



The Kit-Bag (Learn English with a Short Story) [965]

Christmas is nearly here and it has been a tradition since Victorian times to tell a ghost story at Christmas.

The long, dark, and cold winter nights outside create a cozy atmosphere indoors for sharing chilling tales.

So following that tradition, here is a chilling story for the winter holiday period.

I hope you are feeling cosy and warm. Get yourself a nice hot cup of tea, close the curtains, curl up on a sofa perhaps.

If there are any dark, empty rooms nearby - consider closing the door - not just to keep out cold draughts, but also to make sure you don't get bothered by that creeping feeling of not knowing what is inside those dark spaces.

Close the doors, get comfy.

The story I am going to tell you is called *The Kit-Bag* and it was written by English writer Algernon Blackwood in 1908. Blackwood was known for writing ghost stories, and this is one of his most popular ones.

It was written in 1908 but I have modernised the text slightly. I did this myself. No AI was used in the making of this episode today, by the way.

I've been through the text and made a few little changes just to make sure the language is not too old fashioned.

Otherwise, the story is exactly as it was originally written.

I'll tell you the story. Just try to follow it.

Then I will summarise it in my words so you can check how much you understood the first time.

Then I will go back through the story text in order to explain what happened clearly, and highlight or explain various bits of vocabulary, to help you learn English from this.

The story is about 4,500 words long so it might take about 20-30 mins to read, and then of course explaining the language later will take much longer. This might end up taking time but stick with me, it will be worth it.

Don't forget to like & subscribe and don't be afraid of the dark.

Merry Christmas too, by the way, if you celebrate it.

Now, listen carefully, and try to identify exactly what happens at the end of this story.

By the way, a kit-bag is a large bag that you could use to carry lots of stuff. Kit means equipment. So imagine a large heavy bag which could carry various types of equipment.

The Kit-Bag

by Algernon Blackwood

When the words 'Not Guilty' echoed through the crowded courtroom that dark December afternoon, Arthur Wilbraham, the great criminal KC, and leader of the triumphant defence, was represented by his junior; but Johnson, his private secretary, brought the verdict to his chambers like lightning.

'It's what we expected, I think,' said the barrister, without emotion; 'and, personally, I am glad the case is over.'

There was no particular sign of pleasure that his defence of John Turk, the murderer, on a plea of insanity, had been successful, for no doubt he felt, as everybody who had watched that case felt, that no man had ever better deserved the death penalty.

'I'm glad too,' said Johnson.

He had sat in the court for ten days watching the face of the man who had carried out, with callous detail, one of the most brutal and cold-blooded murders of recent years.

The counsel glanced up at his secretary. They were more than employer and employee.

For family and other reasons, they were friends.

'Ah, I remember, yes,' he said with a kind smile, 'and you want to get away for Christmas. You're going skating and skiing in the Alps, aren't you? If I was your age I'd come with you.'

Johnson laughed shortly. He was a young man of twenty-six, with a soft, delicate face.

'I can catch the morning boat now,' he said; 'but that's not the reason I'm glad the trial is over.'

I'm glad it's over because I've seen the last of that man's dreadful face.

It's haunted me. That white skin, with the black hair brushed low over the forehead.

I'll never forget it, and the description of the way the dismembered body was crammed and packed with lime into that-'

'Don't dwell on it' interrupted Wilbraham, looking at him curiously with his keen eyes, 'don't think about it.'

Images like that have a trick of coming back when you least want them.'

He paused a moment. 'Now, off you go,' he added, 'and enjoy your holiday.'

I will want all your energy for my Parliamentary work when you get back.

And don't break your neck skiing.'

Johnson started to leave. At the door he turned suddenly.

'I knew there was something I wanted to ask you,' he said.

'Would you mind lending me one of your kit-bags? It's too late to get one tonight, and I'm leaving in the morning before the shops open.'

'Of course; I'll send Henry over with it to your rooms. You will have it the moment I get home.'

'I promise I'll take good care of it,' said Johnson gratefully, delighted to think that within thirty hours he would be nearing the brilliant sunshine of the high Alps in winter.

The thought of that criminal court was like an evil dream in his mind.

He ate out and went on to Bloomsbury, where he had a flat on the top floor in one of those old houses in which the rooms are large and lofty.

The floor below his was vacant and unfurnished, and below that were other lodgers who he did not know.

