

The HORSEMEN INN



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Introductory Questions

1. Are there any abandoned old buildings in your hometown?
2. What stories or tales are there about these places?
3. Would you stay the night in this place?

The Horsemen Inn

“We’re here,” Sam said quietly.

Charlotte stirred in the passenger seat and opened her eyes. Sam, the man she had married less than twenty-four hours earlier, was bringing the car to a stop.

She looked through the windscreen and gasped.

“It’s beautiful,” she whispered.

Before them stood The Horsemen Inn, an ancient stone building surrounded by trees, with the Cornish coastline stretching into the distance.

“I didn’t think it was real,” Sam admitted, rubbing his tired eyes.

They had chosen Cornwall for their honeymoon, a place Charlotte had loved since childhood. But searching for somewhere to stay had proved disappointing.

“None of these hotels are anything like the Cornwall I remember,” Charlotte had complained.

Then a mysterious message appeared on TripTrekker, the travel app they were using to plan their journey.

Go to The Horsemen Inn.

There were no further details. Sam searched the app and several websites but found nothing about the place.

The following day, another message arrived.

Check this map.

A link led to an old-fashioned website that looked as though it hadn't been updated since the 1990s. There was little information, just a map showing the location of the inn.

“Let's go there,” Sam suggested.

Charlotte agreed. She wanted somewhere quiet and romantic, far from the crowds of tourists.

And now, somehow, they had found it.

Two enormous wooden doors stood beneath a stone archway. The walls were built from massive blocks of granite, making the inn look as though it had grown out of the rocky landscape itself.

As they approached, one of the doors creaked open.

An elderly, grey-haired man appeared and greeted them in a soft Cornish accent.

“Evening to you. Looking for a room?”

“Yes,” Charlotte replied. “Do you have one available?”

The man smiled and gave a slight bow.

“Of course. Come inside.”

The entrance hall was dimly lit, with dark wooden furniture and creaking floorboards. Behind the reception desk stood a grandfather clock, its steady ticking echoing through the silence.

There was no telephone or computer. Everything looked as though it belonged to another century.

The old man led them upstairs to a spacious room overlooking the sea. Beyond the bay window, waves crashed against the rocks far below.

But what impressed them most was the enormous four-poster bed.

“It's bigger than our bedroom in London,” Sam laughed.

Charlotte smiled.

They had been married for less than a day, and they intended to make their first night together memorable.

Sometime during the night, Charlotte woke suddenly.

Voices drifted up from the courtyard below. She heard footsteps, then the unmistakable sound of horses.

Carefully, she slipped out of bed and approached the window.

Pulling back the lace curtain, she looked down.

Several men stood in the courtyard, dressed in long black capes and three-cornered hats. They were gathered around a tall man who appeared to be giving orders.

Charlotte couldn't make out his words, but his voice sounded harsh and angry.

Then he raised his arm.

The other men lit torches, illuminating their faces. Black masks covered their eyes and noses.

Charlotte watched as several of them mounted horses waiting near the gateway. Others drew long knives from beneath their capes.

A cold feeling spread through her stomach.

She hurried back to the bed and shook Sam awake.

“Sam! Wake up!”

“What? What's wrong?”

“There are men outside. They've got horses and knives. We have to leave!”

Sam sat up, confused.

“What are you talking about?”

“Just look!”

He crossed to the window and peered through the curtain.

Below, the masked horsemen were moving across the courtyard, their torches casting enormous shadows against the stone walls.

“My God,” he muttered.

They dressed hurriedly, grabbed their bags and slipped into the corridor.

The inn was silent. Even the grandfather clock seemed to have stopped ticking.

They crept downstairs, trying not to make a sound.

To their relief, the front door was unlocked.

Sam pushed it open, and they stepped outside.

They had almost reached the gateway when a horseman emerged from the darkness.

He raised his torch.

“Who goes there?”

Charlotte froze.

The man shouted something over his shoulder, and more horsemen appeared.

“Run!” Sam cried.

They sprinted through the gateway and onto the narrow road. Behind them came the thunder of hooves.

Charlotte ran as fast as she could, her heart pounding.

Then she heard a cry.

She glanced back.

Two men had dragged Sam to the ground and were holding him by his arms. He struggled desperately, but they were too strong.

“Get the girl!” one of them shouted.

Charlotte stopped.

For a moment, she couldn't move. She couldn't leave him there. They had only just been married.

