

# The Third Day, The Frost

A JOURNEY THROUGH FEAR

## Exploring the Text

Check with your teacher about which questions to try.

- ① Ellie was often possessed by fear. Have you ever felt as though you were possessed by fear, or perhaps another strong emotion? Explain.
- ② The friends began to feel guilty '**just sitting around**'. Do you think it is necessary to be always doing something? What positive things can inaction achieve?
- ③ '**We were all silent, a depressed pessimistic silence**' (p. 17). What other silences can there be? Think of two or three.
- ④ The friends had caught up with a working party that included Kevin. '**It was good to see that despite everything that had happened they could still laugh**' (p. 26). What is it in the human spirit that allows a person to laugh again even in the midst of sadness, trauma or fear? Can you think of examples?
- ⑤ The friends were in trouble as they tried to save Kevin (pp. 43–6). As the soldier was being strangled, Ellie could no longer look. '**I ... looked away towards the beautiful bush, the bush that I loved**' (p. 46). Evaluate the reason behind Ellie's question about the behaviour of animals and birds in the bush.
- ⑥ Ellie was haunted by the sight of the soldier's eyes. '**Every time I close my eyes, his open in my mind**' (p. 46). What might Ellie mean?

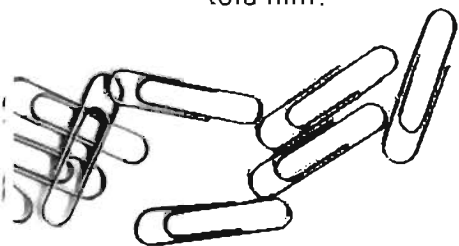
---

Page references are to the Pan 1996 paperback edition of *The Third Day, The Frost*.

---



- 7 Fi and Ellie were discussing the dangers of destroying the ships in Cobbler's Bay (pp. 104–5). Fi tried to reassure Ellie that the danger would not be as great as she thought. What is your opinion of the arguments Fi offers? Would you be convinced?
- 8 It was decided that Robyn 'got the job of cutting the wire and attaching the timer' (p. 107). Do you blame Kevin for leaving the job to Robyn? How might Kevin's lack of nerve be a problem? How did this particular job suit Robyn's sense of humanity?
- 9 'For hot-headed Homer this was very cool' (p. 116). Ellie was pleased. Discuss Ellie's evaluation of Homer. Do you agree, or not, with her assessment of Homer's behaviour?
- 10 'I admired him [Homer] a lot these days, though I didn't ever let him know that' (p. 120). Was Ellie right or wrong not to tell him? How might it have helped Homer to know he was admired? How might it have helped Ellie to have told him?
- 11 While Ellie and Homer were hiding in the container, they realised their ambitions had changed (pp. 120–1). Comment on their new dreams. How important are the little things to you? Name some.
- 12 Ellie had her first glimpse of Cobbler's Bay after she and Homer had blown up the ship, and she wondered about whose fault it was that 'it was so stuffed' (p. 160). In your opinion who was to blame – the invaders, politicians or indifferent, ordinary people? Give reasons.
- 13 Ellie was sick of Hell; she wanted to see 'crowded crowded streets' (p. 189). Suppose the friends were not picked up. What would they have to do to cope permanently with such a situation?
- 14 'I'm a person of the mountains and the open paddocks and the big empty sky, that's me, and I knew if I spent too long away from all that I'd die' (p. 223). What is absolutely necessary to your lifestyle? Explain in detail.
- 15 Ellie set herself the task of remembering the words of four songs (pp. 225–6). How, in your opinion, did this exercise stop her being 'obsessed with thoughts of imprisonment and death'?



16 Assess the impact on Ellie of Major Harvey's approach when interrogating her. '**Ellie, dear girl, do come in. How nice to see you**' (p. 227).

17 Do you agree or disagree with Ellie's judgement of Major Harvey's character (p. 228)? Justify your opinion.

18 Major Harvey stated that he knew what young people can and cannot do (p. 235).

(a) Do you think that the expectations of other people – parents, teachers, friends – can limit your creativity, your potential for growth, or your achievements? Explain.