It was cheerless, and he was looking forward to a change of scene.

The night was even more cheerless. It was miserable, and hardly anyone was out.

A cold, sleety rain was driving down the streets in front of the harshest east wind he had ever felt.

It howled among the big, gloomy houses of the great squares, and when he reached his rooms he heard it whistling and shouting over the world of black roofs beyond his windows.

In the hall he met his landlady, shading a candle from the draughts with her thin hand.

'This come from a man from Mr Wilbr'im's, sir.'

She pointed to what was obviously the kit-bag, and Johnson thanked her and took it upstairs with him.

'I am going abroad in the morning for ten days, Mrs Monks,' he said. 'I'll leave an address for letters.'

'And I hope you'll 'ave a merry Christmas, sir,' she said, in a raucous, wheezy voice, 'and better weather than this.'

'I hope so too,' he replied.

When he got upstairs he heard the sleet volleying against the window panes.

He put his kettle on to make a cup of hot coffee, and then started getting a few things ready for his trip.

'And now I've got to get packing!' he laughed to himself, and got started.

He liked the packing, because it made him think about the snowy mountains, and made him forget the unpleasant scenes of the past ten days.

His friend had lent him the large canvas kit-bag, sack-shaped, with holes round the neck for the brass bar and padlock.

It was a bit shapeless, and not much to look at, but it had plenty of space inside, so there was no need to pack carefully.

He shoved in his waterproof coat, his fur cap and gloves, his skates and climbing boots, his sweaters, snow-boots, and ear-muffs; and then on the top of these he piled his woollen shirts and underwear, his thick socks, and thermals.

Some smart clothes came next, in case the hotel people dressed up for dinner, and then, thinking of the best way to pack his white shirts, he paused a moment to reflect.

'That's the annoying thing about these kit-bags, you need to tie them together with something' he thought vaguely, standing in the centre of the sittingroom where he had come to fetch some string.

It was after ten o'clock. A furious gust of wind rattled the windows, and he thought with pity of the poor Londoners whose Christmas would be spent in such a climate, whilst he was skimming over snowy slopes in bright sunshine, and dancing in the evening with rosy-cheeked girls.

Ah! That reminded him; he must put in his dancing-shoes.

He crossed over from his sitting-room to the cupboard on the landing where he kept his shoes.

And as he did so he heard someone coming up the stairs.

He stood still for a moment on the landing to listen.

It was Mrs Monks's step, he thought; she must be coming up with the last post.

But then the steps stopped suddenly, and he heard no more.

They were at least two flights down, and he came to the conclusion they were too heavy to be those of his landlady.

No doubt they belonged to a late lodger who had got the wrong floor.

He went into his bedroom and packed his shoes and evening clothes as best he could.

The kit-bag by this time was two-thirds full, and stood upright on its own base like a sack of flour.

For the first time he noticed that it was old and dirty, the canvas faded and worn, and that it had obviously been subjected to some rather rough treatment.

It was not a very nice bag to have sent him - certainly not a new one, or one that his boss valued.

He thought about it for a moment, and then went on with his packing.

Once or twice, however, he caught himself wondering who it could have been wandering down below. Mrs Monks had not come up with letters, and the floor was empty and unfurnished.

From time to time, he was almost certain he heard a soft tread of someone padding about over the bare boards — cautiously, stealthily, as silently as possible — and, further, that the sounds had started to come distinctly nearer.

For the first time in his life he began to feel a little creepy.

Then, as though to emphasize this feeling, an odd thing happened.

As he left the bedroom, having just packed his things, he noticed that the top of the kit-bag was lying over towards him with an extraordinary resemblance to a human face.

The canvas fell into a fold like a nose and forehead, and the brass rings for the padlock just filled the position of the eyes.

A shadow — or was it a travel stain? He could not tell exactly — looked like hair.

It gave him a strange feeling, because it looked absurdly like the face of John Turk, the murderer.

He laughed, and went into the front room, where the light was stronger.

'That horrid case has got into my head,' he thought; 'I can't wait to get a change of scene and some fresh air.'

In the sitting-room, however, he was not pleased to hear again that stealthy tread upon the stairs, and to realize that it was much closer than before, as well as unmistakably real.

And this time he got up and went out to see who it could be creeping about on the upper staircase at such a late hour.