“Run, Charlotte!” Sam screamed. “Get help!”

She hesitated, tears filling her eyes.

“RUN!”

Charlotte turned and fled.

She raced down the dark lane, stumbling over stones and branches, terrified that the horsemen were following her.

She had to find help. She had to get back to Sam.

Eventually, exhausted and breathless, she reached a small village.

The streets were deserted, and the houses stood in darkness.

She hammered on the nearest door until a light appeared upstairs.

A few moments later, a man opened the door.

Charlotte could barely speak. Between gasps and tears, she told him what had happened.

At first, he stared at her in disbelief.

Then he called the police.

It seemed an eternity before a police car arrived.

Two officers listened as Charlotte described the inn, the masked horsemen and her husband's disappearance.

“Please,” she begged. “You have to go back. They've got my husband!”

One officer frowned.

“The Horsemen Inn, did you say?”

“Yes! It's just up the road!”

The officers exchanged glances.

“There's no inn there,” the older officer said. “Just an old ruined building.”

Charlotte shook her head.

“No! We stayed there tonight. There was an old man, and a beautiful room overlooking the sea. Please, you have to believe me!”

Finally, the officers agreed to take her back.

As they drove along the narrow lane, the first light of dawn appeared through the trees.

Charlotte recognised the road immediately.

“It's just ahead,” she said.

The police car rounded a bend and stopped.

“Is this the place?” one officer asked.

Charlotte stared through the windscreen.

There stood The Horsemen Inn.

But the enormous wooden doors had vanished. Half the building had collapsed, and the remaining walls were covered in ivy.

A large tree grew from the middle of what had once been the entrance hall.

Charlotte stepped out of the car, unable to believe what she was seeing.

The beautiful inn where she and Sam had spent the night was gone.

It had been abandoned for centuries, a decaying relic of the past.

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Who are the two main characters in the story?
2. Where did Charlotte and Sam decide to go for their honeymoon?
3. Why were Charlotte and Sam disappointed with the hotels they found online?
4. How did Charlotte and Sam first hear about The Horsemen Inn?
5. Describe the appearance of The Horsemen Inn when Charlotte and Sam arrived.
6. How did the interior of The Horsemen Inn appear different from a modern hotel?
7. How did the old man at the inn greet Charlotte and Sam?
8. What did Charlotte and Sam's room at The Horsemen Inn overlook?
9. What did Charlotte and Sam find particularly impressive in their room?
10. What did Charlotte witness in the middle of the night from her window?

11. How did Charlotte react when she saw the group of masked men outside the inn?
12. What weapons and other objects did Charlotte see the masked men carrying?
13. How did Charlotte and Sam escape from The Horsemen Inn?
14. What happened to Sam when they were fleeing?
15. Where did Charlotte seek help after escaping from the inn?
16. How did the man in the small village react to Charlotte's story?
17. What did the police officers initially think of Charlotte's story?
18. What did the police discover when they returned to The Horsemen Inn with Charlotte?
19. How had The Horsemen Inn changed from the previous night?
20. What do you think might have happened at The Horsemen Inn, considering the differences between Charlotte and Sam's experience and the police officers' findings?

Essential Vocabulary

stirred	enormous	emerged
windscreen	granite	vanished
coastline	archway	deserted
mysterious	creaking	hesitated
disappointing	courtyard	stumbled
reception desk	illuminating	disbelief
four-poster bed	peered	abandoned
overlooking	dragged	decaying
murmured	struggled	hooves
grandfather clock	sprinted	relic

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Murmured:

Verb: *To speak or say something in a low, soft, and indistinct voice, often indicating secrecy or hesitation.*

Enormous:

Adjective: *Extremely large in size or amount.*

Then write a sentence of your own that uses the new word or phrase correctly.

Murmured:

In the quiet library, students often murmured softly as they discussed their research projects.

Enormous:

The enormous doors made the old building look impressive.

Do this with all the vocabulary and, over time, this will help improve all your English skills — reading, writing, speaking and listening.

True or False?

Look at all the statements below from the story.

Say which ones are true or false.

Check your answers at the end of the lesson plan!

Charlotte and Sam chose Cornwall for their honeymoon.

The commercial hotels they saw online in Cornwall left them feeling excited.

They received mysterious messages on a travel app suggesting they visit The Horsemen Inn.

The inn was described as a modern, high-tech place in the messages.

The innkeeper at The Horsemen Inn spoke in a loud and gruff manner.

