

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/ENGLISH IB/TOPS/MACS/CLASS 4 HANDOUT

NAME: _____

So far, we have read Chapter 1 of the story about the adventures of Bridget, Barnaby, and Babette, and their feline friend Beauregard. The following selection is the first half of Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2: THE END OF THE ELEPHANT EMPIRE

It was no ordinary army of jackals that had taken us prisoner. These soldiers wore metal armor and helmets that made them a most frightening pack of dogs. That is, I think Barnaby, Babette, and Bridget were frightened. I, of course, am a cat. And cats, as everyone knows, feel a certain, shall we say, **animosity** toward most creatures of the **canine** persuasion. I felt nothing but **contempt** for these puny pups. One on one, I could have handled any of them easily. But since we were greatly outnumbered, and our wrists and ankles were tied up, I decided to keep myself in check. Besides, I had a feeling we wouldn't be prisoners for long.

"I never learned about any place like this in geography class," said Bridget, shaking her head. "Boy, when things go wrong..."

"Something tells me we're not in France anymore," agreed Barnaby.

"I could ask them where we are, if you like," offered Babette.

"Yeah, if you spoke Dog you could," snorted Bridget.

"They're jackals, actually, and I did pick up a working knowledge of their language while I was on safari last year. Their poetry is excellent, although somewhat primitive."

Bridget tried to think of a clever **retort**, but all she could say was, "Yeah, right. And I hear they're all portrait painters in their spare time. 'Dogs Playing Pool' by Fido is one of my favourite pieces."

Barnaby snickered.

"There's no need to be **sarcastic**," replied Babette calmly, turning away from her companions. Then she made some odd growling noises, followed by a short bark and a couple of whimpers, apparently in the direction of the guard behind her. She got no response.

"They don't seem to understand you," Barnaby commented.

Babette ignored him, and repeated her "question" to the guard.

"Save it, sister," barked the dog suddenly, in English. "Your accent is hurting my ears. And pick up your smart aleck friend there. Kind of **awkward**, isn't she? She's tripped over her own feet."

Bridget had, indeed, fallen over from the sheer shock of hearing the dog speak. Babette helped her up, but she remained stunned, and just stood there, **gaping** at the jackal.

"Close your mouth, kiddo," said the jackal. "And let me give you a word of advice. You're in the animal kingdom now. This is our **domain**. And as long as you're on our turf, you would do well to be a little more respectful and a little less **impudent**. For example, I didn't like the way you mocked our artistic abilities just now. You shouldn't **disparage** things you know nothing about, and from what's come out of your mouth so far, that's a lot. Do I make myself clear?"

Bridget continued to stare.

"Do you **comprehend** what I have just told you? Quit giving me that **bovine** stare. You look as dumb as a cow," he snarled.

"Yes. I'm very sorry," stuttered Bridget.

"That's better. Now look, we have nothing against you humans personally. But too bad you have that cat with you. We absolutely **loathe** cats, sneaky little devils, mostly spies. And you should have known better than to land in the middle of a troop movement."

"But we didn't mean to come here!" blurted Barnaby. "We just ran into **adverse** weather conditions above Paris, and..."

"Oh yeah? Then how do you explain the cat?" yipped the jackal. "But as I was saying, we really have nothing against you; even the cat might not be so bad. We've hired cats as spies now and then ourselves. But you have to understand, the situation here is tense. Until a few days ago, the jackal army was united in the revolution. We were working to overthrow the Elephant Empire and hold free, democratic elections open to every animal that **inhabits** this region, from antelopes to zebras. But General Horace got greedy. He decided to run the revolution into some kind of holy war. 'All creatures must come under submission to the word of Dog,' he said. Well, that's the last thing we needed, to get rid of one **authoritarian** government only to replace it with an even crazier dictatorship."

The jackal shook his head in disgust.

"Well, our Colonel Cano spoke up against the idea right away. But as it turned out, Horace wasn't prepared to accept any form of **dissent** or disagreement, and he planned to have Cano executed. So, that same night, Cano and all of us broke off to form our own **faction**. We're hoping other animal armies will help us carry out the revolution and keep Horace out of power."

"And where are you taking us?" asked Babette.

"We're taking you back to camp. Colonel Cano will want to meet you," he replied.

"Thanks for the information," said Bridget, who had somehow regained the ability to speak. "By the way, my name is Bridget, and this is Babette and Barnaby."

"I am Lieutenant Lassiterius. Folks call me Lassie for short."

Bridget thought it best not to make a joke.

