

## BEFORE READING

- 1 Read about the characters from *The Moonstone* below. Complete the sentences with these words: *cousin, cousin, mother, parents, uncle, uncle and aunt*.

Rachel is the daughter of Lady Julia Verinder. Her father died when she was a child.

John Herncastle is Lady Verinder's brother. He fought for Britain in India.

Lady Verinder has two sisters. Her sister, Adelaide, married rich Mr Blake and they had a son, Franklin. Adelaide died when Franklin was a child.

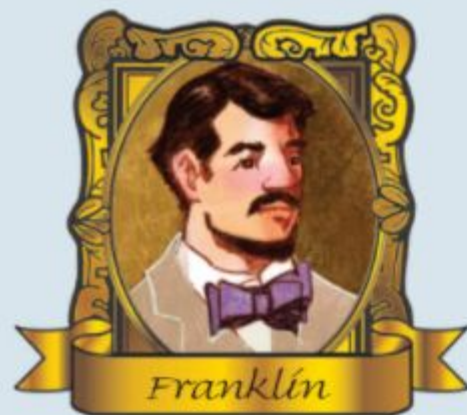
Lady Verinder's second sister, Caroline, married Mr Ablewhite, a banker. They have a son, Godfrey, and live in the town near Lady Verinder.



- a Lady Verinder is  
Rachel's .



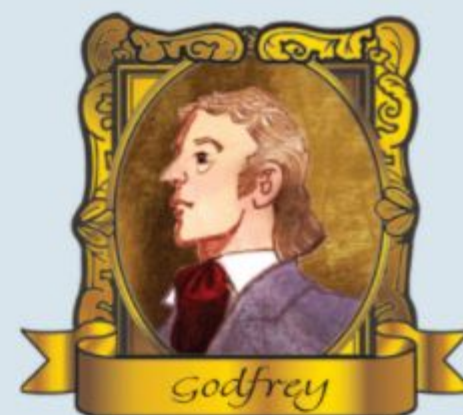
- b John Herncastle is  
Rachel's .



**c** Franklin is Rachel's  
.



**d** Mr and Mrs Ablewhite are  
Rachel's  and ,  
and Godfrey's .



**e** Godfrey is Rachel's  
.

**2 The Moonstone is a mystery story about a diamond that brings bad luck.**  
**What do you think happens to the characters above in the story?**

- a** Who steals the Moonstone diamond? .....
- b** Who does Rachel marry? .....
- c** Who dies in the story? .....



# Prologue

Seringapatam, India (1799)

I am writing to you, the family, from India to explain why I am no longer friendly with my cousin, John Herncastle.

Herncastle and I were here with the British **army**. We were staying near the Palace of Seringapatam in southern India. There were many mysterious stories about the palace. One of the wildest stories was about a yellow **diamond**. It was once part of a **statue** of the Moon God, and it was **guarded** day and night by three Indian **priests**. But a hundred years ago the diamond - called the Moonstone - was stolen and brought to the Palace of Seringapatam. People said that three priests were secretly still guarding the Moonstone at the palace. Herncastle was one of the few men in the army who thought that the Moonstone story was true.

On the 4th of May 1799, the British army **attacked** the palace. On the night of the attack, I found Herncastle in one of the palace rooms with a bloody knife in his hand. Lying across the entrance of the room there were the dead bodies of two Indians, and in front of him another Indian was falling to the floor. As the Indian lay dying, he looked at Herncastle and said: 'The Moonstone will have its **revenge** on you and yours!'

At that moment, the room filled with more men, the fighting went on, and

falling to the floor. As the Indian...

'The Moonstone will have its **revenge** on you and yours!

At that moment, the room filled with more men, the fighting went on, and I didn't see my cousin until the next morning.

'Tell me,' I said, 'how did the Indian die and what did his last words mean?' 'I know no more than you do,' said Herncastle.

I turned my back on him and we have not spoken since.

Please understand that I'm writing about my cousin in order to warn you. I did not see him kill the men with my own eyes, but I am quite sure that he did kill them. Not only this, but I am also sure that he stole the Moonstone. The Moonstone will have its revenge on Herncastle and any other person to whom he gives the diamond.

**army** a large number of people who fight for their country

**diamond** a very bright, hard stone that looks like glass and is very expensive

**statue** a picture of a person made of metal or stone

**guard** to look after a place and stop people attacking it

**priest** a man who works in a temple

**attack** to start fighting

**revenge** something that you do to hurt someone because they have hurt you



## *An Indian diamond in Yorkshire*

On the twenty-fourth of May, 1848, Lady Verinder called her old **servant** Gabriel Betteredge into the sitting room of her family home in Yorkshire.

