

## Searching for Summer

Short Story by Joan Aiken

# What do you take for **GRANTED?**

### COMMON CORE

**RL 4** Determine the connotative meanings of words; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on tone. **RL 10** Read and comprehend literature, including stories.

There are many things in life that we assume will always be there. Air and water are two. But what if they disappeared? You've probably heard the saying "You never miss the water until the well runs dry." That means that we don't have appreciation for certain things until they're gone or scarce. "Searching for Summer" is set in a world that is missing something else we all take for granted.

**DISCUSS** Conduct an informal class survey, asking each person to name an everyday thing that is taken for granted. Choose the item mentioned most often, and as a class, discuss what you would do if this thing were suddenly gone or in short supply.

### Things We Take for Granted

1. Air
2. Water

## ● TEXT ANALYSIS: SETTING AND MOOD

A story may have more than one **setting**, and each setting may convey a different **mood**, or atmosphere. Imagine, for example, the emotional atmosphere in a gym packed with students watching their team winning an important game. Shouts, cheers, upbeat music, exciting plays—all these sights and sounds would create a mood of excitement and joyous anticipation. Now imagine how the mood would change if a character walked out of the gym into a long, dark, deserted hallway. To understand the relationship between the setting and the mood in a story, think about

- the sensory language that tells what a place is like
- the feelings conveyed by that language

In “Searching for Summer,” you’ll encounter two very different settings. As you read, notice the descriptions of each setting and think about the mood those details convey.

**Review:** **Conflict**

## ● READING STRATEGY: MONITOR

When you **monitor**, you check to make sure you understand what you are reading. If you don’t understand a story, you may have to read more slowly, reread passages, or read aloud. Jot down any questions you have about the story’s setting, characters, and events, and then answer them as you read further. Use a chart like the one shown. Additional monitoring questions are provided to help you clarify your understanding.

<i>My Questions</i>	<i>My Answers</i>
<i>Why were the bombs banned?</i>	<i>probably because they caused too much destruction</i>

## ▲ VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

Classify the vocabulary words into three categories: “Words I Know Well,” “Words I Think I Know,” and “Words I Don’t Know at All.” Write a short definition in your *Reader/Writer Notebook* for words in the first two categories. After you read this short story, correct your definitions if necessary and define the new words you learn.

- |               |                |                |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. unavailing | 2. disengage   | 3. rudimentary |
| 4. wizened    | 5. voluble     | 6. commiserate |
| 7. savoring   | 8. indomitable |                |

## Joan Aiken

1924–2004

### Literary Fathers

Joan Aiken (ā’kən) grew up in England in a literary household. Her father, Conrad Aiken, was an American poet, and her stepfather, Martin Armstrong, was a fiction writer. At an early age, she decided to follow in their footsteps.

### A Writer’s Life

In 1945 Aiken met and married journalist Ronald Brown. That same year, she began publishing poems and stories in magazines. Her first book for young adults, *All You’ve Ever Wanted and Other Stories*, appeared in 1953. About two years later, her husband died. To support herself and her two children, she worked as an editor for *Argosy*, a short story magazine, but continued to write at home. Her 1962 children’s novel *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* was a hit with critics and readers alike, enabling her to become a full-time writer. Aiken followed up with many other successful novels, including *Black Hearts in Battersea* and *The Whispering Mountain*. Though she is most often remembered as an author for young people, readers of all ages enjoy her stories.

### BACKGROUND TO THE STORY

#### Nuclear Anxiety

Aiken wrote “Searching for Summer” in the 1950s, setting the story in a future “eighties”—perhaps the 1980s or 2080s. When the story was published, nuclear disaster was an ever-present threat. New nuclear weapons were being tested, and radioactive fallout rained down from the sky, polluting the environment.

Author  
Online



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KEYWORD: HML10-65



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

# SEARCHING FOR *Summer*

Joan Aiken

Lily wore yellow on her wedding day. In the eighties people put a lot of faith in omens and believed that if a bride's dress was yellow her married life would be blessed with a bit of sunshine.

It was years since the bombs had been banned, but still the cloud never lifted. Whitish gray, day after day, sometimes darkening to a weeping slate color or, at the end of an evening, turning to smoky copper, the sky endlessly, secretively brooded.

Old people began their stories with the classic, fairy-tale opening: "Long, long ago, when I was a liddle un, in the days when the sky was blue ..." and children, listening, chuckled among themselves at the absurd thought, because, *blue*, imagine it! How could the sky ever have been *blue*? You might as well say, "In the days when the grass was pink."

