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The Highwayman - A Character Description

by Roan

inspired by the poem, by Alfred Noyes

He bore a permanent sneer on his face. His French-cocked hat glittered in the moonlight. The steady thump of the horse's feet hit the ground. The gun, heavy and cold in his hand, was often called by victims 'his other part'. His shoes shone an iridescent blue and red. His velvet coat was neatly buttoned up, as he rode forwards.

Gunshot. Bess was gone. The feeling of betrayal was evident on his face and the feeling was overwhelmingly sad. Grief? He could not tell, maybe both. He felt guilt. He slumped onto the ground and wept; the hot salty tears ran down his chin and created a puddle. The love of his life, gone. He wept all night, until the sadness had gone. That empty void had now been filled with revenge. He swore an oath to make those men pay for what they had done. There was no love left in him, just the craving for revenge. The wind howling and the bowels of the devil emptied into him as the hard ground turned into mud. He cocked his gun and rode into the moonlight, the darkness swallowing him up.



He was gone but he would be back. As his red velvet coat lifted with the wind, his before soft, handsome face, now hardened and filled with anger and sorrow. One gunshot could alter a man's life entirely.

Constantine Smith

By Phoebe M

~ inspired by 'Sally' by Phoebe Hesketh and 'Timothy Winters' by Charles Causley

Constantine was a poor kind of boy:
on the way to school the sea's courageous waves splatter all over him,
itchy from time to time, sticking like double sided- tape.

He got bullied by girls,
4-5 years older than him;
it made him scream and toss in his sleep.

He'd sit quiet at his desk,
waiting for nothing apart from getting home to his dog.
His home was bricks and a sack of dead dried beans,
with an odd tin of dog food gloop.

He did just about anything for the dog making sure it had what it needed forgetting
about himself.

40 years later the dog was still there;
he had got an apartment and a wealthy job.
He was going to put a gun to his own head but he didn't because the dog was still
there.



Hold on Tightly - A short story by Grace Beaton

It was a bright and sunny day, the sort of day that requires sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat. On days like this, Freddie liked nothing better than going out in the family rowing boat with his dad and older brother Ben.

Freddie lived in a small village in the east of Cornwall. He was a confident young man, whose daring exploits sometimes got him into mischief, but this didn't stop Freddie from seeking out adventure.

On this particularly hot day, Freddie decided (at the ripe old age of twelve), that he was experienced enough to take the boat out by himself. He packed a bag with some snacks, a water bottle and a few comics. He went to the garage and collected his favourite fishing rod, the special wooden one that his grandfather had given him when he was only nine. He also took Barney, the family dog. Barney was an energetic border collie, who moved like lightning but was as gentle as a lamb. Freddie and Barney were inseparable and they both liked their fair share of fun.

Barney pulled hard on his lead as they walked along the jetty. There she was, varnish glistening in the sunshine. The family rowing boat bobbed gently as she waited patiently for her crew. Freddie lifted Barney into the boat and climbed aboard himself.

It didn't take them long to row out of the harbour into the open sea. The waves gently lapped at the sides of the boat and Barney curiously watched bubbles as they rose to the surface.

Freddie worked hard to keep the boat moving out to sea. He rowed and rowed and despite being a skinny boy, with ribs that poked through his t-shirt, he made good progress. Freddie's hair was as red as fire, with a crop of curls that rested above his eyes. His skin was pale and freckles littered his face.

When Freddie was about a mile offshore he dropped the boat's anchor, fixed bait to the end of his line and began to patiently wait for the fish to bite. The late afternoon sun was intense, in fact it made Freddie feel rather sleepy. He lay down and rested his head.