But the sound stopped. There was no one visible on the stairs.

He went to the floor below, not without feeling scared, and turned on the electric light to make sure that no one was hiding in the empty rooms of the unoccupied flat.

There wasn't a single bit of furniture. Nothing to hide behind.

Then he called over the banisters to Mrs Monks, but there was no answer, and his voice echoed down into the dark vault of the house, and was lost in the roar of the gale that howled outside.

Everyone was in bed and asleep—everyone except him and the owner of this soft and stealthy tread.

'My absurd imagination, I suppose,' he thought. 'It must have been the wind after all, although—it seemed so very real and close.'

He went back to his packing.

It was by this time nearly midnight.

He drank his coffee up and made sure he was ready.

It is difficult to say exactly at what point fear begins, when the causes of that fear are not directly in front of the eyes.

Impressions gather on the surface of the mind, film by film, like ice gathering on the surface of still water, but often so lightly that they are hardly noticeable.

Then a point is reached where the accumulated impressions become a definite emotion, and the mind realises that something has happened.

With something of a start, Johnson suddenly recognized that he felt nervous – oddly nervous too, and that for some time the causes of this feeling had been gathering slowly in his mind, but that he had only just reached the point where he was forced to acknowledge them.

It was an odd and uncomfortable feeling that had come over him, and he hardly knew what to make of it.

He felt as though he were doing something that was strongly objected to by another person – another person who had some right to object.

It was a very disturbing and disagreeable feeling, not unlike the feeling of a guilty conscience: almost, in fact, as if he were doing something which he knew was wrong.

But although he searched vigorously and honestly in his mind, he just could not put his finger on the origin of this growing sense of unease, and it puzzled him.

Even more, it distressed and frightened him.

'Pure nerves, I suppose,' he said aloud with a forced laugh.

'Mountain air will cure all that!' he added, still speaking to himself, 'and that reminds me — my snow-mask.'

He was standing by the door of the bedroom during this brief speech, and as he passed quickly towards the sitting-room to fetch it from the cupboard, he saw out of the corner of his eye the vague outline of a figure standing on the stairs, a few feet from the top.

It was someone in a stooping position, with one hand on the banister, and the face peering up at the landing towards him.

And at the same moment he heard a shuffling footstep.

The person who had been creeping about below all this time had finally come up to his own floor.

Who in the world could it be? And what one earth did he want?

Johnson caught his breath sharply and stood completely still.

Then, after a few seconds of hesitation, he pulled himself together, and turned to investigate.

The stairs, he saw to his utter amazement, were empty. There was no one.

He felt a series of cold shivers run over him, and something in the muscles of his legs gave way a little and grew weak.

For the space of several minutes he peered steadily into the shadows that gathered around the top of the staircase where he had seen the figure, and then he walked fast — almost ran, in fact — into the light of the front room.

But almost as soon as he went through the doorway he heard someone run up the stairs behind him and dash into his bedroom.

It was a heavy, but at the same time a stealthy footstep — the tread of somebody who did not wish to be seen.

And it was at this precise moment that the nervousness he had so far experienced crossed the boundary line, and entered the state of fear, almost of acute unreasoning fear.

Before it turned into terror there was a further line to cross, and beyond that again lay the region of pure horror.

Johnson's position was an unenviable one.

'My god! That was someone on the stairs, then,' he muttered, his flesh crawling all over; 'and whoever it was has now gone into my bedroom.'

His delicate, pale face turned absolutely white, and for some minutes he hardly knew what to think or do.

Then he realised instinctively that doing nothing would only increase his fear.

He had to do something, and so he crossed the landing boldly and went straight into the other room, where, a few seconds before, the steps had disappeared.

'Who's there? Is that you, Mrs Monks?' he called aloud, as he went, and heard the first half of his words echo down the empty stairs, while the second half fell dead against the curtains in a room that apparently held no other human figure than his own.

'Who's there?' he called again, in a voice unnecessarily loud and that only just held firm.

'What do you want here?'

He thought he saw the curtains sway very slightly, and his heart felt as if it almost missed a beat, but he dashed forward and drew them aside with a rush.

A window, streaming with rain, was all that he could see.

He continued his search, but in vain. There was nothing in the cupboards except rows of clothes, hanging motionless; and under the bed there was no sign of anyone hiding.

