**The Lovely Bones**

*The extract is from the* ***opening*** *of a novel by Alice Sebold. The narrator is a teenage girl who has been murdered*

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| **Section/questions/terms** | **Text** |
| **Beginning:**  1.What effect does the second sentence have on the reader?  2. What mood do the verb ‘murdered’ and adjective ‘missing’ create?  3. How does the final sentence create suspense? | My name was Salmon, like the fish; first name, Susie. **I was fourteen when I was murdered on December 6, 1973.** In newspaper photos of **missing** girls from the seventies, most looked like me: white girls with mousy brown hair. This was before kids of all races and genders started appearing on milk cartons or in the daily mail. **It was still back when people believed things like that didn’t happen**. |
| **Develop:**  4. How does the writer use language to describe Mr Botte?  Look at:   * The noun phrase ‘my favorite teacher’ * The active verbs ‘animate’, ‘dance’, ‘cried’ and ‘laughed’ when compared with the simple sentence ‘He had a sick kid’.   5. How does the language of this extract build up a sense of the narrator? | In my junior high yearbook was a quote from a Spanish poet my sister had turned me on to, Juan Ramon Jimenez. It went like this: "If they give you ruled paper, write the other way." I chose it both because it expressed my contempt for my structured surroundings a la the classroom and because, not being some dopey quote from a rock group, I thought it marked me as literary. I was a member of the Chess Club and Chem Club and burned everything I tried to make in Mrs. Delminico’s home economics class. **My favorite teacher was Mr. Botte**, who taught biology and liked to **animate** the frogs and crawfish we had to dissect by making them **dance** in their waxed pans.  I wasn’t killed by Mr. Botte, by the way. Don’t think every person you’re going to meet in here is suspect. That’s the problem. You never know. Mr. Botte came to my memorial (as, may I add, did almost the entire junior high school — I was never so popular) and **cried** quite a bit. **He had a sick kid**. We all knew this, so when he **laughed** at his own jokes, which were rusty way before I had him, we laughed too, forcing it sometimes just to make him happy. His daughter died a year and a half after I did. She had leukemia, but I never saw her in my heaven. |
| **Shift:**  6. How does the writer begin to build the mystery surrounding the murderer in this section?  7. What is the weather like? What kind of mood or tone does this create?  8. How does the use of dialogue at the end of the extract create tension? | The murderer was a man from our neighborhood. My mother liked his border flowers, and my father talked to him once about fertilizer. My murderer believed in old-fashioned things like eggshell and coffee grounds, which he said his own mother had used. My father came home smiling, making jokes about how the man’s garden might be beautiful but it would stink to high heaven once a heat wave hit.  But on December 6, 1973, it was **snowing**, and I took a shortcut through the **cornfield** back from junior high. It was **dark out because the days were shorter in winter**, and I remember how the **broken cornstalks** made my walk more difficult. **The snow was falling lightly, like a flurry of small hands**, and I was breathing through my nose until it was running so much that I had to open my mouth. Six feet from where Mr. Harvey stood, **I stuck my tongue out to taste a snowflake**. "Don't let me startle you," Mr. Harvey said. |
| **End:**  8. How does the writer create a sense of threat in this last section? Consider how ‘ordinary’ Mr Harvey seems.  9. How does the last line create sympathy for the narrator?  10. Is this text a whodunnit? A mystery? Something else? | Of course, in a cornfield, in the dark, I was startled. After I was dead I thought about how there had been the light scent of cologne in the air but that I had not been paying attention, or thought it was coming from one of the houses up ahead.  "Mr. Harvey," I said.  "You're the older Salmon girl, right?"  "Yes."  "How are your folks?"  Although the eldest in my family and good at acing a science quiz, I had never felt comfortable with adults. "Fine," I said. I was cold, but the natural authority of his age, and the added fact that he was a neighbour and had talked to my father about fertilizer, rooted me to the spot.  "I've built something back here," he said. "Would you like to see?"  "I'm sort of cold, Mr. Harvey," I said, "and my mom likes me home before dark."  "It's after dark, Susie," he said.  **I wish now that I had known this was weird. I had never told him my name.** |

**4. A student who read the text said: “The writer creates suspense successfully.” How far do you agree?**

* **write about your own impressions of the character**
* **evaluate how the writer has created these impressions**
* **support your opinions with quotations from the text.**