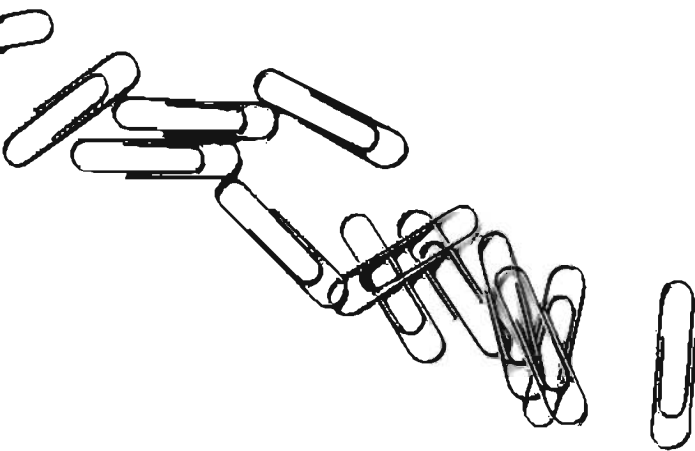
(b) How could you prevent other people's expectations from limiting you?

19 The '**great dark weight of depression and fear**' which had been hovering over Ellie '**was hovering a little higher, and perhaps not quite so heavily**' (p. 258). Why do you think this might be so?

20 Give your verdict on Robyn's last gift to the friends, and your assessment of Ellie's present to Robyn. '**I screamed again and at last said her name**' (p. 270).

21 When the friends met the New Zealand pilot, at first he refused to rescue them. '**You look like you've been through hell. But I'm sorry, I can't take you**' (p. 273). Discuss the reasons for his refusal. Consider whether his refusal could be reasonable. Judge the fairness of his change of mind when he realised that the friends had been responsible for the Cobbler's Bay raid.

22 Have you read the sequel to *The Third Day, The Frost*? If so, why? If not, would you like to? Give reasons.



**Think it through** talk it over

In groups or as a class, discuss one or more of these topics.

**1 Fair and unfair**

Ellie declared her relationship with Lee was over. After the killing of the soldier by Lee, Ellie 'felt sick every time his long fingers touched her'. Ellie knew this to be unfair and suggested 'fair and unfair is for the mind; emotions don't know anything about fair and unfair' (p. 63).

Can we ever be really fair?

How would you judge Ellie: fair or unfair?

**How would you judge Lee: right or wrong?**

Are fair and right the same thing?

To be fair, can we ever really put ourselves in someone else's place?

Is it fair to judge on what we think we see?

Would Lee feel that Ellie was being unfair?

**Discuss what Ellie meant by 'fair and unfair is for the mind'.**

**2 Fear**

Ellie was speaking of fear. 'It's a kind of illness, fever, that takes you over' (p. 1).

Have you ever been overtaken by fear?

**What do you most fear?**

Can you be afraid of fear? How? Why?

How do you 'hold fear at bay'?

**Do you 'think strong' as Homer does? In what kinds of situations?**

**3 Luck**

'We've been so lucky.' 'It's not all luck... Don't forget, we're free agents who can do what we want, when we want' (p. 9).

Define luck.

Do you, like Ellie, believe in luck?

**If it's not all luck, what is it?**

How does being a free agent give you an advantage?

**4 Getting your own way**

Ellie says, 'I also like getting my own way' (p. 109).

What do you do to get your own way?

What do you do if you don't?

**What does it feel like to get your own way?**

What does it feel like if you don't?

What would persuade you to give someone his/her own way? Are you easy to persuade?

Why is it that some people always seem to get their own way?

**5 Judging the risks**

'I think we should put our own safety higher than going on with this'. Ellie was amazed at the change in Homer (p. 116).

Have you ever had to 'weigh the risks'?

What would you consider a risk?

Under what circumstances would you consider a risk worth taking?

In your opinion, do people who take risks want to prove something? What might that be?

**Do you think that taking risks is necessary to achieve your goals? In what way?**

What would you least like to risk?



Think of the scene in which you would most like to have been involved, or the character to whom you most easily relate. Choose one of the following ways to project your ideas.



**construct a scene** From hessian and felt – felt and coloured paper – coloured paper and cellophane.



**wanted poster** Make a really dramatic 'wanted poster' to motivate settlers to track down the friends.



**favourite character** You are your favourite character. Write your version of the Cobbler's Bay incident and prepare overheads to illustrate your story.



**the war is over** The friends have been rehabilitated and are ready to talk to Year 12 students about their experiences. Collect some of the things they might exhibit to interest the audience, and explain why you chose the items.

**design and construct a mosaic**

The principal of the school that the friends had attended wants to commission a mosaic to be set in the entrance foyer of the school to honour their courage. Design and construct the mosaic you think would best tell the tale.