He stepped backwards into the middle of the room, and, as he did so, something tripped him up.

Turning with a sudden spring of alarm he saw the kit-bag.

'Weird!' he thought. 'That's not where I left it!'

A few moments before it had definitely been on his right, between the bed and the chair; he did not remember having moved it.

It was very strange.

What on earth was the matter with everything?

A terrific gust of wind tore at the windows, dashing the sleet against the glass with the force of small gunshot, and then fled away howling over the waste of Bloomsbury roofs.

A sudden vision of crossing the Channel the next day came into his mind and brought him back to reality.

'There's no one here anyway; that's pretty clear!' he said aloud.

But as soon as he said the words, he he knew perfectly well that they were not true and that he did not believe himself.

He felt exactly as though someone was hiding close by him, watching all his movements, trying to stop him packing somehow.

'And two of my senses,' he added, keeping up the pretence of normality, 'have played absurd tricks on me.

The steps I heard and the figure I saw were both completely imaginary.'

He went back to the front room, poked the fire into a blaze, and sat down in front of it to think.

What impressed him more than anything else was the fact that the kit-bag was no longer where he had left it.

It had been dragged nearer to the door.

What happened afterwards that night happened, of course, to a man already excited by fear, and was perceived by a mind that was not fully under control.

Outwardly, Johnson remained calm, pretending that everything he had seen had a natural explanation, or was just because of his tired nerves.

But inwardly, in his heart of hearts, he knew all along that someone had been hiding downstairs in the empty flat when he came in, and that this person had waited for his opportunity and then stealthily made his way up to the bedroom, and that all he saw and heard afterwards, from the moving of the kit-bag to – well, to the other things this story has to tell – were caused directly by the presence of this invisible person.

And it was here, just when he most desired to keep his mind and thoughts under control, that the vivid pictures received day after day upon the mental plates of his memory, exposed in the courtroom of the Old Bailey, came strongly to light and developed themselves in the dark room of his inner vision.

Unpleasant, haunting memories have a way of coming to life again just when the mind least desires them – in the silent watches of the night, on sleepless pillows, during the lonely hours spent by sick and dying beds.

And so now, in the same way, Johnson saw nothing but the dreadful face of John Turk, the murderer, looking at him from every corner of his mental field of vision; the white skin, the evil eyes, and the fringe of black hair low over the forehead.

All the pictures of those ten days in court crowded back into his mind, and very vividly.

'This is all rubbish and nerves,' he exclaimed at length, springing with sudden energy from his chair.

'I will finish my packing and go to bed. I'm exhausted. No doubt, at this rate I will hear steps and things all night!'

But his face was deadly white all the same.

He snatched up his ski-mask and walked across to the bedroom, humming a cheerful Christmas song as he went — a bit too loud to be natural; and the instant he crossed the doorway and stood inside the room something turned cold around his heart, and he felt that every hair on his head stood straight up.

The kit-bag lay just in front of him, several feet nearer to the door than he had left it, and just over its crumpled top he saw a head and face slowly sinking down out of sight as though someone were crouching behind it to hide, and at the same moment a sound like a long-drawn sigh was distinctly audible in the still air about him between the gusts of the storm outside.

Hmmmmhhhhhhmmmm

Johnson had more courage and will-power than the indecision on his face indicated; but at first such a wave of terror came over him that for some seconds he could do nothing but stand and stare.

A violent trembling ran down his back and legs, and he was conscious of a foolish, almost a hysterical, impulse to scream aloud.

That sigh seemed in his very ear, and the air still vibrated with it.

It was unmistakably a human sigh.

'Who's there?' he said at length, finding his voice; but though he meant to speak loudly and clearly, the sound came out instead in a faint whisper.

He stepped forward, so that he could see all round and over the kit-bag.

Of course there was nothing there, nothing but the faded carpet and the bulging canvas sides.

He put out his hands and threw open the mouth of the sack where it had fallen over, as it was only three parts full, and then he saw for the first time that round the inside, some six inches from the top, there ran a broad smear of dull crimson.

It was an old and faded blood stain.

He uttered a scream, and drew back his hands as if they had been burnt.

At the same moment the kit-bag gave a faint, but unmistakable, lurch forward towards the door.

Johnson collapsed backwards, searching with his hands for the support of something solid, and the door, being further behind him than he realised, received his weight just in time to prevent his falling, and suddenly shut with a bang.