All of a sudden, Freddie felt a cold, wet nose nudging his cheek. He wiped some drool from the side of his mouth and opened his eyes. To his surprise the sun had been replaced with the moon and the once warm sunny day was now dark and cold. The waves crashed hard against the small boat. It rocked ferociously from side to side like a fairground ride, tossing Freddie and Barney about. Freddie could hear a distant rumbling coming from the shore. He could see heavy black clouds overhead and then the rain started. He frantically grabbed the oars and began to row. The tide was helping, pushing him closer to land. He could see the lighthouse beam shining brightly. His boat being pushed closer and closer to the rocks. Freddie could feel his heart racing, he knew that they were in real danger. Barney nestled in close for comfort just as the waves started to break against the little boat. Water flooding in. All of a sudden a gigantic wave smashed them against a rock. The wood cracked and Freddie fell into the icy water. Barney yelped and barked and Freddie grabbed his lead. They both swam hard trying to keep their heads above the water until they reached a tall thin rock. Freddie wrapped his arms and legs around it, whilst holding tight to Barney. Freddie held on for what felt like hours, fighting hard to keep his eyes open. His whole body in agony.

Just as Freddie thought he couldn't hold on any longer, he heard a faint whirring sound in the distance. It was a helicopter. Freddie mustered up all of his strength and started shouting and waving with one arm. To his relief the helicopter stopped directly overhead and he watched as a man was winched down to rescue him. As he was pulled up he could feel Barney shivering against him. He was unconscious and his breathing was laboured. The next thing Freddie felt was a cold wet nose nudging his cheek. He opened his eyes to find Barney standing on his hospital bed.

How the Proboscis got Its Nose

by Henry C

inspired by 'Anansi and the Shade Tree'

Deep in the Amazon rainforest there was a family of old world monkeys. The youngest of the family was incredibly greedy and loved food.

“Why are you so greedy Proboscis, you’ve eaten all your food and ours!” shouted his mother who was a chimp, the oldest of the monkeys. “Go find some food by the old riverside”.

Proboscis was sad, he just wanted to please his Mother. “B-b-b but I can't stop myself, I just love food,” Proboscis stuttered. “OK Mum, I’ll go and find some bananas, I’ve seen some by the river”. He hated the river; it had always scared him. But he wanted to please his mother, so off he went with the last of his food, a juicy orange mango. “I might be able to eat this delicious mango,” he said whilst licking his lips. He couldn't resist himself and he gobbled it up in one gulp. It went everywhere, splosh, all over his silky, black fur, turning it orange. "Nooooo!"

He reached the river and all the river animals said, “Ha-ha-ha, an orange monkey, imagine that!”

Proboscis was devastated, he just wanted to be their friend. So he looked away from them, but in the corner of his eye he saw a wonderful sight. A multi-coloured fruit just hanging there on the old Gub-Gub tree. He had heard the story of the Gub-Gub tree; it was the only one of its kind. It was soo delicious it would paralyse anyone without having the strongest taste buds in the world.

He wanted to show all the river animals he was strong, so he began the climb. Heave-ho-heave-ho. Up, up, up he went so high up he did not see the ravenous piranhas at the bottom of the tree in the river. Snap!

He was only an arm's reach off the delicious fruit.

“I am so high up.” He grabbed a bunch of Gub-Gub fruit, it was so heavenly he couldn't stop eating. “Gobble, gobble.” After an hour of grazing he was so fat he broke the tree. Crack! He fell so fast he created a sonic boom,booooooooooooooooooom (that's what happens when you travel at the speed of sound).

Proboscis was dangling upside down, and was nearly touching the water. He hung on for dear life to the half broken branch. He was still gripping hold of the stalk of the last Gub-Gub fruit. He saw some bubbles heading towards him. Some hungry-looking Piranhas with huge, scary teeth swam towards Proboscis and tried to bite into the fruit. Proboscis was so scared, he clenched his hands so hard, that the fruit burst into a million pieces. One piece landed on his nose.

The Piranhas knew just how yummy the gub-gub fruit were. They leapt in the air following the smell of the fruit on Proboscis’ nose and locked onto his nose. They instantly froze because of the immense taste of the Gub-Gub fruit.

“Phew,” sighed Proboscis, “I almost thought I was a goner there.” He tried to pull back from the river and the attached Piranhas. He tried to pull them off and in doing so his nose got stretched. Bigger and bigger his nose grew, until they finally snapped off.

Proboscis wanted to get home very quickly and was too fat to climb back via the tree. Splosh! He fell into the water and gently floated, with a very fat tummy and a long nose, down the river to his home.

“Mum, I’m home, and I don't feel very well,” moaned Proboscis.

