

## Task for *The Drover's Wife*

### Textual Connections

Use this template to record the connections between Purcell's play *The Drover's Wife*, and Henry Lawson's original short story of the same name. Some connections have been listed. In the blank spaces, record how each is connected to the original short story, and note down possible analysis or interpretations of Purcell's purpose in making this connection. The first has been completed.

| Quote  | Page | Connection to Lawson  | Analysis and Interpretation   |
|--|------|---|---|
| <i>She winces with a labour pain</i> (stage direction)   | 1    | In the short story, the dog Alligator 'shakes the snake as though he felt the original curse in common with mankind'.                                 | The 'original curse in common with mankind' is the punishment bestowed upon Eve in the Bible for eating the forbidden fruit: 'In pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.' <i>Exodus 20:17</i> |
| DROVER'S WIFE: I recently had a kill–<br>MCNEALY: I seen it<br>DROVER'S WIFE: What?<br>MCNEALY: The bullock. Out front. Near the snow gum...   | 3    |   |   |
| MCNEALY: There might be a reward, missus? Sixty-forty.   | 4    | McNealy is attempting to negotiate with The Drover's Wife, just like she bargained with a 'stray blackfella' to stack her woodheap in Lawson's story. |   |
| MCNEALY: [ <i>calling</i> ] I can see ya need a few things done around here, missus. Ya woodheap needs to be stocked and stacked. Need to level the ground there though, don't want any snakes getting' in under | 4    |   |   |
| <i>A massive contraction, she screams. She knows something is terribly wrong.</i>  | 4    |   |   |

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| DROVER'S WIFE: [ <i>Panting</i> ] Hot water... inside, clean sheets to the right... clear the kitchen table.  |           |  |  |
| YADAKA: Should I bury her first?<br>DROVER'S WIFE: No. Give me some time with her. Say goodbye.<br>YADAKA: That's good missus. Proper thing to do...<br>DROVER'S WIFE: It was an old gin told me that. 'Don't be afraid to cry hard for ya dead.'   | <b>9</b>  |  |  |
| YADAKA: Time to heal, missus. I'll fell a tree for ya. That deadwood be gone before you know it. Level that ground out there. Stack the heap for ya too.<br>DROVER'S WIFE: Trust no-one with the stackin' of my woodheap.<br>Got a blackfella to do it once before, the bastard stacked it hollow and a snake got in under! Made that night a livin' hell.<br>It made its way inside. Had to put all my children up on the kitchen table out of harm's way. All night I sat watchin', waitin' for that bastard snake to come out.<br>Eventually it did. I went to whack it, but my dog got in the way, took the blow on his nose. | <b>11</b> |  |  |
| DROVER'S WIFE: It's been a big day son.<br>DANNY: A story, Ma, please.<br>The bullock one? Yadaka might want to hear it.  | <b>16</b> |  |  |
| DANNY: Alligator? Alligator! Here, boy.   | <b>21</b> |  |  |

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| <p><i>He whistles but no dog comes.</i><br/>[ Worried] Come here now boy.</p>  |           |  |  |
| <p>DROVER'S WIFE:<br/>...<i>She looks at the woodheap</i><br/>Don't worry about stackin' the heap out there. Snow be settin' in soon. I'll start a new one under the awnin' here.<br/>YADAKA: Snakes, missus.<br/>DROVER'S WIFE: Least of my worries.</p>  | <b>22</b> |  |  |
| <p>DROVER'S WIFE: He was away for eighteen months once; I think it was one of the Queensland drives. I was sixteen. Three months pregnant when he left. Our first drove as husband and wife.<br/>My da dyin'. Died. I buried him. That same old gin helped me. Cried a river, she did. Wailed like a howlin' wind in a storm. She frightened me a little... but, there was also this beauty and comfort to the sound...<br/>It's not like she knew him.<br/><i>Yadaka looks at her curiously, like he's heard this before.</i><br/>Not long after, my precious firstborn, Jack, died, six months old.<br/>I rode for nineteen miles looking for help with my dead son in my arms... buried him too.<br/>Then, my two cows died. I was truly alone then...<br/>Finally, Joe came home... and that same old gin nursed me back from...</p> | <b>30</b> |  |  |

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| DROVERS WIFE: [ <i>offstage</i> ] I think I've found something.<br>DROVER'S WIFE <i>enters with a Young Ladies journal.</i>   | <b>35</b> |  |  |
| DROVER'S WIFE: That was nice of him. The extra material.<br>YADAKA: He's a snake, missus. Speaks with a forked tongue.  | <b>36</b> |  |  |
| YADAKA: Your mother, Black Mary, 'whitest gin around', that's what the district folk would call her. She worked as a cook for some drovers and your da was one of them. Only time he smiled was when he was with Black Mary. Her love for that Scotsman was real. And his for her.        | <b>40</b> |  |  |
| DROVER'S WIFE: There's been enough killin' around here to last us all for a very long time.<br>YADAKA: Thinkin' Men's Business.<br>And if I could take you and Miss Delphi on a walk? Where the Snowy starts to widen, there's these beautiful wildflowers... should be bloomin' by then. | <b>47</b> |  |  |
| DANNY: Ma...<br><i>She turns to face him.</i><br>DROVER'S WIFE: Yes, son.<br>DANNY: Ma, I won't never go a'drovin'.   | <b>56</b> |  |  |