**Extract - Chapter 1**

Tonight, I smelled at once, and with a lightening heart, that there had been a change in the weather. All the previous week, we had had rain, chilling rain and a mist that lay low about the house and over the countryside. From the windows, the view stretched no farther than a yard or two down the garden. It was wretched weather, never seeming to come fully light, and raw, too. There had been no pleasure in walking, the visibility was too poor for any shooting and the dogs were permanently morose and muddy. Inside the house, the lamps were lit throughout the day and the walls of larder, outhouse and cellar oozed damp and smelled sour, the fires sputtered and smoked, burning dismally low.

My spirits have for many years now been excessively affected by the ways of the weather, and I confess that, had it not been for the air of cheerfulness and bustle that prevailed in the rest of the house, I should have been quite cast down in gloom and lethargy, unable to enjoy the flavor of life as I should like and irritated by my own susceptibility. But Esmé is merely stung by inclement weather into a spirited defiance, and so the preparations for our Christmas holiday had this year been more than usually extensive and vigorous.

I took a step or two out from under the shadow of the house so that I could see around me in the moonlight. Monk’s Piece stands at the summit of land that rises gently up for some four hundred feet from where the little River Nee traces its winding way in a north to south direction across this fertile, and sheltered, part of the country. Below us are pastures, interspersed with small clumps of mixed, broadleaf woodland. But at our backs for several square miles it is a quite different area of rough scrub and heathland, a patch of wildness in the midst of well-farmed country. We are but two miles from a good-sized village, seven from the principal market town, yet there is an air of remoteness and isolation which makes us feel ourselves to be much further from civilization.

Answer these questions in your book.

1. In your own words, describe the weather in chapter 1.

2. Without using a dictionary, select the most appropriate meaning for each of the following words.

a. Morose – dirty, joyful, gloomy

b. Oozed – squirted, dripped, seeped (flow slowly)

c. Lethargy – sadness, slowness, joyfulness

d. Susceptibility – open-mindedness, positivity, sensitivity

e. Vigorous – in good shape, in bad shape, done slowly

f. Summit – bottom, middle, top

g. Interspersed – scattered, filled, empty

h. Heathland – dry land, wetland, forest

3. What is strange about the narrator and the way he is speaking?

4. How is suspense created in this extract?