“What a big tummy you have, Proboscis,” said his Mother. “What messy fur you have and most of all **what a huge nose you have!**”



Have you seen the dinosaur in my garden?

by Johnny

inspired by 'Anansi and the Shade Tree'

This story starts a long time ago. Once there was a dinosaur called Fred, and Fred had a phobia. All of the animals laughed at him. “HAHAHAHAHA!”

“DO NOT BE MEAN!” he would cry, sniveling.

Should I tell you his phobia? Ok, I will. He hated squirrels. Red squirrels, grey squirrels, all squirrels. He imagined them hitting him with nuts.

One day, Fred was going to his grandma’s house. Stomp, stomp, stomp, he bumbled along. He was not looking where he was going. He was daydreaming, when he accidentally stood on a big squirrel, making its tail stand bolt upright.

“Aaaagh,” yelled the squirrel in surprise.

“Hhhhhheeeeeeeellllllpppppp!” yelled Fred. “Look what’s underneath my foot!” And in horror he hopped hurriedly away from the squirrel, making an enormous dent in the ground because he was so heavy. This dent is still in our front field, but there’s no sign of the squirrel.

In fear, Fred ran away to the south, passing through plains, bravely crossing rivers, wading through swamps, climbing mountains. This made him very tired and with an enormous ffffoommmfff, he lay down and fell asleep. If you didn't already know, dinosaurs sleep for a very long time. Thousands of years passed. The wind blew, storms raged, and Fred was buried in leaves, rocks and plants. A great mound developed, which became known as Simonside.

You can walk on Simonside now, but you must be very quiet in case you wake Fred. “Ssshhhhhhh!”

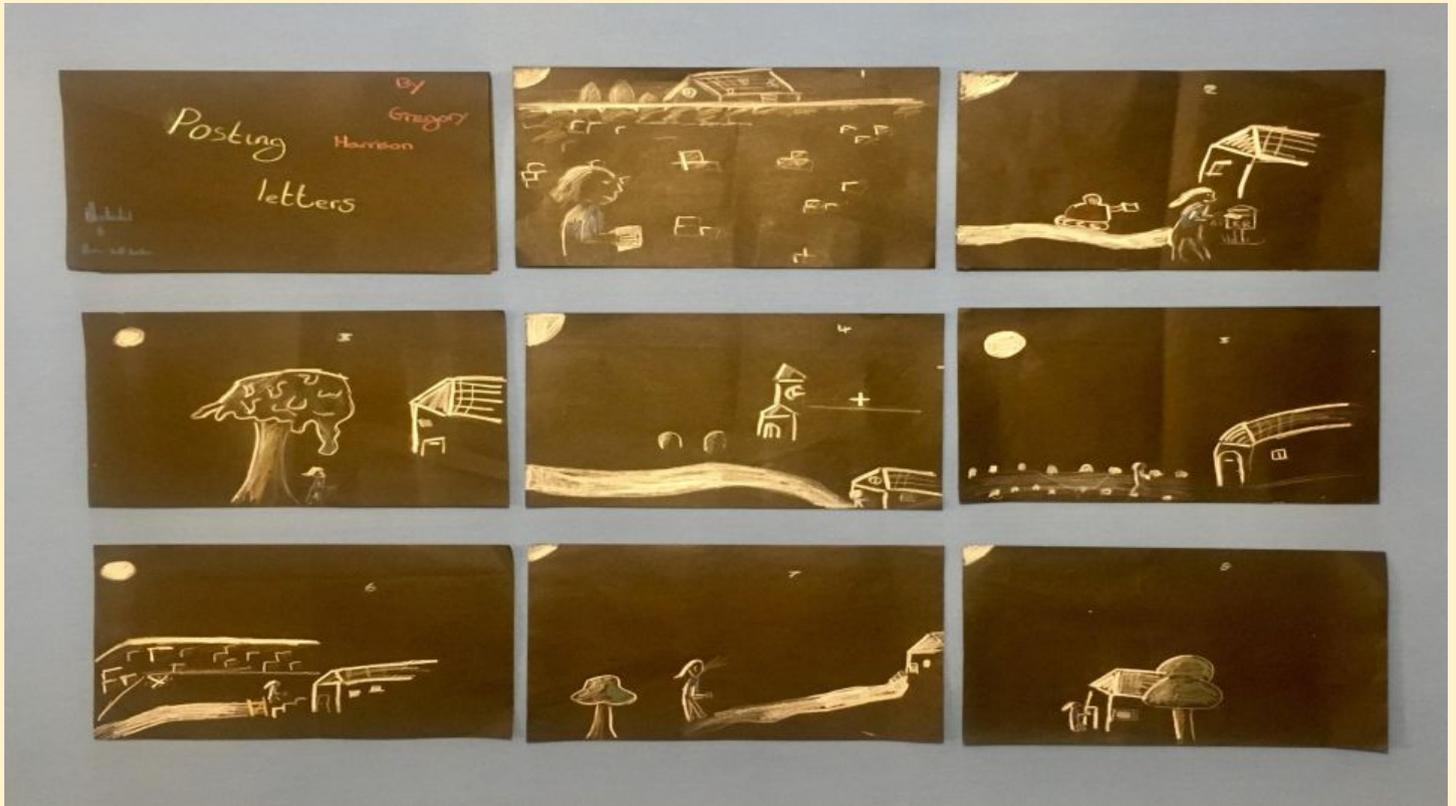
Occasionally, Fred moves in his sleep and causes an avalanche of rocks and boulders. This is just a reminder of how Simonside was made.



