



Morning came at last and Meggy opened her eyes. She was still in London, in the house of Master Peevish. She frowned. If he was her father, did that make her Mistress Peevish? It suits me, I fear, she thought, and moved her lips in what might have been a tiny smile.

Leaning heavily on her sticks, she pulled herself up off the uncomfortable pallet. She found the chamber pot and, cursing that this little house had no privy such as her mother's alehouse had, she managed to use it. Then opening the door, she threw the contents into the stinking ditch that flowed past the house and placed the pot underneath the staircase.

Hunger and curiosity both poked at her, and she looked about. This seemed a poor and paltry sort of house. There was but one small, miserable room – no dining chamber, no kitchen, no pantry, no buttery for storage, no cupboard. Dust motes danced in the pale sunlight peeping through the grimy glass of the window and settled on a flimsy wooden table and its benches in the centre of the room. On the wall opposite the door was a joyless fireplace which held no fire, no pothooks or bellows or spit for meat. Nowhere was there anything to eat. What was she to do to quiet her grumbling belly?

She longed for the alehouse where she lived with her mother and her gran, poor and plain as it had been. She missed the scents of wood smoke, fresh ale, clean rushes and meat turning on a spit. This house stank of dust and mildew, and there was a foul odour like hen's eggs gone rotten. All in all it did not seem a place where people truly lived.

Meggy sat down at the table and drew an 'M' in the dust that covered the top. Would Master Peevish come downstairs? Did he even recall that she was there? If she could find sixpence she could return to the village but she would receive a cold welcome there. As the carter had said, her mother had not been sorry to see her go.

As a baby, once it was apparent she was lame, she had been put in the care of her gran who dwelt in rooms above the alehouse stables. Sweet Granny, with her gnarled hands and her face as wrinkled as old leather. She had given her love and warmth but kept her mostly out of sight. It was her gran who had found the sticks in the woods and shown her how to use them for walking. But Granny died two winters past, and without her broad back and strong arms to carry her up and down the ladder in the stable, Meggy had had to return to the alehouse.

Then yestermorn, her mother announced, just before dawn, "Your father has bid you to come to him. You leave tomorrow."

	TASK					
<b>TUESDAY</b> <i>Vocabulary development and Familiarisation</i>	<p>Skim the text. Can you quickly find the following words?</p> <table><tr><td><i>paltry</i></td><td><i>curiosity</i></td><td><i>flimsy</i></td><td><i>longed</i></td><td><i>gnarled</i></td></tr></table> <p>Write down each word followed by its definition and at least one synonym.</p> <p>Can you write sentences that include these words?</p>	<i>paltry</i>	<i>curiosity</i>	<i>flimsy</i>	<i>longed</i>	<i>gnarled</i>
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<b>WEDNESDAY</b> <i>Word Attack</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Re-read the second paragraph. Can you work out what a '<i>privy</i>' is?</li><li>2. Find two examples of personification in the text.</li><li>3. Explain what a '<i>cold welcome</i>' is.</li><li>4. Find the simile in the text.</li></ol>					
<b>FRIDAY</b> <i>Focused Comprehension Skills</i>	<p>Answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Why might Meggy have smiled when she realised she could be Mistress Peevish?</li><li>2. Re-read the second and third paragraphs. Use evidence in these paragraphs to draw a floor plan of the room.</li><li>3. In what ways does Meggy compare her mother's alehouse to the room?</li><li>4. '<i>She had given her love and warmth but kept her mostly out of sight</i>'. Why might her gran have kept Meggy hidden?</li></ol>					