At the same moment the swinging of his left arm accidentally touched the light switch, and the room was plunged into darkness.

It was an awkward and disagreeable predicament, but Johnson managed to pull himself together, and groped furiously for the little switch to turn the light on again.

But the rapid closing of the door had made the coats hanging on it start swinging, and his fingers became entangled in a confusion of sleeves and pockets, so that it was some time before he found the switch.

And in those few moments of bewilderment and terror two things happened that sent him completely over the boundary into the region of genuine horror.

He distinctly heard the kit-bag shuffling heavily across the floor in jerks, and in-close just in front of his face another sigh of a human being.

In his painful efforts to find the switch on the wall he nearly scraped the nails off his fingers, but even then, in those frenzied moments of alarm — he still had time to realize that he dreaded the return of the light, and that it might be better for him to stay hidden in the merciful screen of darkness.

It was just the impulse of a moment, however, and before he had time to act on it he had automatically flicked the switch, and the room was flooded again with light.

But the second instinct had been right. It would have been better for him to have stayed in the shelter of the kind darkness.

For there, close before him, bending over the half-packed kit-bag, clear as life in the merciless glare of the electric light, stood the figure of John Turk, the murderer.

Not three feet from him the man stood, the fringe of black hair marked plainly against the pale skin of his forehead, the whole horrible vision of the man, as vivid as he had seen him day after day in the courtroom, when he stood there in the dock, cynical and callous, under the very shadow of the gallows.

In a flash Johnson realised what it all meant: the dirty and much-used bag; the smear of crimson within the top; the dreadful stretched condition of the bulging sides.

He remembered how the victim's body had been stuffed into a canvas bag for burial, the horrendous, dismembered fragments forced with lime into this very bag; and the bag itself produced as evidence — it all came back to him as clear as day.

Very softly and stealthily his hand groped behind him for the handle of the door, but before he could actually turn it the very thing that he dreaded most of all came about, and John Turk lifted his face and looked at him.

At the same moment that heavy sigh passed through the air of the room, formulated somehow into words:

'It's my bag. And I want it.'

Johnson just remembered clawing the door open, and then falling in a heap upon the floor of the landing, as he tried frantically to make his way into the front room.

He remained unconscious for a long time, and it was still dark when he opened his eyes and realised that he was lying, stiff and bruised, on the cold floorboards.

Then the memory of what he had seen rushed back into his mind, and he fainted again.

When he woke up the second time the wintry dawn was just beginning to peep in at the windows, painting the stairs a cheerless, dismal grey, and he managed to crawl into the front room, and cover himself with an overcoat in the armchair, where eventually he fell asleep.

A loud noise woke him up.

He recognised Mrs Monks's voice.

'What! You ain't been to bed, sir! Are you ill, or has anything 'appened? And there's an urgent gentleman to see you, though it ain't even seven o'clock yet, and —'

'Who is it?' he stammered. 'I'm all right, thanks. Fell asleep in my chair, I suppose.'

'Someone from Mr Wilb'rim's, and he says he ought to see you quick before you go abroad, and I told him —'

'Show him up, please, straight away,' said Johnson, whose head was whirling, and his mind was still full of dreadful visions.

Mr Wilbraham's man came in, apologised, and explained briefly and quickly that an awful mistake had been made, and that the wrong kit-bag had been sent over the night before.

'Henry somehow got hold of the one that came over from the courtroom, and Mr Wilbraham only discovered it when he saw his own lying in his room, and asked why it had not gone to you,' the man said.

'Oh!' said Johnson stupidly.

'And he must have brought you the one from the murder case instead, sir, I'm afraid,' the man continued, without the ghost of an expression on his face.

'The one John Turk packed the dead body in, Mr Wilbraham's terribly upset about it, sir, and he told me to come over first thing this morning with the right one, as you were leaving early.'

He pointed to a clean-looking kit-bag on the floor, which he had just brought.

'And I was to bring the other one back, sir,' he added casually.

For some minutes Johnson could not find his voice. At last he pointed in the direction of his bedroom.

'Perhaps you could kindly unpack it for me. Just empty the things out on the floor.'

The man disappeared into the other room, and was gone for five minutes.

Johnson heard the shifting to and fro of the bag, and the rattle of the skates and boots being unpacked.