Re-telling a story from a narrative poem.

by Flora

inspired by 'Posting Letters' ~ by Gregory Harrison



Posting Letters - by Gregory Harrison

There are no lamps in our village,
and when the owl-and-bat black night
creeps up low fields
and sidles along the manor walls
I walk quickly.

It is winter;
the letters patter from my hand
into the tin box on the cottage wall;
the gate taps behind me,
and the road in the silver of moonlight
gleams greasily
where the tractors have stood.

I have to go under the spread fingers
of the trees
under the dark windows
of the old man's house,
where the panes in peeling frames
flash like spectacles
as I tip-toe.
But there is no sound of him in his one room in the Queen-Anne shell,
behind the shutters.

I run past the gates,
their iron feet gaitered with grass,
into the church porch,
standing, hand on the cold door ring,
while above
the tongue-tip of the clock
clops
against the hard palate of the tower.

The door groans as I push
and dare myself to dash
along the flagstones
to the great brass bird,
to put one shrinking hand reaching
upon the gritty lid.
of Black Tom's tomb.

Don't tempt whatever spirits sit
in this damp corner, but
race down the aisle,
blunder past font,
fumble the door,
leap steps,
clang iron gate,
and patter through the short-cut muddy lane.

Oh, what a pumping of breath
and choking throat
for three letters.
And now there are the cattle
stirring in the straw
so close
I can hear their soft muzzling and coughs;

and there are the bungalows,
and the steel-blue miming
of the little screen;
and the familiar rattle of the latch,
and our own knocker
clicking like an old friend;
and I am home.

The Cunningham's House

by Eliza

inspired by 'Posting Letters' by Gregory Harrison

Maya and her friends were dared one day to try and sneak into the Cunningham's house after school. They giggled with each other as they strolled down the pavement in their street, talking loudly and laughing louder as they walked. It was early autumn and the sky was turning dark as they neared the house. It was huge and Victorian, with dark shutters and no lights in the windows. Ivy crept up the side of the house and covered some windows with its leaves. The garden (if you could even call it a garden) was covered in weeds and the grass was long and yellow. It was so unlike any other garden that it stood out from all the other houses in the village; with their clipped grass, brightly coloured flowers and trees covered in fruit and late blossom.

'They say it's haunted,' whispered Ashley, her green eyes wide. 'There might be ghosts!' She was one of the most dramatic girls in her group, with red hair and a large smile.

'Yeah, and a killer bunny,' Maya said, rolling her eyes. She wore a hoodie, like every other day, and her straight, black hair had pink streaks in it. She stood next to Kat, who was tall, fair and sporty. Then there was Allie and Alex, who loved shopping, clothes and bubblegum. Ashley was from Oxford and was clever, fashionable and always top of the class, though she never really cared whether she was.

