

Before Reading

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1 BEFORE READING

Encourage discussion. Some possible answers.

- 1 Women in the nineteenth century might inherit, be given, borrow or hire diamonds. Stealing would be difficult, and buying would be unlikely, especially for married women, who did not legally hold property in their own names. Amelia is probably more likely to inherit diamonds, or be given them. Becky, being poor, would not inherit, but might hire, borrow, be given them, or even steal them.
- 2 Becky, who is ambitious, and whose ‘fortunes soon rise’.
- 3 Open answers.
- 4 Open answers.

ACTIVITY 2 BEFORE READING

Open discussion. Encourage students to offer reasons for their choice of adjectives. Possible answers (though there is much scope for debate):

Becky: *ambitious, amusing, brilliant, cunning, selfish, sensible, strong*

Amelia: *affectionate, devoted, dull, gentle, good, honest, modest, sympathetic*

ACTIVITY 3 BEFORE READING

Open discussion.

While Reading

CHAPTERS 1 TO 3 WHILE READING

- 1 Becky hoped for a proposal from Amelia’s brother Jos Sedley.
- 2 William Dobbin never spoke of his love for Amelia, because she was engaged to George Osborne.
- 3 Becky came to London to look after Miss Matilda Crawley, which upset Miss Crawley’s devoted companion Miss Briggs.
- 4 Becky had to refuse Sir Pitt Crawley, because she was already married to his son Rawdon Crawley.
- 5 The wealthy Miss Matilda Crawley planned to divide her money between her nephew Rawdon Crawley and the family of Bute Crawley.
- 6 Amelia married her beloved George Osborne, even though Mr Osborne forbade the marriage when Mr Sedley lost all his money.

Before reading on. Encourage discussion and do not tell students if their answers are right.

- 7 Open answers.

- 8 Open answers.

- 9 Although both couples have pinned their hopes on receiving money from their relatives once they have had time to be reconciled to their marriages, Becky and Rawdon probably have better hopes of a comfortable future. They have Rawdon’s gambling expertise and Becky’s talents to rely on, while George and Amelia only have his army pay.

CHAPTERS 4 AND 5 WHILE READING

Encourage discussion. Some possible answers:

- 1 If they don’t get the old lady’s money, they may borrow money from other friends or family members, or increase their income through gambling. As their debts increase, they might run away and start a new life somewhere else, or they might be imprisoned for their debts.
- 2 If George’s father doesn’t forgive him, George will probably be angry but won’t make any sensible plans. Amelia won’t mind being poor. If Miss Crawley doesn’t forgive Becky and Rawdon, Rawdon will probably also be angry but Becky will make a clever plan for their survival – although it might not be a very honest plan.
- 3 This could cause problems later. Amelia is more ready to see faults in Becky than in George. Her jealousy of Becky may make her suspicious only of her, whereas in fact George is at fault too.
- 4 Becky will almost certainly keep it, as it gives her the means to destroy Amelia’s happiness in future, but it’s not yet clear whether she would do that or not.

CHAPTERS 6 TO 8 WHILE READING

Encourage discussion. Some possible answers:

- 1 Amelia is clearly a better mother than Becky. She is devoted to her child, but is far too protective of him, and he occupies too large a place in her life. Becky is a neglectful mother, has no interest in her son at all, and actually dislikes him.
- 2 Open answer.
- 3 Open answer.

Before reading on. Encourage discussion, but do not reveal the answers. Students will find out as they read that the answers are 5, 8, 9.

CHAPTERS 9 AND 10 WHILE READING

Rawdon and Dobbin

Encourage discussion. Students may also like to consider what modern reactions to these situations would be and compare them to the attitudes expressed in the novel.

Amelia and Becky

Encourage discussion.

BEFORE READING CHAPTERS 11 AND 12

Encourage speculation and discussion. Do not tell students whether their guesses are right or wrong; they will find out as they read that the answers are:

- 1 The old friend is *Becky*, and this person meets *Georgy, Joseph, Amelia, and Dobbin*.
- 2 Janey Dobbin.
- 3 Amelia and Dobbin.
- 4 Rawdon Crawley, Sir Pitt Crawley, and Joseph Sedley.

After Reading

ACTIVITY 1 AFTER READING

The answers below give the most usual collocations, but other combinations of these adjectives and nouns might also give acceptable meanings. Encourage students to discuss these meanings.

My dear Pitt

I am writing to offer sincerest congratulations from Rebecca and myself on your recent *good fortune*. There is no doubt that Aunt Matilda showed *excellent judgement* in leaving her inheritance to you. Of course, in recent years my regimental duties have forced us to live abroad, and as a result we were not able to show Aunt Matilda the *loving attention* that we would have wished. How fortunate that you were able to perform this family duty!

I hear you have returned to Queen's Crawley. (Rebecca and I have such *happy memories* of that house!) As we both know, there has not always been the *warm friendship* between us that brothers should enjoy, but I hope that your *generous nature* will allow you to forget our past disagreements. We are both now fathers, and it would give me *great pleasure* if our two families could meet as friends. Rebecca and I are most anxious to meet your children and your *charming wife*, whom all the world praises, and we beg that you will look with a *friendly eye* on our own son, little Rawdy.

