

DESCRIPTIONS OF CHARACTER

MONSEIGNEUR, one of the great lords in power at the Court, held his fortnightly reception in his grand hotel in Paris. Monseigneur was in his inner room, his sanctuary of sanctuaries, the Holiest of Holiests to the crowd of worshippers in the suite of rooms without. Monseigneur was about to take his chocolate. Monseigneur could swallow a great many things with ease, and was by some few sullen minds supposed to be rather rapidly swallowing France; but, his morning's chocolate could not so much as get into the throat of Monseigneur, without the aid of four strong men besides the Cook.

Yes. It took four men, all four ablaze with gorgeous decoration, and the Chief of them unable to exist with fewer than two gold watches in his pocket, emulative of the noble and chaste fashion set by Monseigneur, to conduct the happy chocolate to Monseigneur's lips. One lacquey carried the chocolate-pot into the sacred presence; a second, milled and frothed the chocolate with the little instrument he bore for that function; a third, presented the favoured napkin; a fourth (he of the two gold watches), poured the chocolate out. It was impossible for Monseigneur to dispense with one of these attendants on the chocolate and hold his high place under the admiring Heavens. Deep would have been the blot upon his escutcheon if his chocolate had been ignobly waited on by only three men; he must have died of two.

from *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens

In this by-place of nature there abode, in a remote period of American history, that is to say, some thirty years since, a worthy wight of the name of Ichabod Crane, who sojourned, or, as he expressed it, "tarried," in Sleepy Hollow, for the purpose of instructing the children of the vicinity. He was a native of Connecticut, a State which supplies the Union with pioneers for the mind as well as for the forest, and sends forth yearly its legions of frontier woodmen and country schoolmasters. The cognomen of Crane was not inapplicable to his person. He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole frame most loosely hung together. His head was small, and flat at top, with huge ears, large green glassy eyes, and a long snipe nose, so that it looked like a weather-cock perched upon his spindle neck to tell which way the wind blew. To see him striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for the genius of famine descending upon the earth, or some scarecrow eloped from a cornfield.

from "Legend of Sleepy Hollow" by Washington Irving

Nor did he open his eyes till roused by the noises of the waking camp. At first he did not know where he was. It had snowed during the night and he was completely buried. The snow walls pressed him on every side, and a great surge of fear swept through him--the fear of the wild thing for the trap. It was a token that he was harking back through his own life to the lives of his forebears; for he was a civilized dog, an unduly civilized dog, and of his own experience knew

no trap and so could not of himself fear it. The muscles of his whole body contracted spasmodically and instinctively, the hair on his neck and shoulders stood on end, and with a ferocious snarl he bounded straight up into the blinding day, the snow flying about him in a flashing cloud. Ere he landed on his feet, he saw the white camp spread out before him and knew where he was and remembered all that had passed from the time he went for a stroll with Manuel to the hole he had dug for himself the night before.

from Call of the Wild by Jack London

Looking down on this very scene, there stood upon the fourth of May, eighteen hundred and forty-seven, a solitary traveller. His appearance was such that he might have been the very genius or demon of the region. An observer would have found it difficult to say whether he was nearer to forty or to sixty. His face was lean and haggard, and the brown parchment-like skin was drawn tightly over the projecting bones; his long, brown hair and beard were all flecked and dashed with white; his eyes were sunken in his head, and burned with an unnatural lustre; while the hand which grasped his rifle was hardly more fleshy than that of a skeleton. As he stood, he leaned upon his weapon for support, and yet his tall figure and the massive framework of his bones suggested a wiry and vigorous constitution. His gaunt face, however, and his clothes, which hung so baggily over his shriveled limbs, proclaimed what it was that gave him that senile and decrepit appearance. The man was dying -- dying from hunger and from thirst.

from *A Study in Scarlet* by Arthur Conan Doyle

The Boxer

A man of tremendous force and size sat near a natural flow of water by some fir trees. He was terrible to behold. His ears had been smashed by rough fists. His chest was monstrous. It was as round as a boulder. His back was broad and wide. His flesh bulged with great hardness and strength. He was enormous. He looked like the massive statue of the Colossus at Rhodes. The muscles in his arms bulged. They looked like smooth, round stones which a winter torrent had caught and polished in its turbulent stream. Over his back and neck lay the skin of a lion. Its paws, loosely tied together, hung down in front.

-- ancient Greek poet Theocritus

Scylla

Scylla was a sea monster, a fearsome creature who inhabited the rocks in the straits of Messina between Sicily and Italy. From time to time, she ventured forth to seize and devour passing sailors from the decks of ships. She had six terrifying heads -- dogs' heads -- and six mouths, each with three ferocious rows of teeth. The heads were attached to six exceedingly long necks thrust forth menacingly. When she opened her mouth, she yelped like a dog, loudly and dreadfully. She hid waist deep in the water to lure unwary sailors to their deaths. Dangling from her body were twelve legs, tenacled and unjointed, and twelve feet. She was terrible to behold. She was finally turned into a precipitous rock in the straits where she continues to endanger travelers even today.

PROGYMNASMATA ASSIGNMENT DUE December 3, 2020

Using the passage describing Scylla as your model, choose a mythological figure to describe, being sure to select the most prominent physical and emotional features to include in your short passage. In order to test your skills of description, leave out the name and lineage of this figure, so the reader can identify the character solely on the basis of the prominent physical and emotional details.

I chose to emphasize the following details:

_____ AGE

_____ GENDER

_____ HEIGHT

_____ BODY FORM

_____ POSTURE

_____ VOICE

_____ DRESS

_____ MANNER

_____ FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

_____ GESTURES

_____ THOUGHTS

I used a _____ direct OR an _____ indirect method of describing my character.

GENERAL CRITERIA

_____ My paper is between 75 and 100 words in length

_____ I have read it aloud to check for errors and for smoothness of style.

_____ I have used vivid diction to make the description paint a clear picture (underline examples of this).