

LESSON 14

From **The Golden Fleece** (fiction)
by Nathaniel Hawthorne

The swollen river had already done a great deal of mischief. It was **evidently** too deep for Jason to wade, and too **boisterous** for him to swim; he could see no bridge; and as for a boat, had there been any, the rocks would have broken it to pieces in an instant.

"See the poor lad," said a cracked voice close to his side. "He must have had but a poor education, since he does not know how to cross a little stream like this. Or is he afraid of wetting his fine golden-stringed sandals? It is a pity his four-footed schoolmaster is not here to carry him safely across on his back!"

Jason looked around greatly surprised, for he did not know that anybody was near. But beside him stood an old woman, with a ragged **mantle** over her head, leaning on a staff, the top of which was carved into the shape of a cuckoo. She looked very aged, and wrinkled, and **infirm**; and yet her eyes, which were as brown as those of an ox, were so extremely large and beautiful, that, when they were fixed on Jason's eyes, he could see nothing else but them. The old woman had a pomegranate in her hand, although the fruit was then quite out of season.

"Whither are you going, Jason?" she now asked.

She seemed to know his name, you will observe; and, indeed, those great brown eyes looked as if they had a knowledge of everything, whether

past or to come. While Jason was gazing at her, a peacock strutted forward and took his stand at the old woman's side.

"I am going to Iolchos," answered the young man, "to **bid** the wicked King Pelias come down from my father's throne, and let me **reign** in his stead."

"Ah, well, then," said the old woman, still with the same cracked voice, "if that is all your business, you need not be in a very great hurry. Just take me on your back, there's a good youth, and carry me across the river. I and my peacock have something to do on the other side, as well as yourself."

"Good mother," replied Jason, "your business can hardly be so important as the pulling down a king from his throne. Besides, as you may see for yourself, the river is very boisterous; and if I should chance to stumble, it would sweep both of us away more easily than it has carried off yonder **uprooted** tree. I would gladly help you if I could; but I doubt whether I am strong enough to carry you across."

"Then," said she, very **scornfully**, "neither are you strong enough to pull King Pelias off his throne." And, Jason, unless you will help an old woman at her need, you ought not to be a king. What are kings made for, save to **succor** the **feeble** and distressed? But do as you please. Either take me on your back, or with my poor old limbs I shall try my best to struggle across the stream."

Exercise I: Context Clues

Read the passage above, paying special attention to the words in dark type. These are the Master Words you will study in this lesson. As you read, look for context clues in the sentences and paragraphs around each Master Word. Circle any words and phrases that give clues to the meaning of the Master Words.

Master Words

Place a check by words you feel you know; underline words you don't know.

bid	evident	infirm	reign	succor
boisterous	feeble	mantle	scornful	uprooted

Exercise 2: Using Context Clues

Fill in the form for each of the Master Words listed below with context clues (if any), your definition, and the dictionary definition. If you have difficulty writing a definition, try using the word in a sentence instead.

1. **bid** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

2. **boisterous** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

3. **evident** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

4. **feeble** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

5. **infirm** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

6. **mantle** Part of Speech: *n.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

7. **reign** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

8. **scornful** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

9. **succor** Part of Speech: *v.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

10. **uprooted** Part of Speech: *adj.* Context Clues: _____

Your Definition: _____

Dictionary Definition: _____

• • Exercise 3: Synonyms and Antonyms

Use the synonyms and antonyms in the word list to fill in the blanks except where you see an X.

	Synonyms	Antonyms
1. boisterous	_____	_____
2. evident	_____	_____
3. mantle	_____	X
4. succor	_____	_____
5. infirm	_____	_____
6. bid	_____	X
7. reign	_____	_____
8. feeble	_____	_____
9. uprooted	_____	_____
10. scornful	_____	_____

Word List	
annoy	planted
calm	polite
cape	pulled up
clear	rule
comfort	sick
disdainful	strong
doubtful	weak
obey	well
order	wild

• • Exercise 4: Sentence Completion

From the Master Words, choose the appropriate word for the blank in each of the following sentences. Write the word in the space provided at the right.

- The two kids I babysit are very ...?... ; I can hardly keep up with them. _____
- The ...?... cornstalks floated on top of the floodwaters. _____
- "In the play I wear a black ...?... draped over my shoulders," said George. _____
- The king ...?... all the lords and ladies to kneel. _____
- The boy's nervousness was ...?... from the trembling of his hands.. _____
- At the camp, the cellular signal is too ...?... ; we can't make or receive calls. _____
- Barry asked, "How many years did Queen Victoria ...?... over England?" _____
- The volunteers tried to ...?... the victims of the flood. _____
- Irene gave me (a, an) ...?... look and said, "No way are you coming with us." _____
- A long illness left Mr. Vargas ...?... . _____

• • Exercise 5: Shades of Meaning

Many words have both a denotation and a connotation. The *denotation* is the dictionary meaning of a word; the *connotation* is the emotional content the word may carry. For example, the words *stingy* and *thrifty* have similar denotations, but their connotations are quite different. *Stingy* has a negative connotation because it describes someone who is selfish. *Thrifty* has a positive connotation when it describes someone who is careful with money but who is otherwise generous.

Each sentence below contains a pair of synonyms in parentheses. Write the word with the connotation indicated in bold type after the sentence. Use a dictionary if necessary. The first one has been done as an example.

My neighbor is (stingy, thrifty) with his money. **(positive)**

thrifty

1. My younger sisters can get quite (boisterous, roudy). **(negative)**
2. During the height of the empire, the rulers of Rome (reigned over, dominated) most of Europe, the Middle East, and parts of Africa. **(positive)**
3. The runt of the litter of puppies was (inferior, infirm). **(negative)**
4. The judge (bid, ordered) the court to maintain silence. **(positive)**
5. After her operation, my Aunt was (feeble, haggard) for months. **(negative)**

• • Exercise 6: Related Words and Meanings

The italic words in the sentences below are synonyms of the Master Words. Write the matching Master Word from the list on the line following the sentence.

evident

feeble

mantle

uprooted

scornful

1. The *cloak* was magic and could make the wearer invisible.
2. It was *obvious* that the spelling bee winner had studied words carefully.
3. Mr. Conroy worried that the move to California would make his family feel *displaced*.
4. Ellie's reason for forgetting her friend's birthday sounded *weak*.
5. Jake's older brother was *critical* of the music Jake liked.

Write About It: Summary

Write a summary of the passage from "The Golden Fleece." Use at least five Master Words or words related to the Master Words in your summary.