



Chapter Six: Mtihani wa Simba

They spent the night among some trees not far beyond the Black Ground, near where, to the North, the hills began to rise. Walking on their scorched feet was painful, so they had soon stopped. Mpole lay down to rest, something elephants don't really like doing. Sheena curled herself up near him. She felt safer close to the grey mound of his body: the last thing she wanted was to have to jump up and run away on her sore paws from something snuffling at her in the darkness.

Her paws hurt, but were not blistered. Her fur was scorched brown in places, but not burnt away. She was glad for once that she had only a short tail: a longer one might have caught fire and burnt like a torch. (Have we told you yet how her tail came to be stumpy? Perhaps some other time.)

The sun had gone down behind the line of fire stretching across the horizon behind them. It had looked red and angry and beautiful, with black streaks of smoke drifting slowly up across its face as it sank into the darkness.

As they settled down for the night, Sheena and Mpole talked. They didn't talk much about the fire. They talked about their early years.

Their lives had been very different, as you might expect. Mpole had had a family. Sheena had had no-one for most of the first six months of her life. Then Dad Allen rescued her, sick, bedraggled and flea-ridden, from under his parked car one hot

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Caribbean night. She had been so weak that she probably wouldn't have been able to move when he drove off, and might well have been crushed under the car's wheels.

Mpole had from the beginning been wonderfully well cared for – fed, protected, played with, taught things. Then it had all come to a sudden end when he was Sent Out. He and Sheena debated for a long time the question of whether it was better not to have, then find, or to have, then lose.

What was certain was that Sheena was in some ways better equipped to survive than Mpole, even in this environment which was home to him and strange to her. From a matter of weeks after her birth she had had to live on her wits and work things out; Mpole was now, at this later stage in *his* life, having to learn to think for himself.

'You did some really good thinking back there,' Sheena said – and she meant it.

'You've invented a way of walking on the Black Ground. That might save some elephant lives, one day.'

She knew Mpole wouldn't selfishly keep the discovery to himself, just so that other Singletons could not use it when they faced Mtihani wa Mteketezo. That wasn't how elephants did things. Every elephant herd had a store of accumulated knowledge and skills, and every member of the herd had access to it to help him or her survive. Most of it was passed on to the calves as they grew up...by some mysterious natural process, it seemed.

'Why do elephants have cracks between their toes?'

'To hold their library cards.'

Sheena didn't think so.

'What kind of books do elephants read?'

'E-books.'

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‘What do you call a group of smart elephants who read a lot of e-books to make themselves even smarter?’

‘A nerd.’

That wasn’t how it worked, either, Sheena was sure. The herd’s most specialised knowledge was carried by the herd leader (always a female) called the Matriarch, often the oldest elephant in the group. She was the one who decided where the herd should travel, for instance, in its search for food and water, since she had the clearest memories of where those things could be found at different times of the year. She knew more than the other elephants about what plants and tree-bark to eat to cure particular sicknesses. She also had the greatest terror of men and their guns, and knew most about hunters’ tricks; and she did her best to keep the herd well away from that source of danger.

This new skill that Mpole had acquired would be shared, passed on (somehow) and become a permanent part of elephant behaviour. Pachydermologists (people who study elephants) would ‘discover’ the behaviour in years to come, and write triumphant Papers about it, almost as if they themselves had invented it.

‘It might be useful. But you helped me think it up. Just like you helped me to think up the idea of using mud to keep the heat of the fire away from my skin.’

That, however, had just been an extension of an old trick, and hardly qualified as an invention. Elephants had always used mud to protect themselves from the sun. (Always? Perhaps only since some clever elephant had thought of the idea – invented it. Everything was an invention, first time round.)

They also covered themselves in mud, Sheena knew, to keep insects away, and to rid their skin of burrs (sharp, hitch-hiking seeds) and ticks (sharp, blood-sucking parasites).

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'Where do elephants go to for skin treatment?'

'To a pachydermatologist.'

That had been one of Thomas's favourites, among the 'old' elephant jokes; Amy had had to have it explained to her.

Now wasn't the time to talk about the next test. Sheena wasn't altogether sure that she wanted to know what it would be.

Now was the time to rest.

Next morning the sun came up yellow and bright in the opposite side of the sky, as if it had passed through a rain shower during its overnight journey and been washed clean of the smokiness.

There was no sign of the fire. It had perhaps died down or moved away. Mpole explained that even if it was still burning it would stop well short of the main track down from the Park Gate, where the rangers had cleared the ground of all vegetation in a line which would act as a fire break.

'They set fire to only one part of the Park at time, so that the animals have plenty of places to run to,' said Mpole.

So Tembo Campsite would not be in any danger.

Sheena now knew even more clearly than she had already done why animals were afraid of fire. It was a monster. She knew more clearly, too, what Panic was. It was the feeling that took over when you faced forces you knew you couldn't control and which might destroy you: it either made you run when you should be standing still, or caused you to stand still, frozen in fear, when you should be running.

She also knew more clearly what Thinking was, and in particular Thinking for Survival. It was using your brain to see how the world works, to understand its forces great and small so that you might learn *to* control them...and if you couldn't, and they were threatening you, so that you could find a way past or

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through them.