'Thank you, sir,' the man said, returning with the bag folded over his arm.

'And can I do anything more to help you, sir?'

'What is it?' asked Johnson, seeing that he still had something he wished to say.

The man shuffled and looked mysterious. 'Excuse me, sir, but knowing your interest in the Turk case, I thought you'd maybe like to know what's happened.'

'Yes.'

'Well, John Turk killed himself last night with poison, immediately, as soon as he was released, and he left a note for Mr Wilbraham saying he wanted to be put away, buried, same as the woman he murdered, in the old kit-bag.'

'What time — did he do it?' asked Johnson.

'Ten o'clock last night, sir'.

The end.

Vocabulary List

Here is a list of the vocabulary I explained during the episode.

1. **Echo / echoed** – “When the words ‘*Not Guilty*’ *echoed through the crowded courtroom* that dark December afternoon, Arthur Wilbraham, the great criminal KC, and leader of the triumphant defence, was represented by his junior...”

2. **Crowded courtroom** – “When the words ‘*Not Guilty*’ echoed *through the crowded courtroom* that dark December afternoon...”
3. **KC (King’s Counsel)** – “...Arthur Wilbraham, the great criminal *KC*, and leader of the triumphant defence, was represented by his junior...”
4. **Verdict** – “...but Johnson, his private secretary, brought *the verdict* to his chambers like lightning.”
5. **Chambers** – “...brought the verdict to his *chambers* like lightning.”
6. **Like lightning** – “...brought the verdict to his chambers *like lightning*.”
7. **Barrister** – “‘It’s what we expected, I think,’ said the *barrister*, without emotion...”
8. **Plea / a plea of insanity** – “...his defence of John Turk, the murderer, on *a plea of insanity*, had been successful...”
9. **Death penalty** – “...no man had ever better deserved *the death penalty*.”
10. **Dreadful** – “*I’m glad it’s over because I’ve seen the last of that man’s dreadful face.*”
11. **Haunted (by a memory)** – “*It’s haunted me.*”

12. **Dismembered** – “...the description of the way the *dismembered* body was crammed and packed with lime into that—”
13. **Cram / crammed** – “...the way the dismembered body was *crammed* and packed with lime into that—”
14. **Packed (into a bag)** – “...the way the dismembered body was crammed and *packed with lime* into that—”
15. **Lime (substance)** – “...crammed and packed with *lime* into that—”
16. **Don't dwell on it** – “‘*Don't dwell on it,*’ interrupted Wilbraham, looking at him curiously with his keen eyes...”
17. **Parliamentary work** – “‘*I will want all your energy for my Parliamentary work when you get back.*’”
18. **Lend / borrow** – “‘Would you mind *lending me* one of your kit-bags?’”
19. **Gratefully** – “‘I promise I'll take good care of it,’ said Johnson *gratefully*...”
20. **Ate out** – “‘*He ate out and went on to Bloomsbury...*’”
21. **Lofty rooms** – “...a flat on the top floor in one of those old houses in which the rooms are large and *lofty*.”

22. **Vacant** – “The floor below his was *vacant* and unfurnished...”
23. **Unfurnished** – “The floor below his was vacant and *unfurnished*...”
24. **Lodger** – “...and below that were other *lodgers* who he did not know.”
25. **Cheerless** – “*It was cheerless, and he was looking forward to a change of scene.*”
26. **Sleet** – “A cold, *sleety* rain was driving down the streets...”
27. **Harsh wind** – “...in front of the *harshest east wind* he had ever felt.”
28. **Gloomy** – “It howled among the big, *gloomy* houses of the great squares...”
29. **Whistling / shouting (wind)** – “...he heard it *whistling and shouting* over the world of black roofs beyond his windows.”
30. **Drafts** – “...his landlady, shading a candle from the *draughts* with her thin hand.”
31. **Rockous / raucous voice** – “‘And I hope you’ll ’ave a merry Christmas, sir,’ she said, in a *raucous*, wheezy voice...”
32. **Wheezy** – “...she said, in a raucous, *wheezy* voice...”