Stars, rainbows, and all other such heavenly sideshows had been permanently withdrawn, and if the radio announced that there was a blink of sunshine in such and such a place, where the cloud belt had thinned for half an hour, cars and buses would pour in that direction for days in an **unavailing** search for warmth and light. **A**

After the wedding, when all the relations were standing on the church porch, with Lily shivering prettily in her buttercup nylon, her father prodded the dour and withered grass on a grave—although it was August, the leaves were hardly out yet—and said, "Well, Tom, what are you aiming to do now, eh?"

"Going to find a bit of sun and have our honeymoon in it," said Tom. There was a general laugh from the wedding party.

"Don't get sunburned," shrilled Aunt Nancy.

"Better start off Bournemouth<sup>1</sup> way. Paper said they had a half-hour of sun last Wednesday week," Uncle Arthur weighed in heavily.

## Analyze Visuals ▶

How would you describe the **mood** of this painting? What qualities contribute to the mood?

**unavailing** (ŭn'ə-vā'līng)  
*adj.* useless, ineffective

## **A** MONITOR

**Reread** lines 8–17. How have the sky and climate changed, and why?

1. **Bournemouth** (bôrn'mèth): a British seaside resort.



“We’ll come back brown as—as this grass,” said Tom, and ignoring the good-natured teasing from their respective families, the two young people  
30 mounted on their scooter, which stood ready at the churchyard wall, and chugged away in a shower of golden confetti. When they were out of sight, and the yellow paper had subsided on the gray and gritty road, the Whitmores and the Hoskinses strolled off, sighing, to eat wedding cake and drink currant<sup>2</sup> wine, and old Mrs. Hoskins spoiled everyone’s pleasure by bursting into tears as she thought of her own wedding day when everything was so different.

Meanwhile Tom and Lily buzzed on hopefully across the gray countryside, with Lily’s veil like a gilt banner floating behind. It was chilly going for her in her wedding things, but the sight of a bride was supposed to bring good luck, and so she stuck it out, although her fingers were blue to the knuckles.  
40 Every now and then they switched on their portable radio and listened to the forecast. Inverness had seen the sun for ten minutes yesterday, and Southend<sup>3</sup> for five minutes this morning, but that was all. **B**

“Both those places are a long way from here,” said Tom cheerfully. “All the more reason we’d find a nice bit of sunshine in these parts somewhere. We’ll keep on going south. Keep your eyes peeled, Lil, and tell me if you see a blink of sun on those hills ahead.”

But they came to the hills and passed them, and a new range shouldered up ahead and then slid away behind, and still there was no flicker or patch of sunshine to be seen anywhere in the gray, winter-ridden landscape. Lily began  
50 to get discouraged, so they stopped for a cup of tea at a drive-in.

“Seen the sun lately, mate?” Tom asked the proprietor.

He laughed shortly. “Notice any buses or trucks around here? Last time I saw the sun was two years ago September; came out just in time for the wife’s birthday.” **C**

“It’s stars I’d like to see,” Lily said, looking wistfully at her dust-colored tea. “Ever so pretty they must be.”

“Well, better be getting on I suppose,” said Tom, but he had lost some of his bounce and confidence. Every place they passed through looked nastier than the last, partly on account of the dismal light, partly because people had given up  
60 bothering to take a pride in their boroughs.<sup>4</sup> And then, just as they were entering a village called Molesworth, the dimmest, drabest, most insignificant huddle of houses they had come to yet, the engine coughed and died on them. **D**

“Can’t see what’s wrong,” said Tom, after a prolonged and gloomy survey.

“Oh, Tom!” Lily was almost crying. “What’ll we do?”

“Have to stop here for the night, s’pose.” Tom was short-tempered with frustration. “Look, there’s a garage just up the road. We can push the bike there, and they’ll tell us if there’s a pub<sup>5</sup> where we can stay. It’s nearly six anyway.”

### **B** SETTING AND MOOD

Reread lines 28–42. Note how the countryside looks and feels. What mood is created by this description?

### **C** MONITOR

Why are buses and trucks a sign that sunshine has been spotted in the area?

### **D** SETTING AND MOOD

Reread lines 58–62. Picture what Molesworth looks like. What feeling do you get from that image?

2. **currant**: a berry used to make jams, jellies, and wines.