There was one force, however, which Mpole didn't seem able to either control or avoid. That was the force driving him on to the other five tests. He had to do them. 'Peer Pressure' is what Mum Allen would have called it (she taught Life Skills among other things). Peer Pressure was being squeezed from the sides by those around you, so that you were forced forwards. The other elephants expected; so Mpole must. There was no way past. The only thing he could do was find a way through.

Sheena did suspect, however, that there was a touch of Pride Pressure at work as well. Mpole was certainly very proud of having passed two tests, and of the thinking that had helped him to do so.

'I'll probably go for Mtihani wa Simba next,' he said. 'The Test of the Lions.'

'Er...what does *next* mean?' asked Sheena. She wasn't sure she was ready for a today sort of next, especially if it involved lions. She knew lions.

'It doesn't mean anything very precisely,' said Mpole.

'It means that next time I see some lions I'll do the test.'

'You mean any old lions will do?'

Actually, she hoped that if she was going to tangle with lions they'd be young ones. Nyanya, the Old One, had been wily and nasty and had had nothing to lose, which made her very dangerous.

'Yes. All I have to do is walk through them.'

Sheena was familiar with the word *all*. It was a word people employed to trick each other, a word you could use to pretend that something was very small when it was Very Big.

'All you have to do is clean up your room' (Mum Allen to Thomas).

'All I want for Christmas is five new dolls' (Amy to her parents).

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'All you have to do is lend me Annie for a couple of hours so that we can play Ambush' (Thomas to Amy. Annie was Amy's favourite doll of all time. Ambush was Thomas's favourite game of the moment, and involved creeping up with his friends on an unsuspecting target and firing at it with catapults.)

Just and *only* were similar words to *all*.

'I just have to go through the middle of the pride, without stopping. It'll only take a moment.'

'Just? Surely lions are dangerous, even to elephants?'

'They can be, to very small elephants at least. To bigger ones too, if they're hungry enough. That's where the luck of the test comes in.'

Sheena didn't think tests should involve luck. Otherwise there was a chance they wouldn't be fair. She didn't want to be on the unfair side of a set of lion teeth.

'Don't you get to choose which lions?'

'No. Once I've decided on Mtihani wa Simba I have to use the next lions I see.'

'How about if I go ahead and make sure the next lions you see have fat stomachs?'

'That *would* be cheating; it would be known; and *I'd* know, I'd know that I hadn't done the test properly.'

That now seemed to matter a lot to Mpole – knowing exactly how well he'd done, which was in some ways more important than just doing whatever it was.

'You can't help me with choosing the lions; but you can still help me with thinking about them. Just in case the test begins to go wrong.'

Sheena knew about *just in case* as well. It often meant *since it's likely that (so and so will in fact happen)*.

'Take a book with you, just in case I'm a bit late' (Mum Allen to

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Dad Allen, when she was going shopping and he was meeting her afterwards).

The lions weren't very far away. Sheena and Mpole had breakfasted (field-mice again for her, sweet, unburnt grass for him). They had drunk at another, very small pool (more of a puddle really), and he had helped her wash the remaining mud out of her fur.

'I'll just spray some water on you,' he said. She should have noticed the *just*.

'What does an airport maintenance elephant use to hose down an airplane?'

'A jumbo jet.'

Sheena was well and truly hosed down.

When she could breathe again she climbed up Mpole's trunk onto his head, from which she dripped water into his eyes and it served him right.

They set off in a direction that would keep them clear of the area that had been overrun by the fire. The ground would have cooled by now, but they had no wish to walk through the ashes of their awful experience.

Before long they turned South again and came to some straggly trees. The lions were just beyond, on the far side of another mud-pond, one that looked quite deep. There were four of them, all females, lying around the remains of a dead animal. Sheena couldn't make out what the animal had started out as, since it had ended up as no more than a broken skeleton with bits of skin attached. The lions had obviously eaten everything edible, and their great round bellies suggested that they couldn't have eaten any more anyway.

'That's that then,' said Sheena.

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‘This bunch won’t give us any trouble, will they? A quick stroll past their left-overs and we can be on our way. That’s Mtihani wa Simba done. Tomorrow’s another day.’

She felt quite perky, now that she knew they’d had good luck with the lions.

The only movement from the lions, as Mpole walked steadily round the mud-hole towards them, was the twitch of an eyelid and the flick of a tail.

Then the situation changed. Without warning all four lions sprang up simultaneously and shot off in different directions.

‘Gosh! We must look pretty scary!’ thought Sheena in her buoyant mood. She liked being part of an outfit that could frighten lions into running away.

‘Does that mean the test doesn’t count?’ she wondered. Mpole hadn’t managed to walk through the group, as he was supposed to, before it became four individuals who obviously didn’t want to be here any longer.

‘That wasn’t Mpole’s fault!’

No indeed it wasn’t. It was the fault of the very large lion that now walked in from the grassland beyond the trees. It was a male, with a great shaggy mane and powerful shoulders. This was a very poor swap, Sheena considered, for the four tame-looking females who had left so quickly and were already nowhere to be seen. This lion’s stomach was not round and full. Mtihani wa Simba had suddenly become much more difficult. How do you walk through a single lion? How do you walk through a single lion who’s very big and hungry?

Mpole had stopped in his tracks, understandably, and now stood still, swaying slightly, trembling a lot. The lion walked around the animal skeleton and its thin remnants of skin, sniffing at it. There weren’t even the beginnings of a meal there for an

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animal as big as he was. He turned his great yellow eyes on Mpole. Mpole and Sheena were being confronted by another of the world's forces, a very powerful one; and it didn't take much thinking to understand how this one worked. It worked by taking what it wanted.