‘Gabriel,’ she said. ‘Here is news that will surprise you. Franklin Blake has come back from **abroad**. He is coming tomorrow to stay until next month, and will be here for Rachel’s birthday. You must get a room ready for him.’

Franklin Blake was Lady Verinder’s **nephew**, her eldest sister’s only son. He had lived with his aunt and his cousin Rachel Verinder in Yorkshire as a boy, until he went to school in Germany. This was Franklin’s first visit back, and everyone was excited about seeing him again.

The next morning, Lady Verinder and Miss Rachel drove out to lunch with some friends because Franklin had told them he wasn’t arriving until dinner time. Betteredge was getting the room ready for Franklin when he heard a noise in the garden. He went outside and saw three dark-skinned Indians looking at the

**servant** a person who works for someone rich

**abroad** in or to another country

**nephew** your sister's (or brother's) son

**wicked** very bad

**ink** you put this in a pen in order to write with it

house. With them was a small, fair English boy. They wanted to see the lady of the house but left politely when they were told that she was out.

Shortly afterwards, Betteredge's daughter, Penelope, came in a hurry to see her father. She also worked at Lady Verinder's house as Rachel's servant.

'Father,' she cried, 'Where are those Indians? They want to do something **wicked**, I'm sure.'

Penelope had followed the Indians when they entered the garden. One Indian made the small boy hold out his hand. He put some black **ink** on it, and asked:

'Will the English gentleman travel to this house this evening? Has the English gentleman got *it* with him?'

The boy's answer to both questions had been 'Yes'.

Betteredge promised his daughter to ask Franklin Blake what the 'it' in the conversation was. Then he went to fetch the **housemaid**, Rosanna Spearman, for lunch. Rosanna was quiet and hardworking, and Betteredge liked her. He also knew her secret. Rosanna had been a thief, and she had been to prison. But Lady Verinder had felt sorry for her and had given her a job as a housemaid, so Rosanna didn't need to steal in order to get money any more.

Betteredge followed Rosanna's favourite walk to a lonely beach not far from the house. The place was known as the **Shivering Sand** because the moving sands there were dangerous when the sea was low. When Betteredge reached the beach, he saw Rosanna in her big grey coat. She was crying.

'Come and sit down,' he said kindly, 'and tell me why you always come to this miserable place.'

'I try to keep away, but I can't,' she said in a low voice.

Suddenly there was a shout from behind them. 'Betteredge! Where are you?'

Rosanna looked around. 'Oh! Who is it?' she asked softly.

**housemaid** a woman who cleans and works in a rich person's house

**shiver** to move quickly from side to side, often because something makes you feel afraid or cold

**sand** it is yellow, and we find a lot of it on the beach



Rosanna looked around. 'Oh! Who is it?' she asked softly.

A bright-eyed young gentleman came up to them. He was not a tall man, but he was very good-looking. He had brown hair and a

*'Betteredge!  
Where are you?'*





beard, and he wore fashionable, foreign clothes. He came and sat down on the sand next to the old man. It was Franklin Blake, and he was four hours early!

‘Welcome back, Mr Franklin,’ the old servant said.

Betteredge was pleasantly surprised to see the man whom he had last seen as a boy. But Rosanna Spearman’s face turned deep red. She seemed suddenly uncomfortable and she ran back to the house.

‘You have arrived early,’ continued Betteredge.

‘I have a reason for that,’ the young man answered. ‘I wanted to lose a dark stranger who has been following me.’

Betteredge, told Franklin about the visit by the three Indians. He was surprised by Franklin’s reply.

“‘Has the English gentleman got *it* with him?’ I suppose that “it” means *this*,’ he said, and he pulled something out of his pocket. ‘My uncle’s famous Indian diamond.’

‘Oh, sir! Why do you have your wicked uncle’s diamond with you?’ asked Betteredge.

‘My uncle has left his diamond as a birthday present to his **niece**, my cousin Rachel,’ said Franklin. ‘And my father asked me to bring it here. But, Betteredge, why do you call my uncle wicked? What do you know about him?’

‘Lady Verinder’s brother, John Herncastle, was in India with the army, and returned to England with a large diamond. From the moment of his return, all his family refused to see him, and no one ever knew the true story of how he had got his diamond.’

‘Your uncle never tried to sell the **jewel** and he never showed it to anyone. Twice in India he nearly died, and he thought that the Moonstone held a terrible secret.’

Betteredge told Franklin all this as they sat near the Shivering Sand. He also spoke of a visit from Herncastle two years before, on Rachel’s birthday. At that time Lady Verinder had refused to let her brother into the house. ‘I shall remember my niece’s birthday!’ Herncastle laughed wickedly and he left.