33. **Volleying (against the window)** – “When he got upstairs he heard the sleet *volleying against the window panes*.”
34. **Canvas** – “His friend had lent him the large *canvas* kit-bag...”
35. **Padlock** – “...with holes round the neck for the brass bar and *padlock*.”
36. **Shapeless** – “It was a bit *shapeless*, and not much to look at...”
37. **Shoved** – “He *shoved* in his waterproof coat, his fur cap and gloves...”
38. **Thermals** – “...his thick socks, and *thermals*.”
39. **Dressed up** – “Some smart clothes came next, in case the hotel people *dressed up* for dinner...”
40. **Reflect (think)** – “...he paused a moment to *reflect*.”
41. **Fetch** – “...where he had come to *fetch* some string.”
42. **Gust of wind** – “A furious *gust of wind* rattled the windows...”
43. **Skimming over (snow)** – “...whilst he was *skimming over snowy slopes* in bright sunshine...”

- 44. **Rosy-cheeked** – “...and dancing in the evening with *rosy-cheeked* girls.”
- 45. **Landing (area upstairs)** – “...the cupboard on the *landing* where he kept his shoes.”
- 46. **The post (letters/mail)** – “...she must be coming up with the last *post*.”
- 47. **Flight of stairs** – “They were at least two *flights* down...”
- 48. **Sack (bag)** – “...and stood upright on its own base like a *sack* of flour.”
- 49. **Subjected to rough treatment** – “...it had obviously been *subjected to some rather rough treatment*.”
- 50. **Soft tread** – “...he was almost certain he heard a *soft tread* of someone padding about...”
- 51. **Padding about** – “...he heard a soft tread of someone *padding about* over the bare boards...”
- 52. **Bare boards** – “...padding about over the *bare boards*...”
- 53. **Cautiously** – “...cautiously, stealthily, as silently as possible...”
- 54. **Stealthily** – “...cautiously, *stealthily*, as silently as possible...”

55. **Resemblance** – “...with an extraordinary *resemblance to a human face*.”
56. **Fold (in fabric)** – “The canvas fell into a *fold* like a nose and forehead...”
57. **Stain / travel stain** – “A shadow — or was it a *travel stain*?”
58. **Absurdly (like)** – “It gave him a strange feeling, because it looked *absurdly* like the face of John Turk...”
59. **Horrid** – “‘That *horrid* case has got into my head,’ he thought...”
60. **Creeping about** – “...to see who it could be *creeping about* on the upper staircase...”
61. **Banisters** – “Then he called over the *banisters* to Mrs Monks...”
62. **Vault (of the house)** – “...his voice echoed down into the dark *vault of the house*...”
63. **Roar of the gale** – “...and was lost in the *roar of the gale* that howled outside.”
64. **Absurd imagination** – “‘My *absurd imagination*, I suppose,’ he thought.”

65. **Accumulated impressions** – “...a point is reached where the *accumulated impressions* become a definite emotion...”
66. **Film by film** – “Impressions gather on the surface of the mind, *film by film*, like ice gathering on the surface of still water...”
67. **Start (noun)** – “With something of a *start*, Johnson suddenly recognized that he felt nervous...”
68. **Acknowledge** – “...he had only just reached the point where he was forced to *acknowledge* them.”
69. **Objected to** – “...doing something that was strongly *objected to* by another person...”
70. **Guilty conscience** – “...not unlike the feeling of a *guilty conscience*...”
71. **Put your finger on (the origin)** – “...he just could not *put his finger on* the origin of this growing sense of unease...”
72. **Unease** – “...the origin of this growing sense of *unease*...”
73. **Distressed** – “Even more, it *distressed* and frightened him.”
74. **Fetch (again)** – “...to *fetch* it from the cupboard...”

75. **Vague outline** – “...he saw out of the corner of his eye the *vague outline* of a figure standing on the stairs...”
76. **Stooping** – “It was someone in a *stooping* position...”
77. **Peering / peered** – “...with one hand on the banister, and the face *peering up* at the landing towards him.”
78. **Shuffling footstep** – “And at the same moment he heard a *shuffling footstep*.”
79. **Pulled himself together** – “Then, after a few seconds of hesitation, he *pulled himself together*, and turned to investigate.”
80. **Shivers / cold shivers** – “He felt a series of *cold shivers* run over him...”
81. **Give way (his legs)** – “...and something in the muscles of his legs *gave way a little and grew weak*.”
82. **Crowded (memories) back** – “All the pictures of those ten days in court *crowded back* into his mind...”
83. **Sway (the curtains)** – “He thought he saw the curtains *sway* very slightly...”
84. **In vain** – “He continued his search, but *in vain*.”

