

Task for *Burial Rites*

Getting to know the characters

The following quotations give readers insight into the characters in the novel. Look up the following examples and identify in what context the quotation was used. Then, describe what the examples tell you about the character. How do they contribute to the characterisation?

Example and page number	How does it contribute to character? What does the example tell us about that character? Reader response?
<p>Blöndal ‘He looked fixedly at the young woman, who squirmed and cast her eyes nervously to the fields.’ (p. 11)</p> <p>‘He peered out through the dried sheep’s bladder that had been pulled across to serve as a pane, noticing a small vein twisted in its dull surface. He shuddered. His own house had glass windows.’ (p. 16)</p>	
<p>Agnes ‘The flies are bad. They crawl on my face and into my eyes, and I feel the tiny ticking of their legs and wings. It’s the sweat that draws them. [...] Still, it is a consolation to have movement, to have the warmth of a horse under my legs: to feel the life in something and to not be so cold. I’ve been half-frozen for so long, it is as though the winter has set up home in my marrow.’ (p. 36)</p> <p>‘Agnes believed that she deserved more.’ (p. 169)</p> <p>‘Natan began to check his belongings. It hurt me that he thought I might have taken something of his. What did I want with his coins, or medicines, or whatever else he had hidden in there?’ (p. 260)</p> <p>‘Steina’s fingers are cold. She lets go of my hands and wraps her arms around my neck. [...] I cling to her because her body is warm and I cannot remember when someone last held me like this, when someone last cared enough to lay their cheek next to mine.’ (p. 324)</p>	

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<p>Tóti ‘Tóti fell silent. He had rehearsed this speech as he rode to the farm, and he was pleased that he’d managed to remember to say ‘spiritual comfort’. It sounded paternalistic, and self-assured, as though he was in a lofty state of spiritual certainty: a state he felt he should be in, but had a vague, discomfoting sense that he was not.’ (p. 81)</p> <p>‘A malaise had crept over him while Agnes had told of Natan, and his throat felt tight and painful. As the lamp was extinguished, he wondered if he was right to let her speak.’ (p. 218)</p> <p>‘Tóti took her stiff hands into his own again. He didn’t know who was trembling more.’ (p. 318)</p>	
<p>Lauga ‘He’ll think us peasants!’ (p. 12)</p> <p>‘Lauga looked up, her mouth falling open. Then, after a moment’s hesitation, she got off the bed and bent to the floor. She slowly handed her mother the clasp and sat back down, blinking away tears.’ (p. 323)</p>	

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