

# In the Shadow of the Mountain

## Aims

- To focus on the main characters.
- To stimulate students to read the book.

1 Elicit different genres of books from students and write up on the board. Make sure that *human interest* is there but don't tell them yet what genre the book is.

**Possible answers:** comedy, thriller, detective story, human interest, adventure, mystery, science fiction, etc.

2 Tell students they are going to read *In the Shadow of the Mountain*, and ask them to read the Blurb (handout opposite). Show them the front cover of the book if you have it. Which genre do they think the book is? Which features suggest that it's an adventure, a mystery, human interest? Focus on what they think is the most important point about the blurb. Is the story about her grandfather or about Clare?

**Possible answer:** It could be adventure, mystery, human interest, but the fact that it ends with something about Clare's personal and professional life suggests that it's about her and therefore more likely to be human interest.

3 Ask students to read the character list on the handout. Put students into pairs and ask: What questions do you have about Clare? What questions do you have about Edward? Remind them that Edward is now dead and his body has been found in Switzerland. Feedback with the whole class.

**Possible questions:** Why did Clare divorce? Will she remarry? What decisions does she reach about her life? How did Edward Crowe really die?

4 Keep the focus on Clare and Edward. We know that she is a journalist and he was a climber from the Blurb. Write the questions below on the board and ask the students to read them.

- What is the name of Clare's boss?
- What does her boss want her to do?
- How does she react to his suggestion?
- How has Clare's work changed recently?  
How does she feel about it?
- Which part of England did Edward come from?
- How did Ulrich feel about Edward in 1923?
- Who did Edward fall in love with?
- Why is this a problem?

Split students into two groups, A and B. Ask students A to read extracts 1 and 2 on Clare and students B to read extracts 3 and 4 on Edward and answer the questions on their characters. Pair students up A–B and ask them to tell each other about their characters, so that they can answer all the questions. Feedback with the whole class.

### Answers:

- Kevin
- Write about her grandfather.
- She refuses (no way).
- The paper has gone downmarket and she's not happy about it.
- The Lake District.
- He thought he was enthusiastic. They had things in common and they got along well.
- With Ulrich's sister.
- Ulrich thinks she'll get hurt. They're from different countries and 'from another world and another class'. Also Edward is married.

**An alternative:** You can also do this activity as a reading race, with the students working in pairs. Put the extracts on the wall. Student A asks a question, Student B runs to the extracts and finds the answer. The first pair to get all the answers are the winners.

- Ask students to read the extracts they haven't read. Ask students what they think will happen to Clare. What do they think happened to Edward?
- If you have the books, they can start reading and find out.

# In the Shadow of the Mountain

## Blurb

Clare Newton, a journalist, travels to Switzerland to bring home the body of her grandfather, which has appeared from the bottom of a glacier 74 years after a climbing accident. Or was it an accident? Clare finds out more about her family's past than she expected and reaches decisions about her personal and professional life.

## Characters

**Clare Newton:** forty-six years old, divorced. A journalist. Lives in London.

**Andrew Newton:** younger brother of Clare. Married to Jan.

**Marjorie Newton:** in her late seventies; mother of Clare and Andrew. Married to Thomas Newton, who died a year before the story begins.

**Edward Crowe:** grandfather of Clare and Andrew; father of Marjorie. Married to Agatha.

**Bruno:** in his early forties; ski instructor and mountain guide in Zermatt.

**Ulrich Grunwalder:** ninety-four-year-old mountain guide; lives in Zermatt.

## Extract 1

After lunch Clare took her mobile phone into the garden to ring her editor at the *Daily News*.

'What's my schedule like for the next ten days or so, Kevin?' Clare asked.

'You probably know that better than I do. Why are you asking?' Kevin replied.

This'll make him jump, thought Clare as she said, 'I've got to go to Switzerland to pick up a body, and ...'

'You what?' said Kevin. 'Whose body ... what are you talking about?'

'You know I'm at my mother's this weekend, well the Foreign Office rang at lunchtime today and announced, out of the blue, that my Grandpa Edward was just about to appear out of the bottom of a glacier in Zermatt and would someone from the family go and collect him.' Clare couldn't resist making the whole thing sound rather light-hearted. She sometimes enjoyed trying to shock her unimaginative editor ...

'This could make a great piece for the paper. It's not exactly something that happens every day, is it? And there'd be the added interest of the article being written by the granddaughter,' said Kevin.

'No way. You're not going to get my family history for everyone to read,' replied Clare firmly.

## Extract 2

[Andrew said,] 'You seem to be writing different sorts of articles recently. Is this your choice or what?'

'It's all part of the public's never-ending desire for human interest stories,' said Clare rather bitterly. 'We have to write what sells papers. It's not something I'm particularly happy about, but that's how it is.'

In fact, Clare was very unhappy about the direction her work was taking. That was the problem; ever since the paper had been taken over by an American businessman, it had gone downmarket. And that was not just her opinion. Hundreds of newspaper articles had been written in other papers and magazines about the changes at the *Daily News*. In one article, by a man she'd always believed was a friend, her name had even been mentioned as someone who was helping to lower the standards. At first she'd been angry, because his words had hurt. But she knew he was right.

## Extract 3

### Zermatt, August 1923.

The further they went on, however, the more relaxed Mr Crowe seemed to get. Whenever they stopped for a rest to admire the view, Ulrich was asked questions about the area – the names of the different mountains, birds, plants – and about his life in Zermatt. Ulrich, not normally a talkative man, was affected by the obvious enthusiasm of Edward Crowe. That evening, in a mountain hut built for climbers, Ulrich listened to Edward Crowe talking about the area of England where he came from. To him, the Lake District sounded a familiar sort of place and again he realised how much Edward Crowe loved mountains and climbing.

## Extract 4

### Zermatt, July 1924.

Ulrich watched as Edward bent down to kiss Marianne. He was shocked that they were so open about their feelings. And yet ... Marianne, his much loved sister, looked so happy. Since Edward Crowe had arrived back in Zermatt at the beginning of the summer, Ulrich had seen Marianne open up, like a flower in the sun.

From the time he'd learnt about her feelings towards Edward, Ulrich had tried to get Marianne to see how impossible it all was. Edward was married, he was English, he was from another world and another class. He couldn't possibly love Marianne – she was fooling herself and would cause a scandal for their family and the village if she continued in this way. But Edward had told Marianne of his love for her and she believed him. Throughout that winter, Ulrich had been unable to persuade her to give up the idea of Edward coming back as a divorced man, ready to marry her.