

TEXT ANALYSIS 10: OUTLANDER

- As an alternative to the items under the snow, I had certain desirable characteristics, from a wolf's point of view. On the one hand, I was mobile, harder to catch, and posed the possibility of resistance. On the other, I was slow, clumsy, and above all, not frozen stiff, thus offering no danger of broken teeth. I also smelled of fresh blood, temptingly warm in this frozen waste.
- 5 Were I a wolf, I thought, I wouldn't hesitate. The animal made up its mind at the same time I came to my own decision regarding our future relations.
- There had been a Yank at Pembroke Hospital, name of Charlie Marshall. He was a pleasant chap, friendly as all the Yanks were, and most entertaining on his pet subject. His pet subject was dogs; Charlie was a sergeant in the K-9 Corps. He had been blown up, along with two of his dogs, by an
- 10 antipersonnel mine outside a small village near Arles. He grieved for his dogs, and often told me stories about them when I would sit with him during the odd slack moments in my shift.
- More to the immediate point, he had also once told me what to do, and not do, should I ever be attacked by a dog. I felt it was stretching a point to call the eerie creature picking its delicate way down the rocks a dog, but hoped that it might yet share a few basic character traits with its tame
- 15 descendants.
- "Bad dog," I said firmly, staring it in one yellow eyeball. "In fact," I said, backing very slowly toward the prison wall, "you are a perfectly horrible dog." (Speak firmly and loudly, I heard Charlie saying.) "Probably the worst I've ever seen," I said, firmly and loudly. I continued to back up, one hand feeling behind me for the stones of the wall, and once there, I sidled toward the
- 20 corner, some ten yards away.
- I pulled the ties at my throat and began to fumble at the brooch fastening my cloak, still telling the wolf firmly and loudly what I thought of him, his ancestors, and his immediate family. The beast seemed interested in the diatribe, tongue lolling in a doggy grin. He was in no hurry; he limped slightly, I could see, as he drew nearer, and was thin and mangy. Perhaps he had trouble
- 25 hunting, and infirmity was what drew him to the prison midden to scavenge. I certainly hoped so; the more infirm, the better.
- I found my leather gloves in the pocket of my cloak and put them on. Then I wrapped the heavy cloak several times around my right forearm, blessing the weight of the velvet. "They'll go for the throat," Charlie had instructed me, "unless their trainer tells them otherwise. Keep looking him
- 30 in the eye; you'll see it when he makes up his mind to jump. That's your moment."
- I could see a number of things in that wicked yellow orb, including hunger, curiosity, and speculation, but not yet a decision to leap.
- "You disgusting creature," I told it, "don't you dare leap at my throat!" I had other ideas. I had wrapped the cloak in several loose folds about my right arm, leaving the bulk of it dangling, but
- 35 providing enough padding, I hoped, to keep the beast's teeth from sinking through.
- The wolf was thin, but not emaciated. I judged it to weigh perhaps eighty or ninety pounds; less than me, but not enough to give me any great advantage. The leverage was definitely in the animal's favor; four legs against two gave better balance on the slippery crust of snow. I hoped bracing my back against the wall would help.
- 40 A certain feeling of emptiness at my back told me I had reached the corner. The wolf was some twenty feet away. This was it. I scraped enough snow from under my feet to give good footing and waited.
- I didn't even see the wolf leave the ground. I could swear I had been watching its eyes, but if the decision to leap had registered there, it had been followed by action too swiftly to note. It was
- 45 instinct, not thought, that raised my arm as a whitish-grey blur hurtled toward me.
- The teeth sank into the padding with a force that bruised my arm. It was heavier than I thought; I was unprepared for the weight, and my arm sagged. I had planned to try to throw the beast against the wall, perhaps stunning it. Instead, I heaved myself at the wall, squashing the wolf between the stone blocks and my hip. I struggled to wrap the loose cloak around it. Claws
- 50 shredded my skirt and scraped my thigh. I drove a knee viciously into its chest, eliciting a strangled yelp. Only then did I realize that the odd, growling whimpers were coming from me and not the wolf.