3. **Inverness . . . Southend**: resort towns in the north and south of the British Isles.

4. **boroughs**: towns or districts.

5. **pub**: a British term for a tavern. Pubs in small towns sometimes serve meals and rent rooms to travelers.

They had taken the bike to the garage, and the man there was just telling them that the only pub in the village was the Rising Sun, where Mr. Noakes might be able to give them a bed, when a bus pulled up in front of the petrol<sup>6</sup> pumps.

“Look,” the garage owner said, “there’s Mr. Noakes just getting out of the bus now. Sid!” he called.

But Mr. Noakes was not able to come to them at once. Two old people were climbing slowly out of the bus ahead of him: a blind man with a white stick, and a withered, frail old lady in a black satin dress and hat. “Careful now, George,” she was saying, “mind ee be careful with my son William.”

“I’m being careful, Mrs. Hatching,” the conductor said patiently, as he almost lifted the unsteady old pair off the bus platform. The driver had stopped his engine, and everyone on the bus was taking a mild and sympathetic interest, except for Mr. Noakes just behind who was cursing irritably at the delay. When the two old people were on the narrow pavement, the conductor saw that they were going to have trouble with a bicycle that was propped against the curb just ahead of them; he picked it up and stood holding it until they had passed the line of petrol pumps and were going slowly off along a path across the fields. Then, grinning, he put it back, jumped hurriedly into the bus, and rang his bell.

“Old nuisances,” Mr. Noakes said furiously. “Wasting public time. Every week that palaver<sup>7</sup> goes on, taking the old man to Midwick Hospital Outpatients and back again. I know what *I’d* do with ’em. Put to sleep, that sort ought to be.” **E**

Mr. Noakes was a repulsive-looking individual, but when he heard that Tom and Lily wanted a room for the night, he changed completely and gave them a leer that was full of false goodwill. He was a big, red-faced man with wet, full lips, bulging pale-gray bloodshot eyes, and a crop of stiff greasy black hair. He wore tennis shoes.

“Honeymooners, eh?” he said, looking sentimentally at Lily’s pale prettiness. “Want a bed for the night, eh?” and he laughed a disgusting laugh that sounded like thick oil coming out of a bottle, heh-heh-heh-heh, and gave Lily a tremendous pinch on her arm. **Disengaging** herself as politely as she could, she stooped and picked up something from the pavement. They followed Mr. Noakes glumly up the street to the Rising Sun.

While they were eating their baked beans, Mr. Noakes stood over their table grimacing at them. Lily unwisely confided to him that they were looking for a bit of sunshine. Mr. Noakes’s laughter nearly shook down the ramshackle building.

“Sunshine! Oh my gawd! That’s a good ’un! Hear that, Mother?” he bawled to his wife. “They’re looking for a bit of sunshine. Heh-heh-heh-heh-heh-heh!”

COMMON CORE RL 4

Language Coach

Informal Language

Aiken’s characters speak informally, in a regional **dialect**—the vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation of their setting. For example, they use “mind ee” (line 77) and “good ’un!” (line 107). What other examples of informal language can you find?

**E CONFLICT**

How does Mr. Noakes’s response to the Hatchings differ from everyone else’s?

**disengage** (dīs’ēn-gāj’)  
v. to detach or remove oneself

6. **petrol**: a British term for gasoline.

7. **palaver** (pə-lāv’ər): useless chatter.



*Entrance to Erchless* (1900s), Victoria Crowe. Oil on canvas, 96.5 cm × 111.7 cm. The Fleming-Wyfold Art Foundation. Photo © The Bridgeman Art Library.

Why,” he said, banging on the table till the baked beans leaped about,  
110 “if I could find a bit of sunshine near here, permanent bit that is, dja know  
what I’d do?”

The young people looked at him inquiringly across the bread and  
margarine.

“Lido,<sup>8</sup> trailer site, country club, holiday camp—you wouldn’t know the  
place. Land around here is dirt cheap; I’d buy up the lot. Nothing but woods.  
I’d advertise—I’d have people flocking to this little dump from all over the  
country. But what a hope, what a hope, eh? Well, feeling better? Enjoyed your  
tea? Ready for bed? Heh-heh-heh-heh, bed’s ready for you.” **F**

Avoiding one another’s eyes, Tom and Lily stood up.