Even a lion this big, however, would not have considered attacking Mpole if there had been other elephants around.

‘Where are the other elephants?’ Sheena whispered. ‘You said there were always other elephants around, watching the tests.’

‘Not exactly. *Watching* sometimes just means *knowing about*; and *around* for an elephant can mean several miles away. I think we’re on our own.’

The lion now began to circle Mpole, slowly, sizing him up. Big

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though the great cat was, he was not much more than half Mpole's height. Mpole's tusks, although not large, were sharp. Mpole turned as the lion moved slowly around him, making sure his tusks were always pointing towards the threat.

Sheena didn't know how she could help. She tried a cat-to-cat stare, but found herself drowning in the twin amber pools of the lion's eyes. There was just too much power there.

As long as Mpole could face the lion he was safe. A lion usually attacks back then front, bringing its prey down from behind then seizing its throat in a strangling bite. This one couldn't get behind Mpole to take hold of a rear leg; and in any case Mpole's neck would be much too thick for the lion to close his jaws around. Perhaps they were safe. (Sheena assumed that if Mpole was safe she would be: she had no intention of getting down from Mpole's head; in fact, she now realised that she had stuck her front claws into the dome of his forehead in order *not* to get down. She persuaded herself that that would help him concentrate.)

She had forgotten about lions and hippos, however. She was about to be reminded.

Hippos, like elephants, are usually too large for lions to tackle. The other problems they present are similar, as well – thick necks and big teeth (rather than tusks). But lions have developed (invented) a horrific technique for killing hippos that have strayed too far from their water holes. They jump up onto their backs, dig their claws in so that they can stay up there, and begin scratching. They scratch down into the hippos' thin skin and through to the flesh beneath. The hippos start to bleed, heavily. When the lions have done enough scratching they jump off, let the hippos run, follow, and wait.

The hippos, losing large amounts of blood, try to make their

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way back to their water holes. Sometimes they succeed. Sometimes, however, they become too weak long before then, fall (or are brought down) and become victims.

This lion knew that technique. What worked on a hippo might work on an elephant.

He sprang suddenly, not directly at Mpole but to one side, landing with a deep thud on the hard ground. Then he sprang again, before Mpole had a chance to turn. It was more a bounce than a jump, but it took him up onto Mpole's back, where he quickly turned so that he was facing forwards.

Sheena swung round on Mpole's head and found herself looking straight into the lion's jaws. He was so close that he could have leaned forward, snapped her up and crunched her like a starter before the main meal. But he paid no attention to her. He was working to maintain his balance as Mpole began to turn and twist...and trumpet – not a pitiful squeal like the one he had emitted as they crossed the Black Ground, but a much more grown-up sound, a mixture of fear and anger.

The lion, however, had sunk his long claws deep into Mpole's skin, and now he began to scratch.

Sheena watched in horror and from close range as the lion's claws sliced down into Mpole's flesh and the blood started to well out of the gashes and run down his sides. She could hear the sound, a kind of rasping, and smell the hot blood. And she could also smell Mpole's fear. All his twisting and turning was having no effect. The lion could not be shaken off, could not be stopped.

Sheena had to try. She gathered herself and sprang for the lion's eyes. But the lion was much too quick. A heavy paw flicked at her as she jumped, and swatted her sideways so that she flew through the air and landed hard several yards away, rolling

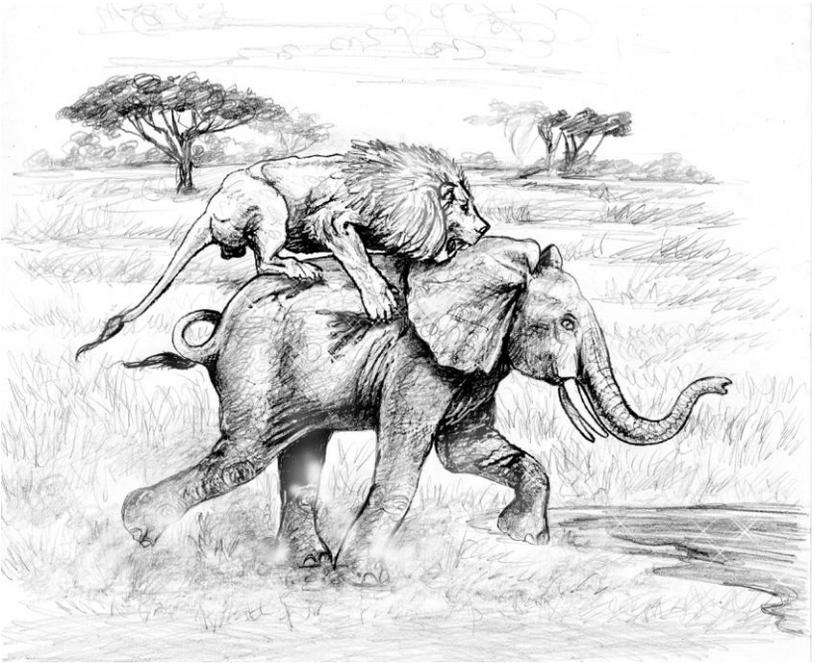
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onwards until she hit a tree stump.