When they reached camp, they saw many soldiers gathered around, as if waiting for something to happen. At first they were quiet and patient, but after five minutes or so, they started barking and stomping their feet, **clamoring** for whatever it was they were waiting for. Finally, a big, important-looking jackal with grayish fur appeared at the front of the room, and with one sharp bark, he silenced the **boisterous** crowd. From the way he looked, so noble and powerful, so full of **dignity**, Barnaby, Bridget, and Babette correctly assumed it was Cano.

He began speaking in Jackal, and you didn't have to understand the words to know that Cano was a gifted **orator** who knew how to hold an audience. He barked, growled, leaped around, and yipped his way to such a stirring climax that all the jackals, including Lassie, began to howl with excitement.

"I'd follow him anywhere," sighed Lassie.

Then, suddenly, he let out a bark in the colonel's direction.

Cano's ears pricked up as he noticed Lassie. He came right over.

"It's **unanimous!**" cried Cano. "We voted, and every single jackal has agreed to fight til the end to keep Horace out of power."

"I told you not to doubt our loyalty, sir," said Lassie. "That was some speech you just gave."

"Well, to tell the truth, I hadn't planned on giving a speech. It was just one of those **impromptu**, spur-of-the-moment things, you know? I **ad-libbed** the whole thing."

"Well, it was pretty amazing for a speech you made up as you went along. You were speaking from the heart, and we're with you. We'll teach that wacko a lesson," the lieutenant replied.

"I believe **fanatic** is more accurate than wacko. Lassie. He's not crazy, he's just, well, let's just say he's dangerously full of enthusiasm and **zeal**."

"Anyway, look what we found on patrol today. Colonel," said Lassie, jerking his head toward the prisoners.

"I see, I see," said the jackal. "A few humans and ... hey! Beauregard, you old son of a gun, what are you doing here?"

Cano had trotted over to the cat and seemed very glad to see him.

"You know him?" asked Lassie and Barnaby. They were both **astonished**, but for different reasons.

"Know him?" laughed the colonel, "Why, back in the old days, Beau and I used to run the undercover division of..."

Just then the cat growled softly in Carlo's ear.

"Yes, well, um, whoops! Heh, heh. What was I saying?" the colonel continued clumsily. "I, uh, must be mistaken. I've never seen this sorry old cat before. Take them all to my tent for questioning."

Babette, Barnaby, and Bridget exchanged perplexed looks. The situation was getting weirder and weirder.

On their arrival at the tent, Cano ordered that they be untied and Lassie began to loosen the ropes.

"Thanks, man, those things were beginning to **chafe** my wrists," said Bridget. "Hey!" she shouted to the colonel. "You got anything to eat?" "Remember the talk we had about respect, Bridget?" snarled Lassie. "It would **behoove** you to behave with a little more **deference** toward the colonel. After all, he is in control of your fate right now."

"Oh, come now," laughed Cano. "These people are welcome here. In fact, they should be treated as foreign **dignitaries**, honoured and important visitors from the human world. Bridget is hungry; we should have a feast for her! Lassie, go out and tell everyone that tonight we'll be having a party to celebrate the arrival of new friends and to **revel** in the certain defeat of Horace and the end of the Empire!"

The travelers began to wonder if Cano was always so full of **optimism**, but as soon as Lassie left to make arrangements for the feast, he let out a heavy sigh.

"I don't know how much the lieutenant has told you, but we are facing serious odds. The situation actually looks pretty **bleak**," he said.

"I can see that," said Babette. "You plan a **coup d'état** against the Empire, and a **feud** develops within your ranks. A very difficult situation, indeed. Can you not find support outside the jackal army?"

"I have considered the possibility," replied the colonel, "but we animals have never had strong alliances. The jackals are the only group that has an army to speak of. Until recently, we were the royal guards of the Elephant Emperor himself."

Cano shook his head and continued, "The ostriches, for example, could be a great help. They seem to favour democracy, and their speed and size make them valuable friends. But, unfortunately, they are known for their **apathy**. They're happy to bury their heads in the sand and not bother with anything.

"The pandas, strong and fierce as they look, are all **pacifists**. That's right – they don't believe in war for any reason. It's against their religion. On the other hand, the warthogs, nasty-looking creatures, are definitely **belligerent** enough to join us. They like fighting. Waging war is how they get their jollies. But when they don't have a war to fight, they tend to kill each other. No, it's best to steer clear of them. Still, there is some hope. We have **solicited** the aid and advice of the Reptile Republic. It looks as though they are willing to help us. We got word that King Cobra is sending an **ambassador** to our camp tonight – a high-ranking lizard, I believe – to see if there is anything they can do. The reptiles have much to teach us. They have lived outside the Empire for many years now. Frankly, I think the elephants are a little afraid of them," Cano chuckled.