120 “I—I’d like to go for a bit of a walk first, Tom,” Lily said in a small voice.  
“Look, I picked up that old lady’s bag on the pavement; I didn’t notice it till  
we’d done talking to Mr. Noakes, and by then she was out of sight. Should  
we take it back to her?”

“Good idea,” said Tom, pouncing on the suggestion with relief. “Do you  
know where she lives, Mr. Noakes?”

“Who, old Ma Hatching? Sure I know. She lives in the wood. But you don’t  
want to go taking her bag back, not this time o’ the evening you don’t. Let her  
worry. She’ll come asking for it in the morning.”

130 “She walked so slowly,” said Lily, holding the bag gently in her hands. It  
was very old, made of black velvet on two ring handles, and embroidered with  
beaded roses. “I think we ought to take it to her, don’t you, Tom?”

**F** **GRAMMAR AND STYLE**

Reread lines 107–118.  
Notice how Aiken  
incorporates **sentence  
fragments, contractions,**  
and **interjections** into her  
dialogue to make it sound  
realistic.

8. **lido** (lī’ dō): a British term for a public outdoor swimming pool.

“Oh, very well, very well, have it your own way,” Mr. Noakes said, winking at Tom. “Take that path by the garage; you can’t go wrong. I’ve never been there meself, but they live somewhere in that wood back o’ the village; you’ll find it soon enough.”

They found the path soon enough, but not the cottage. Under the lowering sky they walked forward endlessly among trees that carried only tiny and **rudimentary** leaves, **wizened** and poverty-stricken. Lily was still wearing her wedding sandals, which had begun to blister her. She held onto Tom’s arm, 140 biting her lip with the pain, and he looked down miserably at her bent brown head; everything had turned out so differently from what he had planned. **G**

By the time they reached the cottage Lily could hardly bear to put her left foot to the ground, and Tom was gentling her along: “It can’t be much farther now, and they’ll be sure to have a bandage. I’ll tie it up, and you can have a sit-down. Maybe they’ll give us a cup of tea. We could borrow an old pair of socks or something. . . .” Hardly noticing the cottage garden, beyond a vague impression of rows of runner beans, they made for the clematis-grown<sup>9</sup> porch and knocked. There was a brass lion’s head on the door, carefully polished.

150 “Eh, me dear!” It was the old lady, old Mrs. Hatching, who opened the door, and her exclamation was a long-drawn gasp of pleasure and astonishment. “Eh, me dear! ’Tis the pretty bride. See’d ye s’arternoon when we was coming home from hospital.”

“Who be?” shouted a voice from inside.

“Come in, come in, me dears. My son William’ll be glad to hear company; he can’t see, poor soul, nor has this thirty year, ah, and a pretty sight he’s losing this minute—”

“We brought back your bag,” Tom said, putting it in her hands, “and we wondered if you’d have a bit of plaster<sup>10</sup> you could kindly let us have. My wife’s hurt her foot—”

160 My wife. Even in the midst of Mrs. Hatching’s **voluble** welcome the strangeness of these words struck the two young people, and they fell quiet, each of them, pondering, while Mrs. Hatching thanked and **commiserated**, all in a breath, and asked them to take a seat on the sofa and fetched a basin of water from the scullery,<sup>11</sup> and William from his seat in the chimney corner demanded to know what it was all about.

“Wot be doing? Wot be doing, Mother?”

170 “’Tis a bride, all in’s finery,” she shrilled back at him, “an’s blistered her foot, poor heart.” Keeping up a running commentary for William’s benefit she bound up the foot, every now and then exclaiming to herself in wonder over the fineness of Lily’s wedding dress, which lay in yellow nylon swathes around the chair. “There, me dear. Now us’ll have a cup of tea, eh? Proper thirsty you’m fare to be, walking all the way to here this hot day.”

Hot day? Tom and Lily stared at each other and then around the room.

**rudimentary**

(rōō’də-mĕn’tə-rĕ)

*adj.* very basic, in the beginning stages

**wizened** (wīz’ənd)

*adj.* withered and dry

**G SETTING AND MOOD**

Reread lines 136–141.

What mood does the sensory language used to describe the woods convey to you?

**voluble** (vōl’yə-bəl) *adj.*

especially talkative, fluent with words

**commiserate**

(kə-mīz’ə-rāt’) *v.* to express sorrow or pity for another’s troubles

9. **clematis-grown**: covered with clematis, a flowering vine.

10. **plaster**: a British term for an adhesive bandage.