**niece** your  
sister’s (or  
brother’s)  
daughter

**jewel** an  
expensive stone



Franklin listened with greater and greater interest to Betteredge's story.

'Now let me tell you what I know,' Franklin said. 'My father's business with the Herncastle diamond is a strange story. My uncle gave my father some important papers, and in return, my father put the jewel in his bank and told his **lawyer**, Mr Bruff, that he would get a note from Herncastle once a year. If Bruff didn't get a note on an agreed date, it was because someone had murdered Herncastle. Bruff then had orders to read a letter which was left with the diamond.'

'After my uncle died in his sleep six months ago, Bruff opened the letter. It told him to take the Moonstone secretly to Amsterdam and have it cut into four to six stones. I think my uncle's life had been in danger from people who were looking for the Moonstone. And he thought he could stop the danger if the diamond were no longer a single stone.'

'But then, in his **will**, my uncle left the Moonstone as a birthday present to his niece, but only if her mother, Lady Verinder, was still alive. Why? For me the important question is: Does the terrible secret of the Moonstone continue after Herncastle dies?'

‘Did Herncastle say why he left the diamond to Miss Rachel?’ Betteredge asked.

‘Oh, yes,’ replied Franklin, ‘His will says that it is to show that he **forgives** Lady Verinder. But remember that Lady Verinder refused to see her brother for years!’

‘I don’t know what to do for the best,’ said Franklin. ‘What do you think, Betteredge?’

Betteredge’s idea was to put the diamond into a bank at Frizinghall, the nearest town. It was a month until Miss Rachel’s birthday, and in this way they could wait and see what happened.

‘A wonderful idea,’ Franklin said and he jumped up. ‘Get the best horse ready for me. I shall take the diamond to Frizinghall before the ladies come back.’

**lawyer** someone who works to help people with the law

**will** the paper that you write and sign, which says how you want to divide your money between people in your family when you die

**forgive** (*past* **forgave,** **forgiven**) to stop being angry with someone for something bad that they did



## READING CHECK

Tick the boxes to complete the sentences.

**a** The story begins in . . .

**1** ☐ Germany.

**2** ☒ India.

**3** ☐ Yorkshire.

**b** The Moonstone is a valuable jewel that belonged to . . .

**1** ☐ Franklin Blake.

**2** ☐ John Herncastle.

**3** ☐ an Indian priest.

**c** Franklin Blake is Lady Verinder's . . .

**1** ☐ nephew.

**2** ☐ son.

**3** ☐ uncle.

**e** Lady Verinder refused to speak to her brother, John Herncastle, because . . .

**1** ☐ he had attacked the Palace of Seringapatam.

**2** ☐ he had done wicked things in India.

**3** ☐ his life had been in danger.

**f** Franklin Blake was told to give the Moonstone to Rachel as a birthday present from . . .

**1** ☐ John Herncastle.

**2** ☐ Franklin's father.

**3** ☐ Mr Bruff.

**d** Before Rosanna Spearman came to work at Lady Verinder's house she ...

- 1 ☐ worked in a bank.
- 2 ☐ lived in India.
- 3 ☐ was in prison.

**g** Franklin and Betteredge decide to take the Moonstone ...

- 1 ☐ back to London.
- 2 ☐ to the Shivering Sand.
- 3 ☐ to the bank in Frizinghall.

## WORD WORK

- 1 Use the words round the statue to complete the sentences on page 7.





- a** I was alone at home, and the noise of the wind made me ..... *shiver* .....
- b** My brother's going to join the  and fight for his country.
- c** We prefer to go  for our holidays.
- d** This is an old pen; you need to fill it with  before you can write with it.
- e** The  on the beach wasn't yellow, it was white.
- f** Tom died without a , so they didn't know how to divide his money.
- g** Herncastle wanted  on his family for the bad things they had done to him.
- h** Last week in our street someone was  and his money was stolen.
- i** If you say sorry for losing my diamond ring, then I'll  you.

## 2 Use words from Chapter 1 to complete the definitions.

- a A lawyer works with the law and tells people what they can and cannot do.
- b A  is someone who works in a temple or a church.
- c A  is a young woman who looks after a rich person's house.
- d A  looks after a building and stops other people stealing things from it.
- e A  is a man or woman who works for a rich person.
- f A  is the son of your sister or brother.
- g A  is the daughter of your sister or brother.

## GUESS WHAT

**What do you think happens in the next chapter? Match the names with the sentences.**

*Betteredge Franklin Lady Verinder Rachel Rosanna*

- a ..... falls in love with Franklin.
- b ..... wears the Moonstone on her dress.
- c ..... is angry about John Herncastle's birthday gift to Rachel.
- d ..... stops smoking to please Rachel.
- e ..... and ..... want to send Rosanna away.