The girls turned around the corner and found themselves directly in front of a huge iron gate, with high spikes like something from a film. A rusty lock hung from the gate; it clicked shut and barred their path towards the abandoned house.

They stood silent and gaped up at the old house, with its cracked stones and dark shutters.

'You know what, I think I've changed my mind,' Allie remarked. 'None of you are gonna make me go in *there*. I mean, just look at it!'

The others ignored her and looked for places to get in. After a few long minutes, they gave up looking and slumped down on the bench in front of the house; dusty and irritated.

'Let's just go round the back and climb over the wall,' Ashley suggested. 'Nobody lives here anymore anyway.'

'Why didn't you say this before? Oh it doesn't matter, let's just go,' sighed Alex, calling for the others to hurry up.

They hurried around the house and climbed over the wall, scratching themselves on the long thorns that grew unchecked. They crept over to a rotting door, which groaned as they shuffled inside. The house had a faint musky smell that hung in the air as the girls tiptoed into a small, dark room with a shelf covered in dusty china. A small moth fluttered past them. Broken glass scattered the floor, glinting from the torch Maya carried.

The next room was huge, with a large fireplace and peeling wallpaper. A moth-eaten carpet lay on the floor. The room was furnished with comfy armchairs, a velvet sofa, numerous oil paintings and a chandelier. A drip, drip, drip echoed around the room. Something scuttled near them and they hurried on.

They climbed up some stairs and reached a room with dark wood panelling and an oak desk covered in faded papers and dry pens. The walls were covered in bookcases and heavy curtains hung across the windows.

'Guys, look what I found!' called Allie.

The others walked into a bedroom and found her rifling through a huge walk-in wardrobe. She brought out a few dresses, snorted in disgust and then tossed them behind her. There were long evening dresses of velvets and silks of every hue imaginable. There were high stilettos, slippers and even a ballet shoe; its pink ribbon still intact. A little desk had lots of jewellery on it, including a pair of pearl earrings, an emerald ring and a spectacular bracelet studded with diamonds. The girls dragged Allie out of the room before she could make any more mess, but not before she could quickly slip a little silver bangle and a gold ring into her pocket.

'What?' she exclaimed when she saw the others eyeing her. 'It's not like they're going to be needing them!'

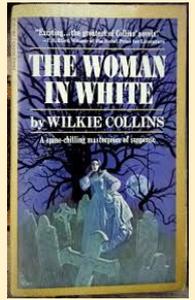
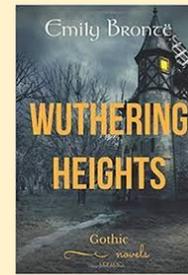
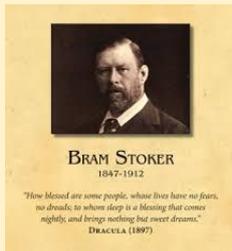
They all sighed in unison and looked at each other with raised eyebrows.

'Fine!' she cried and very deliberately took the gold ring from her pocket and placed it on the bedside table. 'Better?'

'Nope. Come on, I want to get out now,' Alex said, shivering. 'It's cold and there's no signal.'

They sneaked out of the house and climbed over the wall. It was completely dark outside as they travelled down the street. They never went back inside the house, but Allie always appeared with a new piece of jewellery every week.

What is GOTHIC HORROR? - Famous gothic horror novelists include:



Come and find their books in the library.

~ Massacre on the Moon ~ a serial novel ~ written by Charlie ~



Chapter 4

The lives of the poor family had been torn apart as their desperate Mother yelled and spat helplessly at them, tears flooding like an overflowing river. Feeling alone and ignored by her wordless family, the poor lady stormed out of the room with an explosion of tears followed by her stern-looking husband. The echo of Maria's cries of sorrow filled the room as teary Tom became so fed up, he too stormed out of the room. Bewildered and distressed as she sat silently on her bobbing sister's knee, Nancy scanned the room for her Mother. "Maria, why so sad?" she asked, eyeing her sister with cute puppy eyes.

