart
16. Impervious
17. Circumvent
18. Zeal
19. Liable
20. Foray

HOMEWORK

How do you feel when the rabbits have to leave the warren?

OR

Write a **short story** using **at least 5 new words** (above) that we learned from these chapters.