Your *affectionate brother*, Rawdon

ACTIVITY 2 AFTER READING

- 1 Mr Osborne, thinking about his son George (page 24). He has just told George his marriage to Amelia is not going to take place because it is extremely unlikely that Amelia's father will be able to pay the ten thousand pounds due under the marriage settlement.
- 2 Rawdon, thinking about his wife Rebecca (page 83). He has been waiting for her to come and release him from prison, where he is being held because of debt.
- 3 Becky, thinking about Miss Matilda Crawley (page 15). She has just arrived at Miss Crawley's house in London, where she is going to look after the old lady.
- 4 Dobbin, thinking sadly about Amelia (page 60). He has just been to say goodbye to her before he returns

to India, but Amelia is too absorbed in her son Georgy to show any interest in Dobbin's leaving or any emotion.

- 5 Lady Jane, thinking about her husband Sir Pitt and Becky (page 91). She is furious that after the scandal with Lord Steyne, her husband has allowed Becky to come to their house.
- 6 Jos, thinking about Becky (page 119) during Dobbin's visit to him in Brussels. Dobbin has suggested escaping Becky by going to India again, but Jos cannot find the strength to break free of Becky's control of him.
- 7 Amelia, thinking about her son Georgy (page 81). She has agreed to let Georgy go and live with his grandfather, but is deeply unhappy as he leaves.
- 8 George, thinking about Becky (page 44), at the ball in Brussels, the night before the battle. He is excited because as he gave Becky her flowers back, with his note hidden inside it, he sees that she knows the note is there.

ACTIVITY 3 AFTER READING

Students can reword these statements how they like.

Possible answers:

- 1 'He's fat, awkward, and seems frightened of women, but he's rich.'

Saying this would immediately end Becky's chances with Jos, and would upset her friend Amelia.

- 2 'I wouldn't cry my eyes out for you or for any man, but I don't mind giving you some loving wifely tears if that's what you want.'

Saying this might have lessened Rawdon's feelings for her sooner rather than later.

- 3 'I have actually been quite helpful to my husband, in that by flirting with George and encouraging him, I have kept him coming to my house, and continuing to gamble with Rawdon, who is thus able to win money from him – money which we greatly need. It's amusing to exercise my power over George, but I have not the slightest intention of leaving my husband for him. If I wanted to 'steal a man', as you put it, I would pick one worth stealing – not a stupid, vain, boastful, heartless creature like George Osborne!'

Amelia would have rejected in outrage this fairly accurate assessment of her husband, and these remarks would probably have brought Becky and Amelia's friendship to an abrupt end.

4 'It will bore me to death to have to spend time with your children, but I know it will be an effective way of winning your approval, which is my real aim here. So let's get on with it.'

This would have shocked Lady Jane rigid, and completely alienated her, probably finishing Becky's chances of being presented at court.

5 'Boring child! I'm so glad we left him in London and I don't have to be bothered with him here.'

Again, this would have shocked Lady Jane and shown what a hard, self-centred person Becky was. Though as Lady Jane is such an obedient wife, she might not have told Sir Pitt what she thought of Becky, if Sir Pitt was charmed by her.

6 'I've got more interesting things to do than race around London trying to sell your watch. In fact, it might be quite convenient to leave you there for tonight . . .'

This would have aroused Rawdon's fury and suspicion, and probably brought their relationship to a rapid end.

7 'It was for me, me, me! Yes, it was a position for Rawdon and a lordship for you, but they were my prizes – prizes to show my power, prizes to show I can play dangerous games with powerful people like Lord Steyne, and win every time!'

This would have immediately ruined Becky's case with Sir Pitt, and he certainly would not have tried to persuade his brother to be reconciled to Becky.

ACTIVITY 4 AFTER READING

Acceptable answers to these cloze passages are any words that have an appropriate meaning and fit the grammar of the sentences. Students might like to check each other's work and discuss alternative answers. Some alternatives are given below.

FIRST DIARY – written by *Becky*, on the day after Sir Pitt's proposal to her in Miss Crawley's house.

So this is *my* last night in this house! I never *expected* things to happen so (*this*) quickly. Why didn't Sir Pitt ask me *sooner* (*before, earlier, first*)? I'm sure the *old* fool won't live *long*, and I could *have* been Lady Crawley, *rich* (*happy*) and free! It's *very* lucky for me *that* he didn't tell Miss Crawley why I *refused* him.

Dear Rawdon! *It* will be fun *to* be together at *last*. His greatest talent *is* winning at cards, *but* we'll have a *great* future – if I *make* the decisions and *look* after the money! *I* must stop now *and* write my letter *to* Miss Briggs. I'm *sure* I can touch *her* heart with my *story* (*tale*) of true love, *and* then she will *persuade* (*get*) Miss Crawley *to* *forgive* us, and we *will* be rich.

SECOND DIARY – written by *Miss Briggs*, at the end of the first day after Becky's disappearance from Miss Crawley's house.

Oh, what a *terrible* (*dreadful*) day! Miss Sharp's *letter* gave us all *such* a shock. How *lucky* (*fortunate*) that Mrs Bute *arrived* in time to *help* us! I didn't *know* what to say *to* Miss Crawley. She *took* the news very *badly*. We had to *put* her to bed *and* call the doctor.

Then Sir Pitt arrived *at* the house, asking *for* Becky. He was *furious* (*angry*) when he heard *the* news, and his *language* was so *dreadful* *that* I had to *leave* the room. I *could* (*did*) not stop trembling *for* hours afterwards. I *hope* tomorrow will be *calmer* (*quieter*) – I don't want *any* more news or *excitement* (*announcements, visitors*).

ACTIVITY 5 AFTER READING

Open discussion.

ACTIVITY 6 AFTER READING

Open discussion.