The interior of The Horsemen Inn looked as though it belonged to another century.

The inn had a front desk with a computer and a phone.

Charlotte and Sam's room at the inn overlooked a forest.

The bed in their room was smaller than the one they had back in London.

Charlotte witnessed a group of masked men outside the inn at night.

The masked men were on horseback and brandishing guns.

Charlotte and Sam managed to escape from the inn without any trouble.

Charlotte found help in a bustling village near The Horsemen Inn.

The police officers believed Charlotte's story about the inn.

The condition of The Horsemen Inn remained unchanged when the police arrived.

Guess the Correct Meaning

Look at all the phrases in the table below.

Police car	Ticking grandfather clock
Deserted streets	Four-poster bed
Honeymoon	Dark wooden furniture
Masked men in long black capes	Mysterious online messages
Horses' hooves	Bay window

Now match them with the correct meaning below.

A vacation or trip taken by a newly married couple to celebrate their marriage and spend time together.

Messages received online whose origin or purpose is unknown.

Tables, chairs and other furnishings made of dark-coloured wood.

A traditional clock with a pendulum that swings back and forth, making a ticking sound with each movement.

A large window that extends outward from the main wall of a building, often creating a nook or alcove.

A bed with four tall posts at each corner, typically supporting a canopy or curtains.

Individuals wearing disguises, usually with their faces covered, and cloaks that extend down their backs.

The hard parts at the bottom of horses' feet.

Streets with no people present.

A vehicle used by law enforcement officers to patrol, respond to emergencies, and transport suspects or individuals.

Guess the Correct Synonym

Look at the table of words below. Match each word with the correct synonym.

A synonym is a word of similar meaning.

Check the right answers at the end of the lesson plan.

enormous	empty
creaking	forsaken
vanished	squeaking
emerged	pulled
deserted	huge
hesitated	appeared
dragged	paused
abandoned	disappeared

Guess the Correct Antonym

Look at the table of words below. Match each word with the correct antonym.

An antonym is a word with the opposite meaning.

Check the right answers at the end of the lesson plan.

enormous	crowded
creaking	occupied
vanished	silent
emerged	pushed
deserted	tiny
hesitated	disappeared
dragged	acted immediately
abandoned	appeared

Gap Fill

Look at the table of words in the table below.

sprinted	disbelief	deserted
abandoned	courtyard	vanished
emerged	creaking	granite
dragged	enormous	hesitated
hooves	stirred	peered

Now use these words to fill in the gap in the correct sentences below.

You can check all your answers at the end of the lesson plan!

1. The villager stared at Charlotte in _____.
2. An elderly man _____ from the doorway.
3. The couple _____ through the gateway and onto the road.
4. The streets of the village were _____.
5. Two men _____ Sam to the ground.

6. Charlotte _____ in the passenger seat as Sam stopped the car.
7. Charlotte _____ before leaving Sam behind.
8. The inn had been _____ for centuries.
9. The walls were built from blocks of _____.
10. The floorboards were _____ under their feet.
11. They heard the thunder of horses' _____ behind them.
12. At dawn, the wooden doors had _____.
13. Sam _____ through the curtain to see the horsemen.
14. The inn had two _____ wooden doors.
15. Charlotte heard voices coming from the _____.

Discussion Questions

1. What did Charlotte and Sam choose Cornwall for?
2. Why did the commercial hotels they found online disappoint them?
3. How did Charlotte and Sam learn about The Horsemen Inn?
4. What was mysterious about the messages they received about the inn?
5. Describe the appearance of The Horsemen Inn when they arrived.
6. How would you feel if you found yourself in a place like The Horsemen Inn?
7. What was unusual about the inn's interior?
8. How did the innkeeper greet Charlotte and Sam?
9. What made Charlotte and Sam decide to leave the inn in the middle of the night?
10. What did Charlotte see from her window in the middle of the night?
11. Describe the masked men Charlotte saw in the courtyard.
12. What did Sam tell Charlotte when they were fleeing the inn?

13. What did Charlotte do after escaping to the small village?
14. How did the police initially react to Charlotte's story?
15. What did they discover when they returned to The Horsemen Inn?
16. Do you think The Horsemen Inn was a real place or something else?
17. What do you think might have happened to Sam?
18. How would you react in a similar situation to Charlotte and Sam's?
19. Have you ever experienced a mysterious or unexpected event during a trip?
20. Would you be interested in visiting a place like The Horsemen Inn? Why or why not?