"Oh Nancy my dear, you won't understand, I mean you're only five," she cried. "If only I could tell you, but how upset you'd be." Maria gazed sadly out of the window, not realizing that Nancy had crept off her knee. "Nancy, Nancy!" she screamed, with fear of anything else happening to her beloved family members (except her sibling Tom). The drifting sound of quiet screams flowed through the

room, as Maria's ears pricked up in alert. "Jack, JACK!" She leaped from her chair, sending it crashing to the cracked floor as she shot to the door, sprinting down the corridor, screaming her brother's name. A beautiful blossom of hope sprouted from her heart, giving a warm loving colour to her cheeks. "Oh Jack, come to me!" she screamed as she gasped for breath. Returning empty-hearted to her sorrowful chair, she froze dead still, her heart thumping as it leaped out of her chest.

Maria bit her half chewn fingernail as her Mother howled, "This isn't a joke, how dare you act like this!"

"It's impossible," whispered Maria as she gazed at the empty table. "I ran to see him because I thought I heard him screaming; when I left his body was there on the table, when I came back it had just disappeared, I know it sounds crazy but, well, I—"

"Spit it out will you!" yelled Mr Blason.

"I think he might still be alive..."

"That's absurd," Mr Blason stated. "You're only wishing for it, we all are."

"No, Dad, it's true, I know it," his desperate daughter replied.

The cold, crisp air pinched Maria's blushed cheeks. Her tears froze as they trickled down her face. She slowly wandered down the rocky path towards her own question. Her hair twisting and turning into ragged knots, and her lips cracking more with every cry she wept.

Mr Blason stressfully paced up and down his 'bedroom' as he frantically bit his lip, drops of sweat dripping down his sweaty nose, his crooked teeth collided against one another. "Please, please don't hurt me. We could be a team, we could...." he muttered.

As the frosty grass crunched beneath her feet, Maria longed for someone to run to and embrace. Her heart lay empty and frozen as she gazed tearfully at her shoes. "Where am I going? What am I doing? I should really go back," she thought aloud in a small whisper. Briefly, she looked back at the wonky farmhouse to only see a slump of wooden planks in the distance. "How long have I been walking?" She felt a sudden shock of fear and began to nervously glance around her. She began wondering if there was someone watching her from behind, or hidden amongst the nearby frozen trees. Unexpectedly, the crack of a small twig

sounded from nearby. "Who's there?" she cried as her head shot around. She frantically looked around in all directions before stumbling away in fear.

Breathlessly, Maria stopped running and sat down on a nearby rock, still making sure she wasn't being followed. "You're being such an idiot, what were you thinking? I should just go home," she thought. She felt a light breeze drift against the back of her neck and her head spun around, "Who Is There? Leave me alone Tom, you know I came out here to be left alone!" she screamed.

"Oh, I'm not Tom,"

"STOP IT, I mean it!"

"Don't you make me angry,"

"WHAT, you're making me angry!" she replied, injected with anger.

The smoky figure appeared from the deep, dense undergrowth, murmuring in his constant croaky voice, "Don't make me angry. Don't Make Me Angry. DON'T MAKE ME ANGRY." Maria fell off her rock with great shock and fear and found herself dazed and unable to scream as loudly as she needed to, as she shook herself, still unmoving, and passed out.

"Where's Maria?" asked Mrs Blason.

"I dunno," replied her son with a mouth full of tissues.

"Get that out of your mouth," she returned, losing her patience with her nuisance of a son.

"I said I don't know where she is, she probably stormed off somewhere," he said, removing the tissues.

"Will you go and find her please Tom? Be a good man," his Father put in.

"Ugh, fine."

A dark, gloomy figure approached the poor passed out girl, pulling a small knife out of his pocket. "Egnever, Egnever, E~~G~~NEVER!" he screamed. The screaming of the strange creature waking her up, the terrified Maria screamed at the top of her lungs. The 'Thing' held his knife to her neck and recited, "Egnever, Egnever!"

"Yes. Yes... egnever... oh, you're only a child. Have you lost your Mummy?" she replied, still filled with fear.

At this question, the child shook with anger, "YOM!" he roared. Quivering with fear, Maria shielded her face from the small but terrifying child.