Luckily the lion's claws had not ripped into her; but the breath had been knocked out of her little body, and the consciousness had been almost knocked out of her little head. By the time she knew where she was and was able to turn round and look at what was happening, the lion had started scratching again.

Mpole was now bucking wildly, trying to throw the lion off, reaching over backwards with his trunk towards his tormentor. But his trunk was not long enough to allow him to get a grip on the lion and pull it to the ground where it could be trampled.

'Remember the glorious mud!' Sheena cried out. 'Wallow in the hollow!'



The pool of mud that the lions had been lying next to was

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wide and deep. Mpole spun around towards it, took a few quick steps to its edge, and toppled in. The lion went with him. There was a great ‘Ker-Splat!’ and they both disappeared.

Who could know what then went on in the depths of that brown other world? All Sheena could see was a slow swirl on the surface, as if this were a great cauldron of thick brown gruel being stirred by something far beneath. There was an occasional ‘Gloop!’ as a large bubble of air broke upwards. Once, eerily, a set of four flat-topped lumps emerged from the mud, paused, and sank again.

‘Mpole’s feet! He’s upside-down!’

Then everything went still, and the surface settled into smoothness.

Sheena feared the worst. Unable to disentangle themselves from each other, both animals had suffocated – ‘drowned’ wasn’t right, didn’t convey the sense of smother that must have come as the thick mud poured down throats and into lungs. Sheena ran anxiously up and down the edge of the pit.

Suddenly there was movement again, and something broke through the brown surface just in front of her.

She stopped. It was the tip of Mpole’s trunk. The two lips at the end opened pinkly, and a blast of exhaled air splattered a thick spray of mud over her where she had halted. Then there was a great sucking-in through the trunk, and a great stirring beneath it, and the elephant’s heavy shape rose slowly from the depths as he walked up out of the pond, mud running thickly down his sides as if he was melting.

Mpole said nothing. Sheena said nothing. They turned together and left the scene, Mpole walking slowly and steadily, Sheena trotting along beside him. Behind them the surface of the mud pool settled into stillness once more.

***The Gradual Elephant* by H.S. Toshack.....Chapter Six *The Test of the Lions* - Study Tasks**

Page by page (understanding and interpreting texts):

Page	Task	Suggested responses, teaching notes
73	Sheena realises that we can use our brains to protect ourselves from dangerous forces. What two dangerous forces in particular are mentioned on this page?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire • Panic
74	<p>a) When Mpole says, 'I'll probably go for Mthani wa Simba next,' what does the phrase 'go for' suggest about his mood?</p> <p>b) Use the phrase in a sentence of your own, to suggest the same feeling.</p>	<p>a) That he's confident (since he's just passed two tests). It's a casual, almost flippant phrase.</p> <p>b) Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'If he bowls a slower ball in this over, I'll go for a six.' • 'I'll go for blue – it's my lucky number.'
75	<p>a) What do you think the 'unfair' side of a set of lion teeth is?</p> <p>b) Why is it unfair?</p>	<p>a) The inside</p> <p>b) Because lions are big and powerful, and Sheena is only a little cat.</p>
76	How do we know that Mpole used a lot of water to hose Sheena down?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The joke about the jumbo jet tells us that. • So does the phrase 'well and truly'. • She needs to get her breath back afterwards. • The water runs off her fur and drips into Mpole's eyes. • She thinks he deserves some kind of punishment for what he has done ('...and it served him right').

77	<p>a) Which short phrases in the first paragraph give us the impression that Sheena’s mood is indeed ‘perky’?</p> <p>b) Find a word further down the page that means the same as ‘perky’.</p>	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This bunch • Quick stroll • Left-overs • On our way <p><i>[Further teaching opportunity: This is the same kind of deliberately casual language as ‘go for’ (Page 74), and expresses the same mood.]</i></p> <p>b) Buoyant.</p>
78	Why does Sheena whisper?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She’s afraid. • She doesn’t want the lion to hear her question, because it will tell him that there are probably <i>no</i> other elephants around.
79	When we find a way of persuading ourselves that it’s alright to do something that we know we perhaps shouldn’t do, we are said to ‘rationalise’. Find an example of rationalisation on this page.	Sheena sticks her claws into Mpole’s head so that she won’t fall off. She persuades herself that it’s alright to do that, however, since it will ‘help him concentrate’.
80	<p>One of the things that make this account horrific is the way it includes the sensations Sheena experiences, through her five senses.</p> <p>a) Write down the five senses (if you remember what they are) and try to find examples of four of Sheena’s in use.</p> <p>b) There is a sixth sense called the ‘kinesthetic’ sense (the sense of movement). Find an example of that.</p>	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sight: the slicing of the lion’s claws; the bleeding • Sound: the thud as the lion lands; Mpole’s trumpeting; the rasping of the lion’s claws • Taste: no example • Smell: the hot blood; Mpole’s fear • Touch: she lands ‘hard’. <p>b) ‘She felt herself flying through the air.’</p>

81	<p>a) How does the author make the point that both Sheena and Mpole are at a disadvantage in this encounter?</p> <p>b) What, towards the end of the page, suggests that Sheena is not at a disadvantage, in another respect?</p>	<p>a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He reminds us that Sheena has a ‘little’ body (and a little head). • He tells us that Mpole’s trunk is too short to reach the lion (since he’s quite a young elephant). <p>b) She quickly thinks up a plan to help Mpole – so her brain is clearly not small, even if her head is.</p>
82	<p>Why do you think Mpole and Sheena say nothing as they leave the mud pool?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are both in a state of shock – Mpole because he has nearly died and Sheena because she <i>thought</i> he had died. • The death of another animal, however cruel the animal, is a sad event.