Exploring Abandoned Buildings and Their Mysterious Stories

This is a group discussion activity.

Objective:

This discussion exercise is designed to help you practice your speaking and critical thinking skills while discussing abandoned buildings in your hometown that have strange tales or legends attached to them.

It will encourage you to share stories, express opinions, and engage in group discussions.

Materials Needed:

- A list of abandoned buildings in your area with mysterious stories or legends (research in advance — look online or ask each other about this).
- Whiteboard or blackboard and markers.
- Paper and pens for note-taking.

Instructions:

Warm-Up:

Begin by asking each other in the class some questions related to abandoned buildings:

- *Have you ever visited an abandoned building?*
- *Do you know of any abandoned buildings in your hometown?*
- *Have you heard any strange or mysterious stories about these buildings?*
- *Would you be interested in exploring abandoned buildings with mysterious stories?*

Introduction:

You will be discussing abandoned buildings in your hometown, and the strange tales attached to them. Share a brief summary of "The Horsemen Inn" story as a starting point.

Brainstorming:

Divide the class into small groups or pairs and provide everyone with a list of abandoned buildings in your area along with their associated stories.

Each group chooses one building and discusses the following:

- *What is the story or legend associated with this building?*

- *How do people in your hometown feel about this building?*
- *Have there been any attempts to renovate or preserve it?*

Group Discussion:

Bring everyone back together and have each group share the information they discussed.

Encourage the other students to ask questions and seek clarification.

Use the whiteboard to jot down key points.

Critical Thinking:

This is a critical thinking exercise:

- Talk about the reasons why people are intrigued by abandoned buildings with mysterious stories.
- Think about the impact of such stories on the community and tourism.
- Discuss whether abandoned buildings should be preserved or demolished.

Sharing Personal Stories:

Now you are going to share any personal experiences or stories related to abandoned buildings in your hometown. Use descriptive language and share your feelings about these places.

Role Play Scenario: Charlotte and the Confused Police Officer

This is a role play activity.

Characters:

- Charlotte (from the story above)
- A police officer

The Situation:

Charlotte has just returned to the abandoned Horsemen Inn, where she stayed the previous night with her husband, Sam. She is trying to convince the police officer that the inn was not in ruins when she was there, and she is concerned about the safety of her husband. The police officer is confused and sceptical, as he knows the inn has been abandoned for many years.

In pairs, take some time to prepare your role play.

When you are ready, show the class!

Writing

This is a creative writing exercise.

Title:

The Horsemen Inn — A Tale of Smugglers and Vagabonds

Objective:

In this writing exercise, you will create a short story set in the past, focusing on the mysterious and clandestine activities of the men who inhabited The Horsemen Inn. Your story will explore the themes of smuggling, intrigue, and adventure while practising your English writing skills.

Instructions:

Imagine a historical setting for your story, taking place many years ago, in a small coastal village in Cornwall, England.

Characters:

Introduce your main character, who can be a curious local resident or a traveller passing through the village.

Create a group of mysterious men who frequent The Horsemen Inn. These men are known for their secretive and illicit activities, such as smuggling goods along the coast.

Setting:

Describe the village and The Horsemen Inn in detail, painting a vivid picture of the surroundings. Use sensory details to immerse your readers in the setting.

Plot:

Develop a plot that revolves around the main character's interactions with the smugglers at The Horsemen Inn.

Are they drawn into the world of smuggling, or are they trying to uncover the truth behind the inn's mysterious activities?

Conflict:

Build tension and conflict in your story. Explore the risks and dangers associated with the smugglers' activities.

Is there a threat from law enforcement or rival smuggling gangs?

Resolution:

Conclude your story with a resolution that ties up loose ends.

Does the main character's life change as a result of their encounters at The Horsemen Inn?

What lessons have they learned?

Length:

Aim for a short story of about 300-500 words.

Sharing:

After completing your story, you can share it with the class, fostering discussion and providing feedback on each other's work.

Read your story out loud in front of the class.

Or you can ask your teacher for a review of your writing.

Reading Comprehension Questions — Answers

Suggested answers (question 20 is open to interpretation).