- Strangely enough, I was not at all frightened now, though I had been terrified watching the wolf stalk me. There was room in my mind for only one thought: I would kill this animal, or it would kill me. Therefore, I was going to kill it.
- 55 There comes a turning point in intense physical struggle where one abandons oneself to a profligate usage of strength and bodily resource, ignoring the costs until the struggle is over. Women find this point in childbirth; men in battle.
- Past that certain point, you lose all fear of pain or injury. Life becomes very simple at that point; you will do what you are trying to do, or die in the attempt, and it does not really matter much which.
- 60 I had seen this sort of struggle during my training on the wards, but never had I experienced it before. Now all my concentration was focused on the jaws locked around my forearm and the writhing demon tearing at my body.
- 65 I managed to bang the beast's head against the wall, but not hard enough to do much good. I was growing tired rapidly; had the wolf been in good condition, I would have had no chance. I hadn't much now, but took what there was. I fell on the animal, pinning it under me and knocking the wind from it in a gust of carrion breath. It recovered almost immediately and began squirming beneath me, but the second's relaxation enabled me to get it off my arm, one hand clamped
- 70 under its wet muzzle.
- By forcing my fingers back into the corners of its mouth, I managed to keep them out from between the scissoring carnassial teeth. Saliva drizzled down my arm. I was lying flat on top of the wolf. The corner of the prison wall was perhaps eighteen inches ahead of me. Somehow I must get there, without releasing the fury that heaved and squirmed under me.
- 75 Scrabbling with my feet, pressing down with all my might, I pushed myself forward inch by inch, constantly straining to keep the fangs from my throat. It cannot have taken more than a few minutes to move those eighteen inches, but it seemed I had lain there most of my life, locked in battle with this beast whose hind claws raked my legs, seeking a good ripping purchase in my belly.
- 80 At last I could see around the corner. The blunt angle of stone was directly in front of my face. Now was the tricky part. I must maneuver the wolf's body to allow me to get both hands under the muzzle; I would never be able to exert the necessary force with one.
- I rolled abruptly away, and the wolf slithered at once into the small clear space between my body and the wall. Before it could rise to its feet, I brought my knee up as hard as I could. The wolf grunted as my knee drove into its side, pinning it, however fleetingly, against the wall.
- 85 I had both hands beneath its jaw now. The fingers of one hand were actually in its mouth. I could feel a crushing sting across my gloved knuckles, but ignored it as I forced the hairy head back, and back, and back again, using the angle of the wall as a fulcrum for the lever of the beast's body. I thought my arms would break, but this was the only chance.
- 90 There was no audible noise, but I felt the reverberation through the whole body as the neck snapped. The straining limbs—and the bladder—at once relaxed. The intolerable strain on my arms now released, I dropped, as limp as the dying wolf. I could feel the beast's heart fibrillating beneath my cheek, the only part still capable of a death struggle. The stringy fur stank of ammonia and soggy hair. I wanted to move away, but could not.
- 95 I think I must have slept for a moment, odd as that sounds, cheek pillowed on the corpse. I opened my eyes to see the greenish stone of the prison a few inches in front of my nose. Only the thought of what was transpiring on the other side of that wall got me to my feet.
- I stumbled down the ditch, cloak dragged over one shoulder, tripping on stones hidden in the snow, banging my shins painfully on half-buried tree branches. Subconsciously, I must have been aware that wolves usually run in packs, because I do not recall being surprised by the howl that
- 100 wavered out of the forest above and behind me. If I felt anything, it was black rage at what seemed a conspiracy to thwart and delay me.

Diana Gabaldon, *Outlander*

1. **Make a summary of the text in less than 80 words.**
2. **This is an excerpt from the same novel. Try to complete the missing words using word formation techniques.**

The spiral stair opened around another curve, the wedge-shaped steps plunging down in (DIZZY) flights that deceived the eye and twisted the ankles. The plunge from the relative light of the corridor into the gloom of the stairwell made it even harder to judge the distance from one stair to the next, and I slipped several times, barking my knuckles and skinning my palms on the stone walls as I caught myself.

The stairway yielded one benefit. From a narrow window let in to save the stairwell from total darkness, I could see the main courtyard. At least I could now orient myself. A small group of soldiers was drawn up in neat red lines for (INSPECT), but not, apparently, to witness the summary punishment of a Scottish rebel. There was a gibbet in the courtyard, black and (BODE), but (OCCUPY). The sight of it was like a blow in the stomach. Tomorrow morning. I clattered down the stairs, (HEED) of scraped elbows and stubbed toes.