85. **Trip / tripped up** – “...and, as he did so, something *tripped him up*.”
86. **Tore at (the windows)** – “A terrific gust of wind *tore at the windows*...”
87. **Fled away (wind)** – “...and then *fled away* howling over the waste of Bloomsbury roofs.”
88. **Pretense of normality** – ““And two of my senses,’ he added, keeping up the *pretence of normality*...”
89. **Poked the fire** – “He went back to the front room, *poked the fire* into a blaze...”
90. **Dragged (the bag)** – “...the kit-bag was no longer where he had left it. It had been *dragged* nearer to the door.”
91. **Mental plates (of memory)** – “...the vivid pictures received day after day upon the *mental plates* of his memory...”
92. **Developed (in the dark room of the mind)** – “...came strongly to light and *developed themselves in the dark room* of his inner vision.”
93. **Haunting memories** – “Unpleasant, *haunting memories* have a way of coming to life again...”
94. **Field of vision** – “...from every corner of his mental *field of vision*...”

95. **Fringe (hairline)** – “...and the *fringe* of black hair low over the forehead.”
96. **Snatched up** – “He *snatched up* his ski-mask and walked across to the bedroom...”
97. **Humming** – “...*humming* a cheerful Christmas song as he went...”
98. **Crumpled** – “...and just over its *crumpled* top he saw a head and face slowly sinking down out of sight...”
99. **Crouching** – “...as though someone were *crouching* behind it to hide...”
100. **Long-drawn sigh** – “...and at the same moment a sound like a *long-drawn sigh* was distinctly audible...”
101. **Trembling** – “A violent *trembling* ran down his back and legs...”
102. **Faint whisper** – “...the sound came out instead in a *faint whisper*.”
103. **Bulging (sides of the bag)** – “...nothing but the faded carpet and the *bulging canvas sides*.”
104. **Smear (of crimson)** – “...there ran a broad *smear of dull crimson*.”

105. **Lurch** – “At the same moment the kit-bag gave a faint, but unmistakable, *lurch forward towards the door.*”
106. **Collapsed** – “Johnson *collapsed* backwards, searching with his hands for the support of something solid...”
107. **Plunged into darkness** – “...and the room was *plunged into darkness.*”
108. **Predicament** – “It was an awkward and disagreeable *predicament...*”
109. **Groped / groping** – “...but Johnson managed to pull himself together, and *groped* furiously for the little switch...”
110. **Bewilderment** – “...and in those few moments of *bewilderment* and terror two things happened...”
111. **Jerks (movement)** – “...the kit-bag shuffling heavily across the floor *in jerks...*”
112. **Dreaded** – “...he still had time to realize that he *dreaded* the return of the light...”
113. **Shelter of darkness** – “It would have been better for him to have stayed in the *shelter of the kind darkness.*”
114. **Merciless glare** – “...clear as life in the *merciless glare* of the electric light...”

115. **Gallows** – “...when he stood there in the dock, cynical and callous, under the very shadow of the *gallows*.”
116. **Clawing (the door open)** – “Johnson just remembered *clawing the door open*, and then falling in a heap upon the floor of the landing...”
117. **Bruised** – “...he realised that he was lying, stiff and *bruised*, on the cold floorboards.”
118. **Wintry dawn** – “...the *wintry dawn* was just beginning to peep in at the windows...”
119. **Peep in (light)** – “...the wintry dawn was just beginning to *peep in at the windows*...”
120. **Dismal** – “...painting the stairs a cheerless, *dismal* grey...”
121. **Ain't** – ““What! You *ain't* been to bed, sir!””
122. **Stammered** – ““Who is it?’ he *stammered*.”
123. **Whirling (head)** – “...said Johnson, whose head was *whirling*...”
124. **To and fro** – “Johnson heard the shifting *to and fro* of the bag...”
125. **Shuffled (awkward movement)** – “The man *shuffled* and looked mysterious.”

126. **Casually** – “‘And I was to bring the other one back, sir,’ he added *casually*.”

127. **Put away / buried** – “...he left a note for Mr Wilbraham saying he wanted to be *put away, buried, same as the woman he murdered*, in the old kit-bag.”