1. Charlotte and Sam are the two main characters in the story.
2. Charlotte and Sam decided to spend their honeymoon in Cornwall, England.
3. They were disappointed because the hotels did not resemble the Cornwall Charlotte remembered from childhood.
4. They first heard about The Horsemen Inn through mysterious messages on the TripTrekker travel app.
5. The inn was an ancient granite building with enormous wooden doors beneath a stone archway.
6. The interior looked as though it belonged to another century, with old wooden furniture and a grandfather clock.
7. The old man greeted them in a soft Cornish accent, offered them a room and welcomed them inside.
8. Their room overlooked the sea and the rocks below.
9. They were particularly impressed by the enormous four-poster bed.

10. Charlotte saw men wearing black capes, three-cornered hats and masks; some mounted horses and others drew knives.

11. She became frightened, woke Sam and insisted that they leave the inn.

12. Charlotte saw the masked men carrying torches and long knives.

13. They dressed quickly, crept downstairs and ran through the gateway towards the road.

14. Two men dragged Sam to the ground and restrained him as Charlotte escaped.

15. Charlotte sought help in a nearby small village.

16. The villager initially doubted her account, but he then called the police.

17. The officers were sceptical because they believed that the inn was only a ruined building.

18. They discovered a ruined, abandoned building where Charlotte said the inn had stood.

19. The doors had vanished, part of the building had collapsed and a tree was growing inside.

20. Students may suggest that Charlotte and Sam experienced a supernatural event or travelled into the past; the story does not confirm what happened.

True or False — Answers

Check your answers below.

How many did you get right?

1. True.

2. False. The hotels they found online disappointed them.

3. True.

4. False. The messages did not describe the inn as modern or high-tech; they gave its name and a map.

5. False. The innkeeper spoke in a soft Cornish accent.

6. True.

7. False. There was no telephone or computer at the reception desk.

8. False. Their room overlooked the sea.

9. False. The four-poster bed was larger than their bedroom in London.

10. True.

11. False. The masked men carried torches and knives, not guns.

12. False. Sam was captured by two men while Charlotte escaped.

13. False. Charlotte found help in a village with deserted streets.

14. False. The police officers were initially sceptical of Charlotte's story.

15. False. The inn was a ruined, abandoned building when the police arrived.

Guess the Correct Meaning — Answers

These are all the correct answers below.

How many did you get right?

Honeymoon: A vacation or trip taken by a newly married couple to celebrate their marriage and spend time together.

Mysterious online messages: Messages received online whose origin or purpose is unknown.

Dark wooden furniture: Tables, chairs and other furnishings made of dark-coloured wood.

Ticking grandfather clock: A traditional clock with a pendulum that swings back and forth, making a ticking sound with each movement.

Bay window: A large window that extends outward from the main wall of a building, often creating a nook or alcove.

Four-poster bed: A bed with four tall posts at each corner, typically supporting a canopy or curtains.

Masked men in long black capes: Individuals wearing disguises, usually with their faces covered, and cloaks that extend down their backs.

Horses' hooves: The hard parts at the bottom of horses' feet.

Deserted streets: Streets with no people present.

Police car: A vehicle used by law enforcement officers to patrol, respond to emergencies, and transport suspects or individuals.

Guess the Correct Synonym — Answers

These are the correct answers below.

How did you do?

enormous	huge
creaking	squeaking
vanished	disappeared
emerged	appeared
deserted	empty
hesitated	paused
dragged	pulled
abandoned	forsaken

Guess the Correct Antonym — Answers

Below are the right answers.

Did you get them all correct?

enormous	tiny
creaking	silent
vanished	appeared
emerged	disappeared
deserted	crowded
hesitated	acted immediately
dragged	pushed
abandoned	occupied

Gap Fill — Answers

Below are all the correct answers.

Did you get them all right?

1. The villager stared at Charlotte in **disbelief**.
2. An elderly man **emerged** from the doorway.
3. The couple **sprinted** through the gateway and onto the road.
4. The streets of the village were **deserted**.
5. Two men **dragged** Sam to the ground.
6. Charlotte **stirred** in the passenger seat as Sam stopped the car.
7. Charlotte **hesitated** before leaving Sam behind.
8. The inn had been **abandoned** for centuries.
9. The walls were built from blocks of **granite**.
10. The floorboards were **creaking** under their feet.
11. They heard the thunder of horses' **hooves** behind them.
12. At dawn, the wooden doors had **vanished**.

13. Sam **peered** through the curtain to see the horsemen.

14. The inn had two **enormous** wooden doors.

15. Charlotte heard voices coming from the **courtyard**.

Credits

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