

## Extract 5 : the family's decision about Ben

### I. The argument / trial

#### A) A tense atmosphere

- Ben has just tried to kill a dog, so the atmosphere is very tense : everyone is shocked and knows that something has to be done, the situation has to change. Ben has already done terrible things (he killed a dog and Mr McGregor, the cat), trying to kill another dog is the last straw that breaks the camel's back.  
This tension is illustrated by the silent pauses : « silence » 1.25, « the family sat silent » 1.44, « silence again » 1.48.
- Frederick starts the fight by saying out loud that Ben has to go into an institution 1.8.

#### B) An unequal fight

- First Harriet seems to be self-confident, strong enough and determined to face others as she says « defiantly » 1.5 « let's have it », as if nothing could reach her. But there is a lot of pressure on her : « everyone was looking at Harriet » 1.48.
- But little by little, they all unite against her. Molly and Frederick are compared to a « pair of judges » 1.17 « united in determination » 1.16. The family is « full of division » 1.44. They all put some « energy » and « conviction » 1.54 to convince Harriet.
- They have a solution for every problem that sending Ben into an institution could cause :  
→ they can find another doctor who would acknowledge Ben's abnormality (as opposed to Dr Brett)  
→ the institution is expensive but Frederick proposes to chip in (1.36). Despite hard times, James says that he would do what he can (1.45).
- They try to make Harriet surrender by making her feel guilty. Molly says that « if something isn't done, it's going to be catastrophic » 1.63. Dorothy insists by saying that it is already catastrophic and accuses Harriet not to see her children are suffering from the situation.

In front of those people united against her, Harriet finally surrenders.

### II. The final decision

#### A) David's opinion

- First he worries about the price of such a place. Again he seems to care only about money (like in the extract 3; when Harriet gets pregnant he doesn't want the people to come for Christmas because it costs too much).
- He is « tugged and torn » 1.70 between Harriet and the rest of the family. On one hand, there's Harriet who seeks his help (« Harriet(...) glanced at David to see if she could share this criticism with him » 1.17) and the fact that the institution will be expensive. Maybe he has pity for Ben. But on the other hand, he can't stand this situation anymore (« I don't think I can stick it any longer » 1.72). So he finally agrees with the rest of the family : 1.20 « He agreed with them ».
- He wants Harriet to surrender because this trial, the tension and the division is hard to stand for him. He is « impatient and angry » 1.68. So he looks at Harriet with a « pleading, suffering look » 1.75 that will make Harriet yield.

#### B) Harriet's surrender

- First she acted like every mother would do, she refused categorically. She thinks that those institutions are full of disturbing and unloved children, put there because their parents weren't able and willing to take care of them.

- But finally, thanks to David's role, she accepts the family's decision, what makes her very sad : « she began to cry » l.77.  
Her head knows that she can't keep Ben at home because he provokes too much troubles.  
But her heart doesn't want him to be away. She chooses to be reasonable in spite of what she feels.
- She didn't really seem to love him before, but the idea of him far from her maybe makes her realize that he is her child, and that she loves him at heart.