

Answer Key

Reading Comprehension

1. True (T) – Clara moved to Cornwall for a fresh start after a divorce and quitting her marketing job.
2. False (F) – Lord Blackwood wanted to leave his land to a local nature conservation trust. Gregory Vance was the one who wanted to build a resort.
3. True (T) – Belladonna extract was taken from the greenhouse and used to poison the tea.
4. True (T) – Julian locked the heavy door at the top of the archive stairs.
5. False (F) – Lord Blackwood survived, regained consciousness at the hospital, and identified Julian.
6. False (F) – Clara accepted Lord Blackwood's offer to stay on as the permanent archivist.

Character & Event Matching

1. Clara Vance → d) Found the secret escape route inside the ventilation tunnel.
2. Lord Blackwood → c) Left his estate to a local nature conservation trust in his new will.
3. Julian Blackwood → a) Was carrying a briefcase and trying to leave with stolen documents.
4. Gregory Vance → e) Wanted to buy the coastal land to build a resort.
5. Detective Miller → b) Investigated the crime and discovered the poisoning.

Vocabulary Practice

1. **damp** – The old stone room underground was cold and **damp**, with water dripping from the ceiling.
2. **consciousness** – After being unconscious for hours, the patient finally regained **consciousness** in the hospital.
3. **estate** – Lord Blackwood owns a huge **estate** in the English countryside.
4. **vault** – The police placed all the valuable historical documents inside a secure iron **vault**.
5. **cliff** – Blackwood Manor stands high on a rocky **cliff** overlooking the ocean.
6. **archivist** – The house hired a professional **archivist** to organize centuries of old family records.
7. **gasped** – Everyone at the dinner table **gasped** in shock when Lord Blackwood suddenly collapsed.
8. **will** – Lord Blackwood signed a new **will** to make sure his money went to a local nature conservation trust.
9. **briefcase** – Julian carried a small leather **briefcase** containing stolen documents when he tried to leave the manor.
10. **descents** – The narrow staircase **descents** deep into the dark stone foundations beneath the library.

Comprehension Questions

1. Why did Clara leave her job in London to move to Blackwood Manor?
 - *Answer:* She needed a new life after a painful divorce and five stressful years working in a noisy London marketing agency.
2. What did Clara notice in the garden building when she first looked out of her bedroom window?
 - *Answer:* She noticed a small light flickering in an isolated stone building (the greenhouse) at the end of the garden.
3. Why was Detective Miller called to Blackwood Manor after Lord Blackwood collapsed?
 - *Answer:* Lord Blackwood's doctor at the hospital suspected that he was poisoned.
4. What did Julian and Gregory argue about in the pantry during Chapter 4?
 - *Answer:* They argued about Lord Blackwood's new will and the fact that neither of them would inherit any money if the will was registered.
5. What dangerous liquid was stolen from the greenhouse workbench?
 - *Answer:* Belladonna extract was stolen from the greenhouse.
6. How did Clara and Thomas enter the secret archive beneath the library?
 - *Answer:* Thomas pulled a hidden wooden lever behind a book on the oak bookcase, which opened a secret door to a set of stone steps.
7. How did Clara and Thomas escape from the locked vault under the library?
 - *Answer:* They unscrewed an iron grate in the corner and crawled through a narrow ventilation tunnel that led to the laundry room.
8. What was Julian's real motive for putting poison into Lord Blackwood's tea?
 - *Answer:* He was drowning in gambling debts and needed his uncle to be hospitalized so he could search the house and destroy the new will.

