

BOOK STUFF

#31

'You know you've read a good book when you turn the last page and feel a little as if you've lost a friend.'

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.



How much do you know about our environment?

Try this quiz from the Guardian newspaper:

1. How much water does it take on average to produce a pair of jeans?
i. 100 litres ii. 1000 litres iii. 10,000 litres
2. How many single-use plastic bottles are used in the UK every day?
i. 21 million ii. 38.5 million iii. 50 million
3. Which country generates the largest amount of solar power in the world?
i. USA ii. Germany iii. China
4. How many pieces of litter are estimated to enter the sea on a daily basis?
i. 1 million ii. 5 million iii. 8 million
5. How much of our wildlife meadows, a vital habitat for bees and insects, have been lost since the Second World War?
i. 27% ii. 63% iii. 97%

COP 26

The COP26 (Conference of the Parties) will meet in Glasgow from October 31 to discuss global warming. The first COP met in 1995 when there was already a sense of crisis. Since then *'we have more than doubled the damage done, with half of all the carbon ever released into the atmosphere by humans since the dawn of humanity put there since that first COP'*. (David Wallace-Wells, TLS, Oct 29, 2021).



Do as I say, not as I do?

Irena Janus was preparing her presentation on the impact of flying on global warming. She would tell her audience that commercial flights pump more of the major gas CO2 into the atmosphere in one year than all of Africa does. She would tell them how one long-haul flight is more polluting than twelve months of car travel. If we want to save the earth, she would conclude, we must do more than reduce the number of flights we take and encourage people either to travel less or use other forms of transport. Just as she was imagining the rapturous reception her talk would receive, she was interrupted by the air stewardess offering her some wine. Hypocrisy? Not as Janus saw it. For she also knew full well that the impact of her own flights on the environment was negligible. If she refused to fly, global warming would not be delayed by as much as a second. What was needed was mass change and policy change. Her work, which involved flying around the world advocating this, could thus be part of the solution. Refusing to fly would simply be a hollow gesture. And with that she switched on the in flight movie: *The Day After Tomorrow*.

From Julian Baggini, *The Pig that Wants to be Eaten and 99 Other Thought Experiments*

Apocalypse anyone?

There are lots of gripping novels about environmental disaster. Here are a few titles:

Jim Crace, *The Pesthouse*
J G Ballard, *The Drowned World*
Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*
Russell Hoban, *Ridley Walker*
Robert Harris, *The Second Sleep*

Or the wonders of nature?

Paul Jepsen and Cain Blythe, *Re-Wilding*
Peter Wohlleben, *The Hidden Life of Trees*
Robert Macfarlane, *The Wild Places*, *Underland*, *The Wild Places*
Sara Wheeler, *Terra Incognita* and *The Magnetic North*

Horror to hunker down with

Here are some of the greats of the genre:

Stephen King
James Herbert
Dean Koontz
Susan Hill, *The Woman in Black*
Shirley Jackson

Scariest films ever?

Here's a list to compare your own favourites with:

Psycho
The Shining
Let the Right One In
Halloween
The Innocents
The Sixth Sense
Hereditary
Get Out
The Exorcist



Spooky words for autumn evenings

Halloween may soon be over but it's still the time of year for ghost stories and things that go bump in the night. Here are some six-word stories to give you a chill. Read them and then have a go yourself.

It enjoys watching you sleep - closely.

Alone in bed. The blanket shifts.

Door opens. Empty. Footsteps approach.

Lovely face but it won't stick.

Slowly her shadow moved towards her.

Dolly's arms lifted and she grinned.



Answers

1. i
2. ii
3. iii
4. iii
5. iii