Whole chapter (other activities):

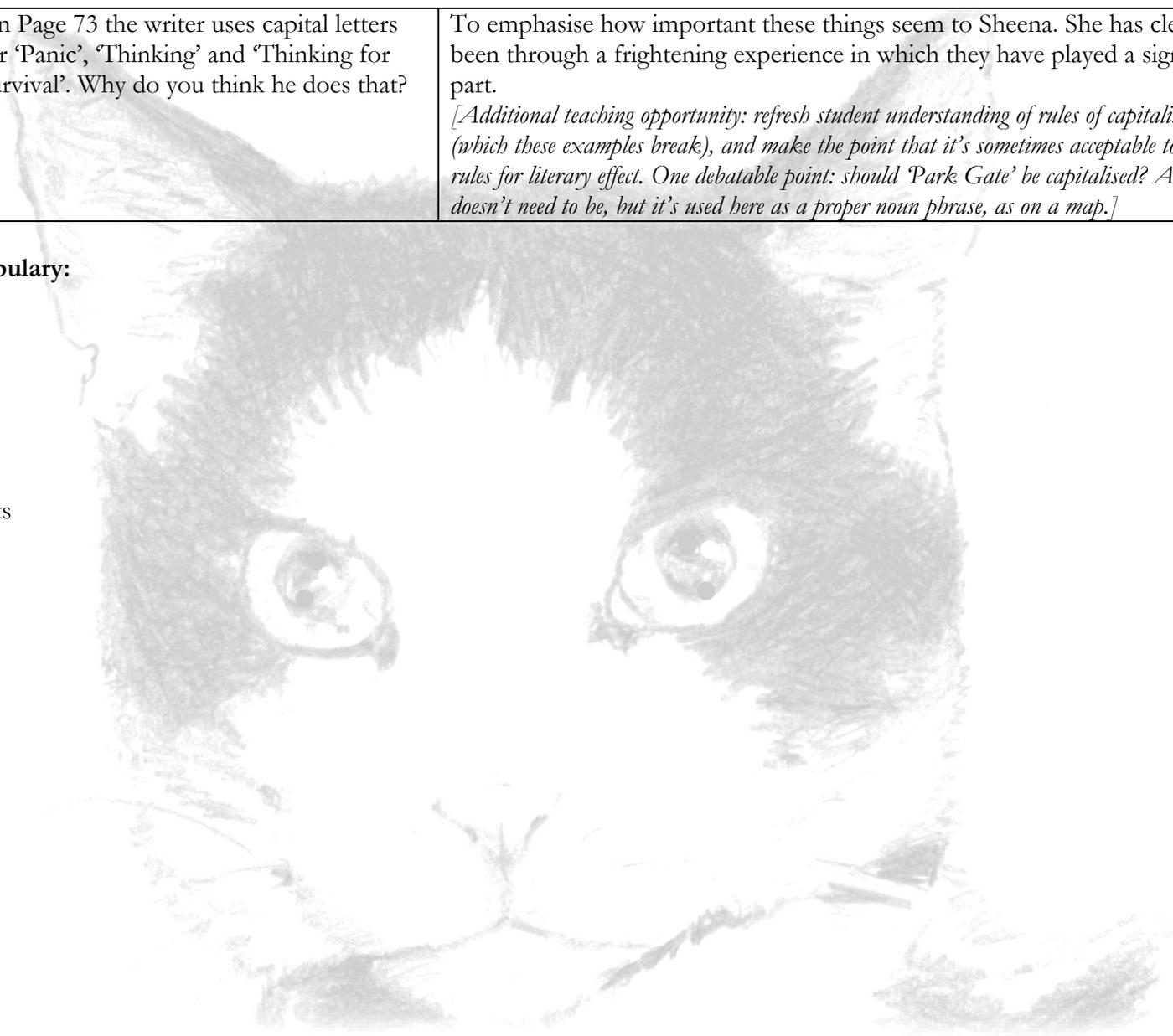
Activities	Task	Suggested responses; additional teaching opportunities; notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussion, interaction 	<p>Talk with a partner or in a group about your experience of peer pressure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What form does it take? • What sort of things do you find yourself doing because of it? • How difficult is it to resist? • Has it ever got you into trouble? <p>Alternatively (or in addition) you could talk about pride pressure, using the same questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Check understanding of the word ‘peer’.</i> • <i>Additional question for whole-class discussion: do peer pressure and pride pressure sometimes overlap?</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group discussion, interaction 	<p>‘Sheena didn’t think tests should involve luck. Otherwise there was a chance they wouldn’t be fair.’ (Page 75)</p> <p>Discuss that idea in a group. Give some examples of what you think are ‘fair’ or ‘unfair’ tests.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging and responding to texts 	<p>Think and talk about stories in which a person or an animal has apparently died but reappears, having survived. What feelings do we have as we read such stories? How do storytellers work to bring those feelings out in us?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating and shaping texts Text structure and organisation 	<p>‘Then the situation changed.’ (Page 77)</p> <p>Write about an experience you have had in which something seemed if it was going to be easy and then suddenly became difficult.</p> <p>Emphasise the difference in mood between the ‘easy’ and the ‘difficult’ part of things.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure, punctuation 	<p>On Page 73 the writer uses capital letters for 'Panic', 'Thinking' and 'Thinking for Survival'. Why do you think he does that?</p>	<p>To emphasise how important these things seem to Sheena. She has clearly just been through a frightening experience in which they have played a significant part.</p> <p><i>[Additional teaching opportunity: refresh student understanding of rules of capitalisation (which these examples break), and make the point that it's sometimes acceptable to break rules for literary effect. One debatable point: should 'Park Gate' be capitalised? Answer: it doesn't need to be, but it's used here as a proper noun phrase, as on a map.]</i></p>
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Possibly new vocabulary:

