

A Kestrel For A Knave: Creative Writing Tasks

Before you undertake any creative writing task, always think about what you are going to write first. Ensure you have decided what will happen at the beginning, middle and end of your story. Some tasks are given below. You can either use your own plan for completing them or use the suggested writing frame given below it, which may help you get started. (N.B. No frame is given for Task 3 as the events will be the same as in the book.)

1. What happens next?

A *Kestrel For A Knave* covers one day in Billy's life. Now you must write a short story outlining the day after the novel finishes. What happens next? Does Jud continue to persecute Billy about the debt? Does Billy get revenge for Kes? Does he find another bird? Does he run away from home? Do things continue as bad as ever? Do Jud and Billy's mum agree to change for the better? What happens at school? Try to write descriptively, and copy the style of Barry Hines' prose.

Suggested Plan: Billy Takes Revenge.

Introduction Billy lies in bed, thinking about why Judd murdered Kes. He is angry.

Middle He hears Judd come in. Judd is noisy and drunk. Then it goes quiet except for the sound of the TV.

Billy goes downstairs and sees Judd asleep on the sofa, lit cigarette in hand. Billy throws the burning cigarette onto the sofa. It begins to smoulder as Billy runs out of the house.

End Billy's mum arrives home to find her house on fire.

2. Billy as an adult.

Describe Billy as you imagine him nowadays, as a middle aged man having grown up. What is he like? Is he still keen on nature? What effect have the events in the novel had on his life? What job does he do? Is he married? Children? Does he still know Jud? Is he bitter about what happens to him in the novel?

Suggested Plan: Billy becomes a Birdman

Introduction We see an older Billy doing a bird show. He is showing school children his skills with a kestrel.

Middle The children ask him how he came to do this job. He explains that he learnt about kestrels while he was still at school.

When he left school he worked in the local mines, but he used to read bird magazines.

He read an article about a woman who rescued birds, especially birds of prey. He was interested so he wrote to her.

He went to visit her bird sanctuary. They became good friends and eventually fell in love. Now they are married and run the sanctuary together.

End He tells the children never to give up on their dreams even if they seem impossible.

3. Telling the story with a narrator.

Choose a passage from the story, and retell it from Billy's point of view, instead of from a third person perspective. What differences to the story will it make having Billy as the narrator? Will he contradict the third person account in any way? How will his own views and opinions affect his story? Will he make himself appear more favourable in his version of the story? Try to use the language, slang, spelling and punctuation that Billy does.