Explain why William won The Battle of Hastings.

by Harry S-H

William won the Battle of Hastings for a wide range of reasons. These can be categorised into three groups: William's strengths, Harold's weaknesses and other aspects such as luck, Fostig and Hardrada. These categories can be further split into long term and short term factors. I can also identify the links between them and identify the most important facts.

William had key strengths which helped him win at Hastings. In the long term, William had key strengths such as William was made Duke of Normandy at the age of eight, after his father died on campaign. William also lived in a pious and warlike society; these two long term factors explain why, in the short term, William was a determined, strong and tactically pragmatic leader in battle. The Norman method of fighting used a combination of mercenaries and the latest technology, stirrups, allowed William to have mounted cavalry. And because William was on a horse, he had a dynamic command position during the battle, so when the Bretons retreated down the hill in disorder, he was able to re-gather them and show his face, then get them to surround and kill the chasing Anglo-Saxons. Later, he used this as a tactic, by pretending to retreat and again and again the fyrd were slaughtered and killed. Back in the long term, William managed to obtain the blessing of the Pope before the battle. This helped him gain men and the belief that he was going to win. He also gathered a fleet of 700 ships. This happened because of a feudal oath that I will explore later. William could arrange his archers, infantry and cavalry in a variety of ways. He also had with him, a pre-fabricated castle which was erected on the 28th September 1066. In the short term, the battle began before Harold was properly ready because William drew Harold towards him by burning villages, such as Harold's home town, Bosham. Moreover, the Norman army (some on horseback) were skillful fighters and William arranged them carefully and skillfully in battle (a good example is the fake retreats). These were William's strengths in battle which allowed him to win at Hastings.

Harold had key weaknesses which allowed William to win at Hastings. In the long term, there were many reasons why Harold lost at Hastings. Harold used the shield wall tactic, which was an old Viking method used by the Anglo-Saxons. Because of this, Harold had a static position. This is a short term factor as well as a long term factor. So when his fyrd chased the Bretons down the hill, he could do nothing about it. He was also dogmatic and this was his only plan. Harold's army consisted mainly of untrained fighting farmers (the fyrd). This is a short term factor as well as a long term factor. He positioned his fyrd along the south coast to guard it from William's ships, but he had to demobilise them after their 2 months service since they had to tend their crops. The Battle of Stanford Bridge gave him huge confidence, so he rushed over to Hastings, which tired out his men. He also lost 1/3 of his horse-carls. I think this is one of the most important reasons William won. I will discuss this again later. In the short term, Harold was shot, possibly in the eye, with a high arrow, and was killed. The English were weak without their leader. From then on, it was an easy battle for the Normans. So clearly, Harold's weaknesses gave William an advantage at Hastings.

There were many other factors, such as luck, Fostig and Hardrada, that helped William win at Hastings. These are all in the long term. In 1064, Harold's ship was wrecked off the coast of Ponthieu. He was captured by Guy of Ponthieu and taken to William, where he swore a feudal oath over a reliquary, a very important and holy item. This seemingly unconnected event allowed William to obtain the blessing of the Pope. I have already discussed this earlier in the sanction on William's

strengths, when Harold broke the oath. This oath stated that Harold was William's knight, so if he ever gained control over anything, he would have to offer it to William. The blessing of the Pope allowed William to gain huge numbers of troops. Without this, I don't know think William would have won the battle. I think this is the most important reason for William winning the Battle of Hastings. In 1065 Tostig was exiled by Harold. Tostig, bent on revenge, made an alliance with Hardrada, who later invaded England in the Battle of Stamford Bridge. This had a considerable effect on Harold's chances of winning the battle. He landed with 300 dragon-headed ships. Finally, the wind changed, just after Harold's fyrd had demobilised, so the coast was unguarded. So clearly there were a wide range of reasons in the luck category that helped William win the battle.

To conclude, William won the Battle of Hastings for a wide range of reasons. I have categorised these into 3 groups, which were William's strengths, Harold's weaknesses and other aspects such as luck. I have found a most important reason: the feudal oath. I further split my categories in to long term and short term.