3. **Reflect on and analyse the structure of the following sentences taken from the text:**

- a) "Were I a wolf" (l. 5)
- b) "Should I ever be attacked by a dog" (l. 12 - 13)
- c) "Infirmity was what drew him to the prison midden to scavenge" (l. 25)
- d) "The more infirm, the better" (l. 26)
- e) "Only then did I realize that the odd, growling whimpers were coming from me and not the wolf." (l. 51-52)
- f) "There comes a turning point in intense physical struggle where one abandons oneself..." (l. 56)
- g) "Women find this point in childbirth; men in battle" (l. 58)
- h) "Never had I experienced it before" (l. 62 - 63)
- i) "Had the wolf been in good condition, I would have had no chance" (l. 66)
- j) "As limp as the dying wolf" (l. 92)

4. **The following definitions correspond to words that appear in the text. Match each definition with the appropriate word.**

- a) Lacking in moderation; abundant.
- b) To try to reach or hold something in a clumsy way.
- c) Non-permanently; transitorily.
- d) Ability to influence situations or people so that you can control what happens.
- e) Dirty, uncared for or ill.
- f) Angry speech or article which is extremely critical of someone's ideas or activities.
- g) A dunghill or dung heap.
- h) Front part of the legs, between the knees and the ankles.
- i) A period in which there is not much work or activity.
- j) Twisting or turning to and fro.

5. PHRASAL VERBS. Fill in the gaps with the corresponding verbs and particles. You may need to make changes to the verb.

VERBS: *sign, pick, get, hold, hang, let, palm, pack, chicken, parcel, make.*

PARTICLES: *off, up, on, across, down, out.*

- a) The whole story about his rescuing the drowning blonde was absolutely unbelievable. In fact, I think he _____ it all _____
- b) The robbers are _____ the National Security Bank.
- c) He hasn't got the guts to leave his wife. He'll _____ as usual and then find an excuse to tell his mistress.
- d) We tried to be as fair as possible when we _____ the work among the team.
- e) This CD is the most terrible thing I've ever heard. I'll try to _____ it _____ on my mother-in-law.
- f) You know I've fallen for you, so please don't ever _____ me _____ again.
- g) The hostage was handcuffed and blindfolded, but he somehow managed to _____ where he was being held.
- h) _____ a minute, I have to go and see to the toast.
- i) Angelica _____ for a Spanish course when she was sent to Barcelona to report on the Olympic Games.
- j) The committee will _____ three people from the list of applicants.
- k) As it was obvious that he couldn't get any work done there, his parents _____ him _____ to a boarding school.
- l) He could see by the enthusiastic nods of the audience that he was _____ his point _____.

6. Using the word in brackets (taken from the text), complete the following sentences with the correct idiom by changing the expression in italics.

- a) I don't earn much - only just enough to "*stay alive and avoid hunger*" (**WOLF**)
- b) He felt as though he had "*been unexpectedly rejected or discouraged*" when he was dismissed after he had worked so hard for the company. (**TEETH**)
- c) The sight of the mountains in the distance is enough to "*make one excited*" - it is very impressive indeed. (**BLOOD**)
- d) "*It is hard to understand, believe or imagine*" the great distance of the farthest stars in the universe. (**MIND**)
- e) Terry likes to be "*the person in control*" wherever he goes: he ought to learn to let others have a little more power. (**DOG**).
- f) Eric's business really had no chance. It needed more money from the start and now it's "*ruined*". (**ROCKS**)
- g) When I gave my opinion at the meeting, Bill suddenly "*attacked me verbally*" and accused me of causing trouble. (**THROAT**)
- h) I didn't mean to say that there was a profit of \$2,000. It was "*something I said by mistake but intending to say something else*": the profit was only \$200. (**TONGUE**)
- i) It was "*a punishment well-deserved for*" him when he lost the match after boasting how good he was. (**EYE**)
- j) Ted will "*be punished severely*" if he doesn't improve his work. His teacher will send him to see the headmaster. (**JUMP**)

7. Find examples of the following figures of speech in the fragment:

- Litotes
- Simile
- Metaphor
- Synecdoche
- Hyperbole

8. ESSAY: Discuss the following topic using approx. 300 words “*The wolf: harmless or vicious hunter?*” Take into account the debate taking place in Galicia at the moment on the matter.**FOOD FOR THOUGHT:**

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jan/26/harmless-or-vicious-hunter-the-uneasy-return-of-europes-wolves>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/25/europe-wolf-population-finland-culling-protection>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/20/france-wolf-population-grow-40-anger-farmers>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/dec/08/keeping-wolf-from-door>

<https://www.publico.es/luzes/lobo-galicia-punto-mira.html>

<https://www.larazon.es/sociedad/20210215/xexsairvknfedchcn7vegi2zxe.html>

https://www.abc.es/espana/galicia/abci-incierto-futuro-lobo-gallego-202102051940_noticia.html

<https://www.thelocal.es/20161122/wolf-kills-beloved-pet-dog-in-galicia-at-farmhouse-door/>

<https://www.thinkspain.com/news-spain/32171/wolves-wander-round-galicia-town>