

**Princess Victoria's War.**  
**Semantic Fields**  
**Extract from P 32-33**

Traitor's Spike stood dark and menacing and solitary in the centre of the ice, just beyond the shadow of Westminster Bridge. It was crested with fierce curving blades. Fast hands roped Oi to the spike. He could feel the cold spine of the spike against his back, and the harsh, bristling twists of the rope. He was bound so tightly from shoulder to ankle he could barely breathe.

The crowd jeered and gabbled, enjoying the spectacle. Traitors deserved what they got and the crowd liked to watch. But gradually, as the cold and the night grew more biting and vicious they thinned away.

Oi was alone.

The ice river stretched before him, curving away in silver and shadows. The cold was inside him now. He vibrated with cold and he did not know it. The tears were frozen on his face and he did not know it. The candle flame of life flickered and guttered and almost went out and he did not know it.

There was a throbbing howl. It pierced the thick river mist that hung over the ice, echoing along the banks. It was a howl of pain and hunger. Oi's eyes flew open, his heart pounding in his head and sending pulses of burning pain through his wrists where the coarse, biting ropes held him. Instinctively, Oi pressed his back to the spike, feeling its ridged metal pattern pressing through his thin sacking shirt. He peered into the mist, his eyes following the silver blue trail of the river of ice. He could just make out the vicious grey spikes of Castle Darkness looming high above, sharp against the frosted stars.

### Character through dialogue

As she opened the shop door, there was a long clanging. The shop had a musty smell and was crowded with all kinds of junk, broken prams, old books and clothes, tools and a large moth-eaten bear.

‘Shop!’ called Victoria, and there was a shuffling at the back of the shop.

‘I’m comin’, I’m comin’,’ grumbled a voice.

A tiny woman came forward, shrouded in shawls, with a dirty bonnet covering straggling grey hair.

‘Are you Mrs Pinchew?’ asked Victoria.

‘I am, and why do you want to know?’

Mrs Pinchew had the pinched face and mean spirit of a stoat, but she knew a likely prospect when she saw one, and she bared her teeth in what was meant to be a smile when she saw Victoria’s rich clothes.

‘We want a room,’ said Victoria.

‘I’ve one left, at the top. Penny a day, and no gentleman callers, doors locked at ten, and don’t disturb the other guests,’ said Mrs Pinchew holding out a mittened hand for the money.

Victoria bit her lip and glanced at Broth.

‘I haven’t any money...’

‘That’s alright, dearie,’ said Mrs Pinchew. ‘We can do a deal on yer clothes.’

‘We’re keeping the cloak,’ said Broth grabbing it and holding it tight against her chest.

‘That’s alright, the dress will do nicely,’ said Mrs Pinchew, reaching out a wizened claw to feel the material.

‘My...my *dress?*’ said Victoria.

‘Appy to do a trade...now take it off, there’s nobody lookin’, and I’ll find you sommat else,’ said Mrs Pinchew, rummaging in the pile of old clothes on the rough wooden counter.

‘Give me the sword,’ hissed Broth, hastily wrapping it in the cloak.

Angrily, Victoria took off her dress and handed it over. Mrs Pinchew snatched it, and then grinned, showing a single tooth.

‘That’s a very fine petticoat and no mistake... take ‘er off, and I’ll ‘ave that too.’

Victoria took off her petticoat.

‘Loverly. Now I’ll ‘ave the next one as well...’

Glaring at her, Victoria took off a second petticoat.

‘You’re not having the next one,’ she said, ‘it’s the last one I’ve got.’

‘Don’t worry, Dearie, we can allus trade later in the week,’ said Mrs Pinchew, handing Victoria a dull brown dress. ‘Three garments, three nights.’

‘Only three... but...’

‘I wouldn’t argue, it I wus you, Dearie. Price might go up. Times is ‘ard, with all the taxes a body’s gotta pay. Now what are you called?’

‘I’m Broth and this is Vi...’

‘Plum,’ interrupted Victoria, giving her father’s pet name for her.

‘Broth and Plum. Nice *edible* names,’ said Mrs Pinchew.