11. **scullery**: a small room in which dishwashing and other kitchen chores are done.

Then it was true, it was not their imagination, that a great dusty golden square of sunshine lay on the fireplace wall, where the brass pendulum of the clock at every swing blinked into sudden brilliance? That the blazing geraniums on the windowsill housed a drove of murmuring bees? That, through the window, the gleam of linen hung in the sun to whiten suddenly dazzled their eyes?

“The sun? Is it really the sun?” Tom said, almost doubtfully.

180 “And why not?” Mrs. Hatching demanded. “How else’ll beans set, tell me that? Fine thing if sun were to stop shining.” Chuckling to herself she set out a Crown Derby tea set, gorgeously colored in red and gold, and a baking of saffron<sup>12</sup> buns. Then she sat down and, drinking her own tea, began to question the two of them about where they had come from, where they were going. The tea was tawny and hot and sweet; the clock’s tick was like a bird chirping; every now and then a log settled in the grate; Lily looked sleepily around the little room, so rich and peaceful, and thought, I wish we were staying here. I wish we needn’t go back to that horrible pub. . . . She leaned against Tom’s comforting arm.

190 “Look at the sky,” she whispered to him. “Out there between the geraniums. Blue!” **H**

“And ee’ll come up and see my spare bedroom, won’t ee now?” Mrs. Hatching said, breaking off the thread of her questions—which indeed was not a thread, but merely a **savoring** of her pleasure and astonishment at this unlooked-for visit—“Bide here, why don’t ee? Mid as well. The lil un’s fair wore out. Us’ll do for ee better ’n rangy old Noakes; proper old scoundrel ’e be. Won’t us, William?” **I**

“Ah,” William said appreciatively. “I’ll sing ee some o’ my songs.”

A sight of the spare room settled any doubts. The great white bed, huge as  
200 a prairie, built up with layer upon solid layer of mattress, blanket, and quilt, almost filled the little shadowy room in which it stood. Brass rails shone in the green dimness. “Isn’t it quiet,” Lily whispered. Mrs. Hatching, silent for the moment, stood looking at them proudly, her bright eyes slowly moving from face to face. Once her hand fondled, as if it might have been a baby’s downy head, the yellow brass knob.

And so, almost without any words, the matter was decided.

Three days later they remembered that they must go to the village and collect the scooter which must, surely, be mended by now.

They had been helping old William pick a basketful of beans. Tom had  
210 taken his shirt off, and the sun gleamed on his brown back; Lily was wearing an old cotton print which Mrs. Hatching, with much chuckling, had shortened to fit her.

It was amazing how deftly, in spite of his blindness, William moved among the beans, feeling through the rough, rustling leaves for the stiffness of concealed pods. He found twice as many as Tom and Lily, but then they, even on the third day, were still stopping every other minute to exclaim

### **H** SETTING AND MOOD

Reread lines 174–191.

Notice that the new setting conveys a different mood. How would you describe that mood?

**savoring** (sā’vēr-ĭng) *n.*  
a full appreciation and enjoyment **savor** *v.*

### **I** MONITOR

Reread lines 192–197.

What is Mrs. Hatching saying? Try to clarify by reading her words aloud and then putting her statements in your own words.

12. **saffron**: a cooking spice that imparts an orange-yellow color to foods.



*Yellow Dress* (2003), Jeffrey T. Larson. Oil on linen, 12" × 16". © Daylight Fine Art.

### ◀ Analyze Visuals

How does the use of color affect the **mood** of this painting? Contrast the mood with that of the painting on page 67.

over the blueness of the sky. At night they sat on the back doorstep while Mrs. Hatching clucked inside as she dished the supper, "Starstruck ee'll be! Come along in, do-ee, before soup's cold; stars niver run away yet as I do  
220 know."

"Can we get anything for you in the village?" Lily asked, but Mrs. Hatching shook her head.

"Baker's bread and suchlike's no use but to cripple thee's innardses wi' colic.<sup>13</sup> I been living here these eighty year wi'out troubling doctors, and I'm not faring to begin now." She waved to them and stood watching as they walked into the wood, thin and frail beyond belief, but wiry, **indomitable**, her

**indomitable**  
(ĭn-dŏm'ĭ-tə-bəl) *adj.*  
not easily discouraged  
or defeated

13. **cripple . . . colic** (kŏl'ĭk): give yourself a bad case of indigestion.

black eyes full of zest. Then she turned to scream menacingly at a couple of pullets<sup>14</sup> who had strayed and were scratching among the potatoes.