- blistered
- bedraggled
- flea-ridden
- accumulated
- specialised
- acquired
- pachydermologists
- qualified
- burrs
- ticks
- parasites
- vegetation
- tangle
- unsuspecting
- perky
- buoyant
- sizing
- rasping
- swatted
- bucking
- tormentor
- cauldron
- eerily
- disentangle



Questions on the illustrations:

Page	Task	Suggested responses, teaching notes
78	Which part of the lion portrait do you find most frightening? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its teeth (they're very big). • Its whole mouth (it's open very wide and could take a very big bite). • Its eyes (they're wild). • Its wrinkled nose (which make it look angry, as if it's snarling).
81	How has the illustrator suggested that Mpole (and the lion) are travelling at speed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lion's tail is streaming out behind it. • Two of Mpole's legs are well off the ground.

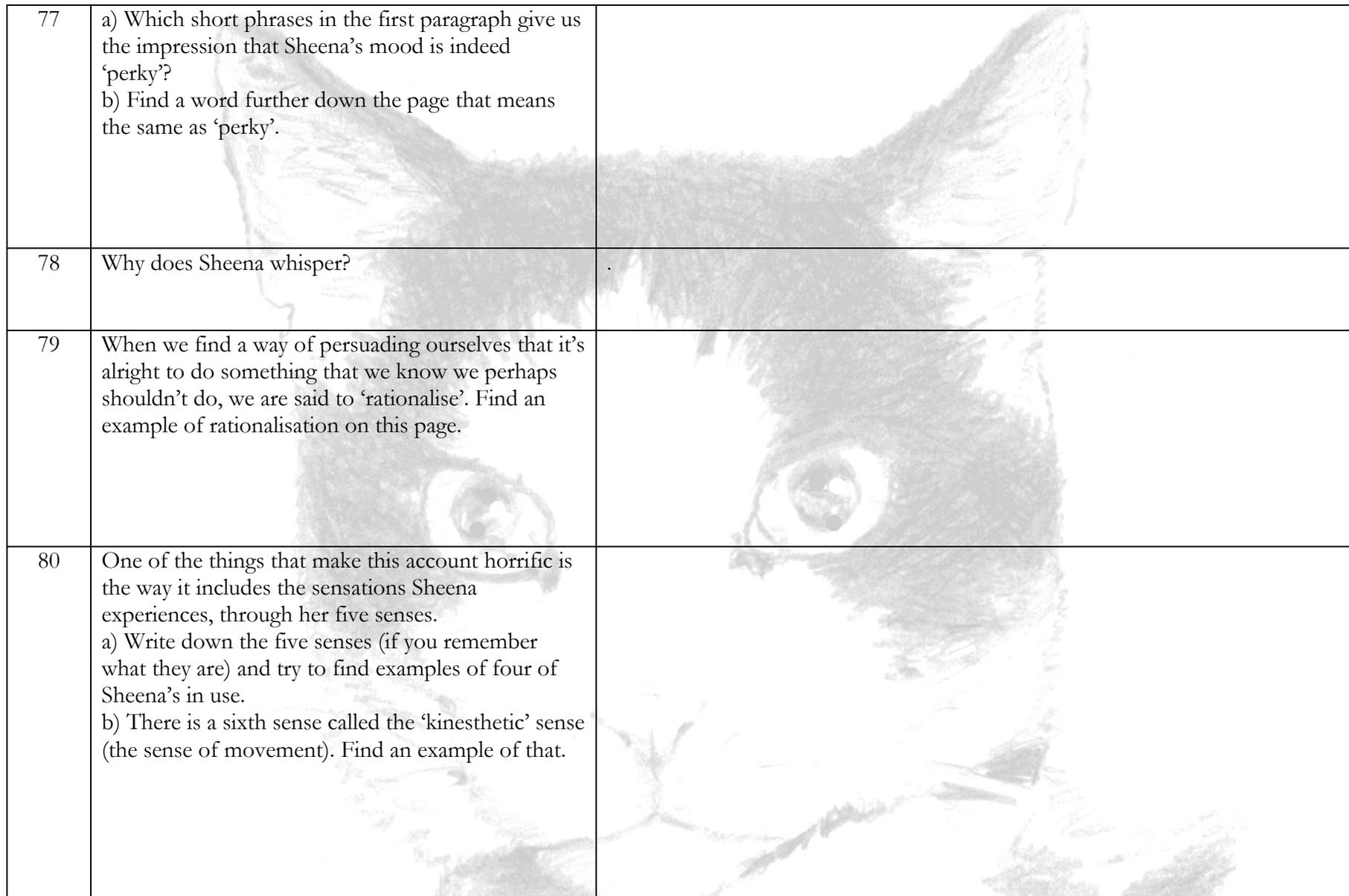
Personal writing:

Task	Teaching support
Write about a time when you had a feeling of panic about something. Explain how you used your brain ('thinking') to control your panic.	<i>It may be necessary to brainstorm possible situations.</i>

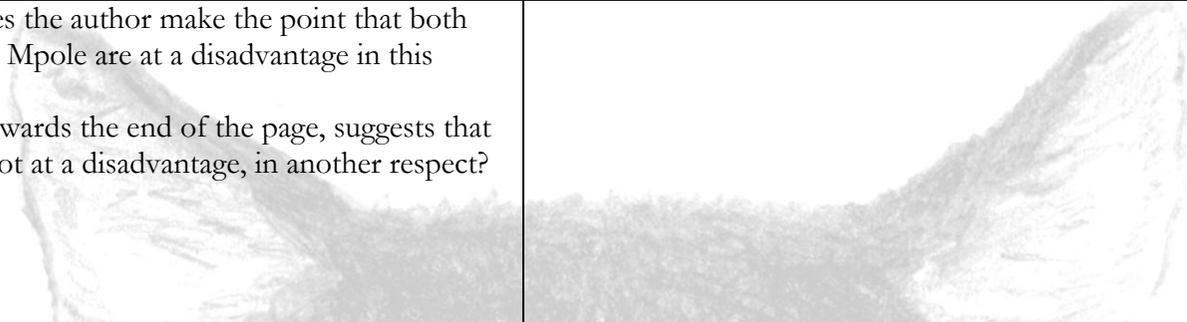
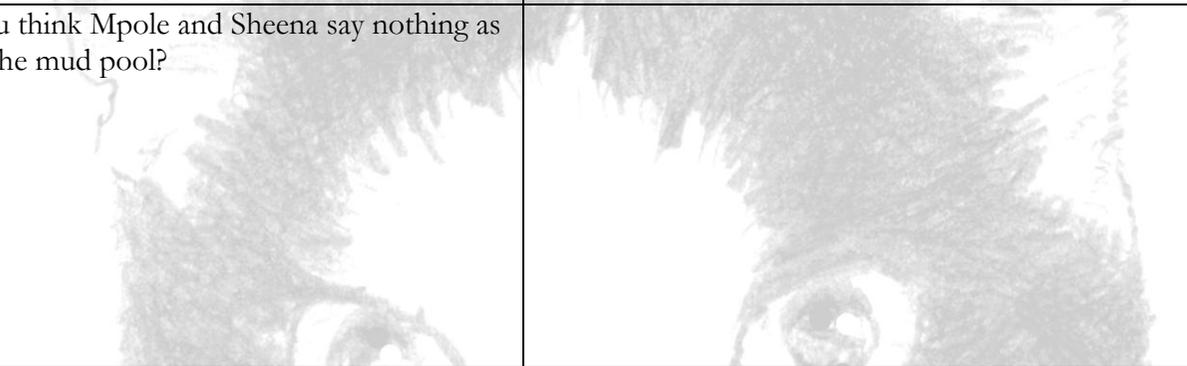
The Gradual Elephant by H.S. Toshack.....Chapter Six *The Test of the Lions* - Study Tasks