"Tell us more about this Horace character," demanded Bridget. "He sounds much worse than the Emperor."

"You're right there," agreed the colonel. "Horace is the worst kind of **tyrant** imaginable. He expects more than obedience from his animals—he wants them to be absolutely servile, slavishly satisfying his every whim. It's been like that for years, and the elephants have always backed him up. He even issued an order that all soldiers must fall to their knees and bow before him, **revere** him as if he were some kind of god! That was the last straw for me. I refuse to **kowtow** to anyone, not even the Emperor, and especially not Horace! I went through basic training with him, for goodness' sake!"

"You said it, Colonel," said Bridget.

Cano took a deep breath. "Horace actually does think of himself as some kind of god—the **omnipotent** kind, at that. You know, all-powerful, all-seeing. But really he's just totally **paranoid**. He was always imagining that there were secret plots and **conspiracies** against him."

"If he's such a rotten guy, why did you go along with him on this whole coup d'état thing?" asked Bridget.

"That's a good question," replied Cano, "and I can only respond with the tired old **cliché**, desperate times require desperate measures ' I knew Horace was a crook, but I thought that continuing to live under the harsh rule of the elephants was worse. It wasn't until after we declared our freedom that I found out how truly evil he was. He's an absolute bigot."

"A bigot?" gasped Barnaby.

"I honestly don't know how I didn't figure it out before. I guess before we broke away from the elephants, he kept his **prejudices** to himself. Now he is much more overt about his hatred of all other creatures, even ones he's never even met. He feels jackals are the only worthy animals. It's extremely disturbing. To think, not so terribly long ago he was my friend, and now he is my most dangerous foe."

Cano sighed again, and stared off into the distance as if **contemplating** all the events that had led him up to this moment. Soon, he was completely lost in thought.

"Urn, maybe we should go wash up **prior** to eating," offered Barnaby, wanting to leave the colonel alone with his thoughts.

"Yes, how rude of me," said Cano, snapping out of it. "You'll find a guest tent outside to the right. Everything you need is there. We'll come get you when the feast is ready."

"Cool. See you later, Cano," said Bridget.

"Thank you, Colonel," said Babette.

And with that, they left the tent. But the cat stayed behind.

I should explain about Colonel Cano and myself. It's true, we were comrades-in-arms back when I was working undercover for the Elede agency of **disparate** experiences – traveling with the circus, selling encyclopedias, organizing labor unions, and yes, even spying for the Empire. You see, at the time, humans were guilty of **atrocious** acts of violence against elephants. Hunters would kill them by the hundreds, rip their tusks out for ivory, and leave their bodies to rot. Animals all around the world decided to fight against this senseless cruelty.

Cano and I got together at a meeting of the United Animal Nations and came up with a completely new, offbeat, altogether **radical** idea. We would take our story to the **media** – newspaper television, radio, the works. We took pictures of the horrors ourselves – elephants lying tuskless in the jungles. Then we went off into the human world and tried to blend in as pets, waiting for the opportunity to put our plan into action.

Of course, it was easy for me I was used to **cohabiting** with humans, and besides, pet cats usually get to act as mean and persnickety as they want, and no one thinks twice about it. Cano had more of a problem. He was a jackal, and a soldier, and he didn't have much **tolerance** for the whole stick-fetching, tail-wagging routine dogs are expected to put on. But he put up with it somehow.

Finally, I managed to slip a videotape of the elephant hunts to a major television channel. One of the station managers saw it and things just sort of took off from there. There was a huge public outcry. Many countries got together and imposed **sanctions** against other countries supported the ivory trade – that is, they refused to do business with them or help them in any way. Some even called for **embargos**, refusing to import any ivory at all. Cano and I were mighty pleased with our **audacity**. It sure took a lot of guts and daring to do what we did.

After that, we went our separate ways. I didn't see Cano again – until now. I had no idea the elephants had come back so strongly – too strongly, it seems, I sure didn't like seeing my old friend so upset. After the kids left, we had a talk and **reminisced** about old times. I told him not to blow my cover, that I was watching over these kids. But I didn't want them to know it. And I told him I'd help him in any way I could. Well, he took me at my word. We spent the next hour working out a plan to take care of Horace and the Emperor once and for all.

VOCABULARY

A) Fill in the blanks by matching the words in the box below with their definitions.

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|---------|-----------|--------|--------|
| animosity | contempt | retort | sarcastic | gaping | domain |
| impudent | disparage | adverse | inhabit | | |

1. _____: The state of mind of one who despises.
2. _____: Sounding like a sharp and ironic utterance designed to hurt someone.
3. _____: Lacking humility.