230 Almost at once they noticed, as they followed the path, that the sky was clouded over.

“It *is* only there on that one spot,” Lily said in wonder. “All the time. And they’ve never even noticed that the sun doesn’t shine in other places.”

“That’s how it must have been all over the world, once,” Tom said.

At the garage they found their scooter ready and waiting. They were about to start back when they ran into Mr. Noakes.

240 “Well, well, well, well, *well!*” he shouted, glaring at them with ferocious good humor. “How many wells make a river, eh? And where did you slip off to? Here’s me and the missus was just going to tell the police to have the rivers dragged. But hullo, hullo, what’s this? Brown, eh? Suntan? Scrumptious,” he said, looking meltingly at Lily and giving her another tremendous pinch.

“Where’d you get it, eh? That wasn’t all got in half an hour, *I* know. Come on, this means money to you and me; tell us the big secret. Remember what I said; land around these parts is dirt cheap.”

Tom and Lily looked at each other in horror. They thought of the cottage, the bees humming among the runner beans, the sunlight glinting in the red-and-gold teacups. At night, when they had lain in the huge sagging bed, stars had shone through the window, and the whole wood was as quiet as the inside of a shell. **J**

250 “Oh, we’ve been miles from here,” Tom lied hurriedly. “We ran into a friend, and he took us right away beyond Brinsley.” And as Mr. Noakes still looked suspicious and unsatisfied, he did the only thing possible. “We’re going back there now,” he said. “The sunbathing’s grand.” And opening the throttle, he let the scooter go. They waved at Mr. Noakes and chugged off toward the gray hills that lay to the north. **K**

“My wedding dress,” Lily said sadly. “It’s on our bed.”

They wondered how long Mrs. Hatching would keep tea hot for them, who would eat all the pasties.<sup>15</sup>

“Never mind, you won’t need it again,” Tom comforted her.

260 At least, he thought, they had left the golden place undisturbed. Mr. Noakes never went into the wood. And they had done what they intended; they had found the sun. Now they, too, would be able to tell their grandchildren, when beginning a story, “Long, long ago, when we were young, in the days when the sky was blue . . .” 

COMMON CORE RL.4

Language Coach

**Connotation** Many words have positive or negative **connotations** (emotional associations). Reread lines 236-237. Do the words *glaring* and *ferocious* have positive or negative connotations?

**J CONFLICT**

Why do Mr. Noakes’s statements fill Tom and Lily with horror?

**K MONITOR**

What do Tom and Lily decide to do?

14. **pullets**: young hens.

15. **pasties** (päs’téz): a British term for meat pies.

## Comprehension

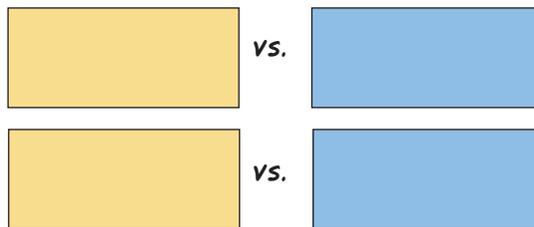
- 1. Recall** Why are Tom and Lily riding around on their scooter at the beginning of the story?
- 2. Recall** Why do Tom and Lily decide to visit the Hatchings?
- 3. Clarify** Why don't Tom and Lily go back to the Hatchings' after picking up their scooter?

### COMMON CORE

**RL 3** Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot. **RL 4** Analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. **RL 10** Read and comprehend literature, including stories.

## Text Analysis

- 4. Monitor** Review the questions and answers you wrote while reading. What further insights did you gain into the setting, characters, and events?
- 5. Interpret** Why does the sun shine only over the Hatchings' cottage?
- 6. Contrast Setting and Mood** Contrast the Hatchings' cottage and yard with the rest of England "since the bombs." What differing moods are created by the sensory language used to describe these settings?
- 7. Examine Conflicts** How would you describe the important conflicts in this story? Consider characters who are at odds and desires that are frustrated. Summarize the conflicts in a chart like the one shown.



- 8. Evaluate Actions** Do Tom and Lily do the right thing in not going back to the cottage? Explain your opinion.
- 9. Draw Conclusions About Theme** What does the story suggest to you about the things people don't appreciate? Support your answer.

