



Chapter 17 - Destruction

TASK 1:

Find where the author has used sound to show the reaction of the grandmother and label this 'sound'. What is the effect of this?

TASK 2:

Find where the author has used short sentences (this is part of the structure). How does this effect how we read the extract? How does it increase the tension?

TASK 3:

Find evidence of **physical** destruction in this extract and highlight it. Why is this significant?

TASK 4:

Find evidence of **emotional** destruction in this extract and highlight it. Why is this significant?

TASK 5:

This is the first time we are seeing how the mother's illness is effecting the grandmother. Why is this important? Why do you think Ness has chosen this moment to reveal her emotions? Does this change your opinion of the grandmother? If so why?

TASK 6:

The monster is not present during this extract. Why do you think Ness has structured it so the monster is not around when the grandmother returns?

TASK 7:

Find and highlight where Ness has used repetition. Label it repetition. What is the effect of this repetition?

TASK 8:

'It was like standing at the end of the world, almost like being alive and awake in his nightmare, the screaming, the emptiness-' Find and highlight this quote. What is the significance of this line?

TASK 9:

Find and highlight the verbs in this extract. Label them 'verbs'. Look at them collectively. What is the effect of this?

Read this extract from the chapter 'Destruction':

(In this extract, Conor has just destroyed his grandmother's living room.)

Explore how Ness presents destruction in this extract.



His grandma put her key in the lock and opened the front door.

In the split second after she came around the corner to the sitting room, still fiddling with her handbag, before she registered where Conor was or what had happened, he saw her face, how tired it was, no news on it, good or bad, just the same old night at the hospital with Conor's mum, the same old night that was wearing them both so thin.

Then she looked up.

"What the—?" she said, stopping herself by reflex from saying "hell" in front of Conor. She froze, still holding her handbag in mid-air. Only her eyes moved, taking in the destruction of the sitting room in disbelief, almost refusing to see what was really there. Conor couldn't even hear her breathing.

And then she looked at him, her mouth open, her eyes open wide, too. She saw him standing there in the middle of it, his hands bloodied with his work.

Her mouth closed, but it didn't close into its usual hard shape. It trembled and shook, as if she was fighting back tears, as if she could barely hold the rest of her face together.

And then she groaned, deep in her chest, her mouth still closed. It was a sound so painful, Conor could barely keep himself from putting his hands over his ears.

She made it again. And again. And then again until it became a single sound, a single ongoing horrible groan. Her handbag fell to the floor. She put her palms over her mouth as if that was all that would hold back the horrible, groaning, moaning, keening sound flooding out of her.

"Grandma?" Conor said, his voice high and tight with terror.

And then she screamed.

She took away her hands, balling them into fists, opened her mouth wide and screamed. Screamed so loudly Conor did put his hands up to his ears. She wasn't looking at him, she wasn't looking at anything, just screaming into the air.

Conor had never been so frightened in all his life. It was like standing at the end of the world, almost like being alive and awake in his nightmare, the screaming, the emptiness –

Then she stepped into the room.

She kicked forward through the rubbish almost as if she didn't even see it. Conor backed away from her quickly, stumbling over the ruins of the settee. He kept a hand up to protect himself, expecting blows to land any moment–

But she wasn't coming for him.

She walked right past him, her face twisted in tears, the moaning spilling out of her again. She went to the display cabinet, the only thing remaining upright in the room.

And she grabbed it by one side–

And pulled on it hard once–

Twice–

And a third time.

Sending it crashing to the floor with a final-sounding crunch.

She gave a last moan and leaned forward to put her hands on her knees, her breath coming in ragged gasps.

She didn't look at Conor, didn't look at him once as she stood back up and left the room, leaving her handbag where she'd dropped it, going straight up to her bedroom and quietly shutting the door.

Conor stood there for a while, not knowing whether he should move or not.

How does Ness presents destruction in this extract?

Write about:

How Ness presents the physical destruction.
How Ness presents the emotional destruction.