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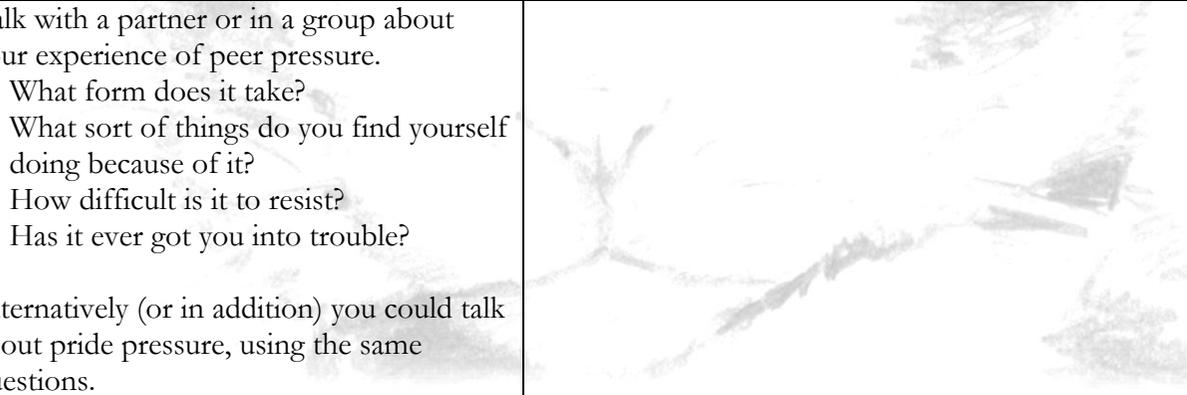
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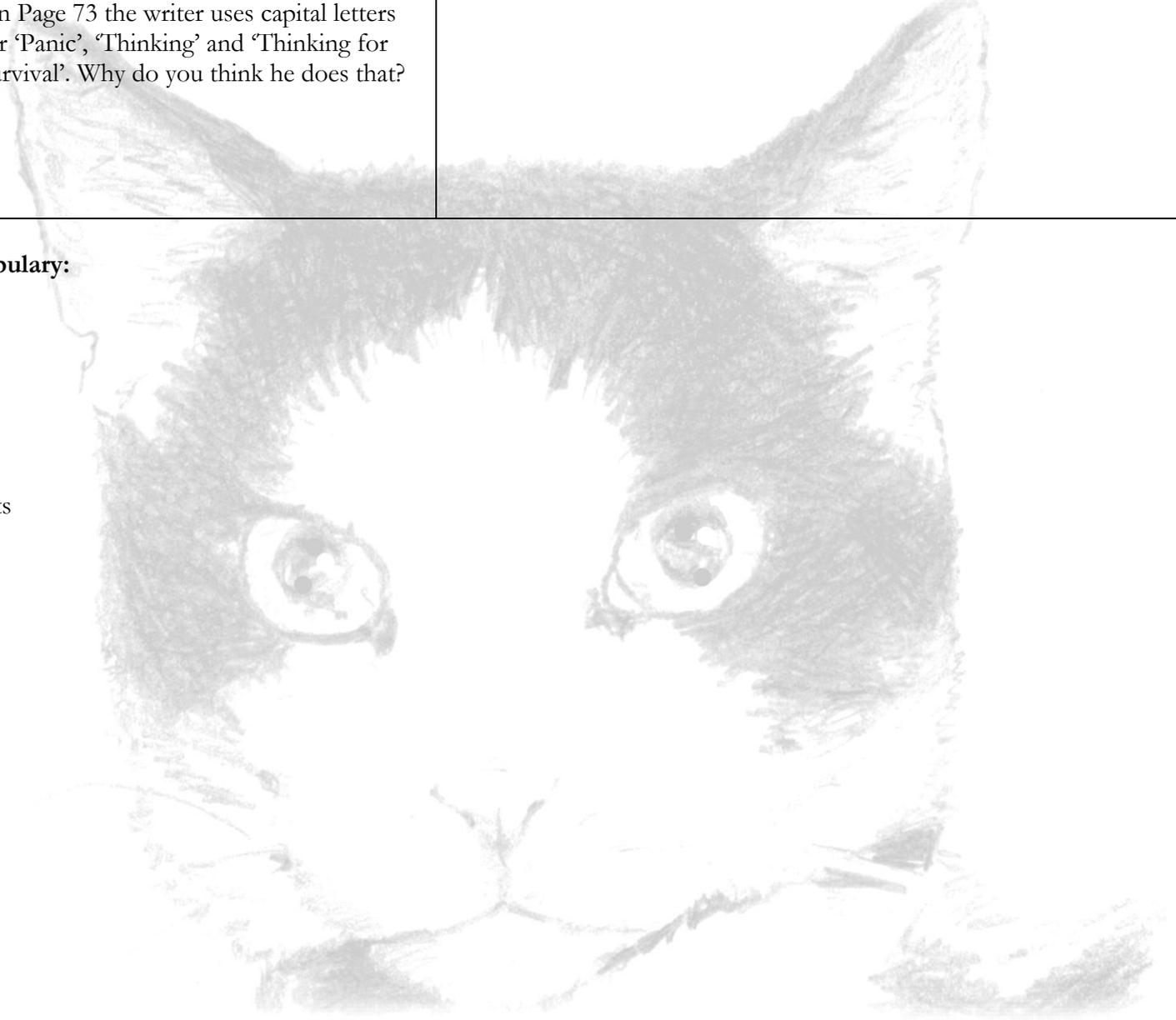
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Whole chapter (other activities):

Activities	Task	Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group discussion, interaction 	<p>Talk with a partner or in a group about your experience of peer pressure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What form does it take? What sort of things do you find yourself doing because of it? How difficult is it to resist? Has it ever got you into trouble? <p>Alternatively (or in addition) you could talk about pride pressure, using the same questions.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group discussion, interaction 	<p>‘Sheena didn’t think tests should involve luck. Otherwise there was a chance they wouldn’t be fair.’ (Page 75)</p> <p>Discuss that idea in a group. Give some examples of what you think are ‘fair’ or ‘unfair’ tests.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging and responding to texts 	<p>Think and talk about stories in which a person or an animal may have died but reappears, having survived. What feelings do we have as we read such stories? How do storytellers work to bring those feelings out in us?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating and shaping texts Text structure and organisation 	<p>‘Then the situation changed.’ (Page 77)</p> <p>Write about a situation in which something seemed if it was going to be easy and then suddenly became difficult. Emphasise the difference in mood between the ‘easy’ and the ‘difficult’ part of things.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure, punctuation 	<p>On Page 73 the writer uses capital letters for 'Panic', 'Thinking' and 'Thinking for Survival'. Why do you think he does that?</p>	
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Possibly new vocabulary:

- blistered
- bedraggled
- flea-ridden
- accumulated
- specialised
- acquired
- pachydermologists
- qualified
- burrs
- ticks
- parasites
- vegetation
- tangle
- unsuspecting
- perky
- buoyant
- sizing
- rasping
- swatted
- bucking
- tormentor
- cauldron
- eerily
- disentangle

Questions on the illustrations:

Page	Task
78	Which part of the lion portrait do you find most frightening? Why?
81	How has the illustrator suggested that Mpole (and the lion) are travelling at speed?

Personal writing:

Task
Write about a time when you had a feeling of panic about something. Explain how you used your brain ('thinking') to control your panic.