## Text Criticism

- 10. Author's Style** Many critics have commented on Aiken's ability to write stories that seem like folk tales. What elements of "Searching for Summer" remind you of "once upon a time" stories you read or heard as a child? Cite evidence from the story.

### What do you take for GRANTED?

What would you do if blue skies disappeared?

# Vocabulary in Context

## ▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Identify the word that is not related in meaning to the other words in the set.

1. indomitable, unconquerable, feeble, powerful
2. disengage, detach, remove, connect
3. withered, blooming, shrunken, wizened
4. sympathize, commiserate, pity, accuse
5. complex, rudimentary, basic, preliminary
6. voluble, talkative, fluent, silent
7. distaste, savoring, relishing, enjoyment
8. unavailing, useless, effective, futile

### WORD LIST

commiserate  
disengage  
indomitable  
rudimentary  
savoring  
unavailing  
voluble  
wizened

## ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN SPEAKING

- affect
- communicate
- definite
- establish
- identify

One theme that Aiken’s story conveys is the importance of sunlight. With a partner, **identify** and discuss other themes that the story **communicates**. Use at least one Academic Vocabulary word in your discussion.

### COMMON CORE

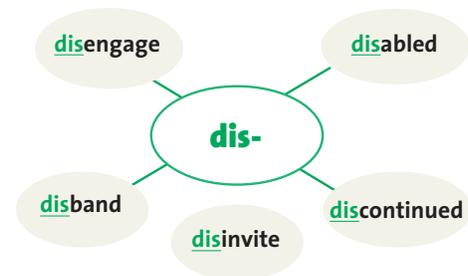
**L.4c** Consult reference materials to determine or clarify a word’s meaning or etymology.

## VOCABULARY STRATEGY: THE PREFIX *dis-*

The vocabulary word *disengage* contains the Latin prefix *dis-*, which means “in different directions.” This prefix is found in a number of English words. To understand the meaning of words with *dis-*, use your knowledge of the base word as well as your knowledge of the prefix.

**PRACTICE** Write the word from the word web that best completes each sentence. Use context clues to help you. If necessary, consult a dictionary or glossary.

1. The crab tried to \_\_\_\_\_ itself from the fisherman’s net.
2. After their argument, she decided to \_\_\_\_\_ her friend to the party.
3. There’s a \_\_\_\_\_ vehicle on the road that needs to be removed.
4. The music group will \_\_\_\_\_ this month.
5. The store has \_\_\_\_\_ this brand of clothing.



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## Language

### ◆ GRAMMAR AND STYLE: Use Realistic Dialogue

Review the **Grammar and Style** note on page 70. Aiken uses realistic dialogue to help shape her characters and bring them to life. When writing dialogue, follow her example by enlisting these techniques:

1. **Use contractions and interjections.** Contractions—such as *doesn't*, *we're*, and *they'll*—combine and shorten words, while interjections—such as *well*, *oh*, and *hey*—express emotion. You can incorporate both into your dialogue to make it sound more like everyday speech.
2. **Form sentence fragments.** Although sentence fragments should be avoided in formal writing, they are often used in dialogue. Here is an example from the story that highlights Aiken's use of these techniques.

*"Can't see what's wrong," said Tom, after a prolonged and gloomy survey.*

*"Oh, Tom!" Lily was almost crying. "What'll we do?" (lines 63–64)*

Notice how the revisions in blue make this first draft's dialogue sound more like real speech. Revise your own writing by making similar changes.

#### STUDENT MODEL

"Who wants to be the first to visit the new Rising Sun Resort? I <sup>am</sup> telling you, you <sup>will</sup> never find a place like this. <sup>Not anywhere.</sup> The sun is bright, and the sky is blue. <sup>Oh,</sup> And did I mention the camp for the kids? What more could you want?"

## READING-WRITING CONNECTION



Explore your understanding of "Searching for Summer" by responding to this prompt. Then use the **revising tip** to improve your writing.

#### WRITING PROMPT

##### Short Constructed Response: Description

Imagine that Mr. Noakes has turned the woods into a resort. What would he say in a presentation to make people want to visit? What sensory language would he use? Write **one or two paragraphs** describing this resort, using the words, grammar, and pronunciation that Mr. Noakes would use.

#### REVISING TIP

Review your response. How have you used realistic dialogue to make the presentation sound like Mr. Noakes?

#### COMMON CORE

L3 Apply knowledge of language to make effective choices for meaning or style.

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