4. _____: Ill will or resentment.
5. _____: To speak about someone in an insulting or condescending way.
6. _____: Opposed to one's interests; unfavourable
7. _____: To answer (as an argument) by a counter argument.
8. _____: A territory over which ownership is exercised.
9. _____: To occupy as a place of settled residence or habitat.
10. _____: Wide open.

B) Write down the definitions of the following words.

1. Authoritarian: _____
2. Dissent: _____
3. Faction: _____
4. Clamor: _____
5. Boisterous: _____
6. Dignity: _____
7. Orator: _____
8. Impromptu: _____
9. Fanatic: _____
10. Zeal: _____

Reading Context Clues Practice Exercises

Read the selection, and then answer the questions that follow.

It was late when Marco finally got to the store. He'd been planning this surprise party for weeks, but somehow time was running out! "I can handle it all by myself," he'd told his mom when he first suggested a surprise party for his cousin's birthday. "I mean, how hard it is to throw a party?"

"It can be very time-consuming. There's a lot to do," replied his mom. But Marco reiterated, "I can handle it all myself!"

Marco did all the mundane, tedious things first, like making a list of who to invite, buying the invitations, and addressing and mailing them out. He found it somewhat irritating when people called to RSVP right in the middle of his favourite TV show, but he thanked them and checked their names on the list so he'd know who would and wouldn't be attending the party.

Then he planned the menu. He knew Paco loved Crema Catalana— a cold custard with a crispy, crunchy, caramel coating. Marco thought his mom made the best, so he asked her to make it for the party. Of course, he planned to have a giant birthday cake with candles for Paco to blow out for luck. Marco also picked other good things to serve.

The day of the party, Marco blew up balloons and made colourful garlands. He draped the paper-chain ribbons across the curtains and attached the balloons to the wall with double-stick tape. Everything looked quite festive. He called his Uncle Santiago to make sure he'd bring Paco at the right time, supposedly just to drop in for a minute on the way to dinner. Then Marco checked on the food supplies. The snacks were ready. The Crema Catalana was in the refrigerator keeping cold, awaiting that final, last-minute caramel topping. And the cake was ready, awaiting the candles on top... "Oh, no!" Marco cried. "I forgot to pick up candles! Mom, do we have any birthday candles?"

"Sorry, honey," she replied. "I wish you'd told me... I could have picked some up on the way home. You'll have to run to the store to get some."

And that's how Marco ended up at the store just before closing, when there was just one checkout open, and a very slow clerk. The lady in front of Marco kept asking, "Is it always this slow?" After the fifth time, Marco replied, somewhat politely, "Yes, ma'am, except on Thursdays. Why don't you come back then?"

The lady turned in a huff and galumphed out of the store, leaving one less person in front of Marco.

Finally, Marco got to the counter. "I just have these birthday candles, Ma'am, and I can't be late for the party," he said hurriedly as he put some money on the counter. "Just keep the change!"

He ran home as fast as he could, arriving just in time to hear everyone inside yell "Surprise!" as Paco and Uncle Santiago walked in the door ahead of him!

Which is most likely the meaning of reiterated?

- a. refused
- b. said for the first time
- c. said again
- d. sat down

2. Which is NOT a meaning of mundane?

- a. boring
- b. ordinary
- c. dull
- d. unusual

3. From the context, which is most likely the meaning of galumphed?

- a. tip-toed
- b. ran
- c. stomped
- d. skipped

ANTONYMS

Choose the word that matches a list of antonyms. A word should not be used more than once. The first two are done for you.

animosity
awkward
adverse
authoritarian
boisterous

astonished
optimism
apathy
prior
disparate

radical
tolerance
audacity
cliché

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. After, ensuing, following, subsequent <i>prior</i> | 2. Exciting, unfamiliar, atypical, strange <i>Cliché</i> |
| 3. Orderly, sedate, noiseless, controlled | 4. Bashfulness, timidity, hesitancy, shyness |
| 5. Rapport, friendship, good will, love | 6. Pessimism, bleakness, cynicism, hopelessness |
| 7. Advantageous, favourable, positive | 8. Concern, interest, emotion |
| 9. Unimpressed, indifferent, bored | 10. Alike, identical, similar, same |
| 11. Graceful, suave, urbane | 12. Impatience, resistance, authoritarian |
| 13. Nonrevolutionary, middle-of-the-road, conservative | 14. Gentle, lenient, tolerant, accommodating, democratic |

THE END