

Charing Cross Railway Station



D. My freelance writing could not _____

sweetly than I ever could.

accommodate us for long.

What changed was that we had a child, a boy named Matt, on whose first birthday Arabella and I were married. _____. We moved farther south, deeper into the postal districts of southwest London, first to SW12, later to SW17. From there, one reached Charing Cross by a twenty-minute train ride, which itself began only after a twenty-five-minute walk through the suburbs. _____. I found a part-time teaching job in a local college. Arabella became pregnant again—she loved being pregnant. _____. There was praise; there was mild damnation. Six weeks later, Jocelyn's first novel was out—an instant success. Though it didn't sell much more than mine (in those days, sales hardly mattered), his name already had a ring to it. There was a hunger for a new voice, _____.



2. Unjumble the sentences, listen to the clip, then type them into the correct places

/ me/ they/ fascinated/ everything/ said or did/

/ and we / pregnant again, /moved north, /she was soon/ to Nottingham.

/the last time./ remembered /no one/ but me/

Nottingham



His looks and his height (Nazi is unfair—let's say Bruce Chatwin, with Mick Jagger's scowl), his high turnover of interesting girlfriends, the beaten-up M.G.A. sports car he drove fed his reputation. Was I envious? I don't think so. I was in love with three people—our children seemed to me divine beings.

_____, and Arabella continued to fascinate me, too. _____. With teaching and family responsibilities, it took me five years to write my second novel. There was praise, a little more than last time; there was damnation, a little less than last time. _____.

3. Listen, read and do T/F activity _____. What is in the picture?

By then, Jocelyn was publishing his third. The first had already been made into a movie starring Julie Christie. He'd had a divorce, a mews house in Notting Hill, many interviews on TV, many photographs in life-style magazines. He said hilarious, scathing things about the Prime Minister. He was becoming our generation's spokesman. But here's the astonishing thing: our friendship did not falter. Certainly, it became more intermittent. We were busy in our separate realms.



We had to get the desk diaries out well in advance in order to see each other. Occasionally, he travelled up to see me and the family. (By the time of our fourth child, we had moved even farther north, to Durham.) But usually I was the one who travelled south to see him and his second wife, Joliet. They lived in a large Victorian house in Hampstead, right near the heath.

1. Jocelyn said hilarious, light-hearted things about the Prime Minister. T F
2. Jocelyn was becoming their generation's mouthpiece. T F
3. Their friendship became sporadic but the men didn't grow apart. T F
4. Parker Sparrow and his family moved farther north. T F

4. Drag and drop the correct caption under each picture. Why are the pictures here?

Mick Jagger

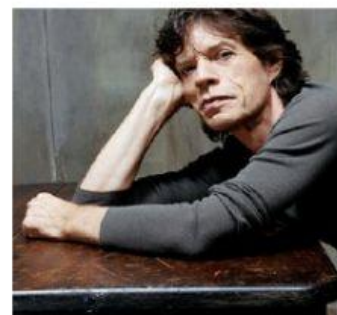
a mews house in Notting Hill

Bruce Chatwin

Julie Christie

Durham University

M.G.A. sports car



5. Listen and fill the gaps with verbs _____

Mostly, we _____ and _____ and _____ on the heath. If you'd been listening in, you would have heard nothing between us to suggest that he was the star and that my literary prospects were _____. He

_____ that my opinions were as important as his; he never _____ . He even _____ my children's birthdays. I was always _____ in the best guest room. Joliet was welcoming. Jocelyn _____ friends around, who all seemed lively and pleasant. He _____ big meals. He and I were, as we often said, "family."

6. Read and try to find a place for each word and chunk. Type them in.

savings

laundry

luxuries

chairs and carpets

pine fittings

washing machine

part-time nursing

But, of course, there were differences that neither of us could ignore. My place in Durham was friendly enough, but child-trampled, crowded, cold in the winter. The _____ had been wrecked by a dog and two cats. The kitchen was always full of _____, because that was where the _____ was. The house was afflicted with many ginger-colored _____ that we never had time to paint or replace. There was rarely more than one bottle of wine in the house. The kids were fun, but they were chaotic and noisy. We lived on my modest salary and Arabella's _____. We had no _____, few _____. It was hard in my house to find a place to read a book. Or to find a book.

Listen and check _____

7. Look up these words in a dictionary and report back the meaning:

to pitch up

banked

to bestow



Listen, unjumble the collocations and type them back into the text _____



tanentci lolwwi _____

dekanb wostel _____

oka forol _____

niovil smuci _____

gelaninc daly _____

drang opian _____

So it was a holiday of the senses to pitch up at Jocelyn and Joliet's for a weekend. The vast library, the coffee tables supporting that month's hardbacks, the expanses of dark polished _____, paintings, rugs, a _____, _____ on a stand, the _____ in my bedroom, its awesome shower, the grownup hush that lay around the house, the sense of order and shine that only a daily _____ can bestow. There was a garden with an _____, a mossy Yorkstone terrace, a wide lawn, and high walls. And, more than all this, the place was pervaded by a spirit of open-mindedness, curiosity, tolerance, and a taste for comedy. How could I stay away?

What two things from those listed in the excerpt are in the pictures above?

8. Read, listen and order the pieces _____

____ I'd written four novels in fifteen years—a heroic achievement, given my teaching load and hands-on fathering and lack of space.

____ I suppose I should confess to one solitary strain of dark sentiment, a theme of vague unease I never gave expression to. Honestly, it didn't trouble me that much.

____ I wrote him long appreciative letters about the first two or three, then I decided for the sake of our friendship's equilibrium to respond in kind. We no longer talked or wrote about each other's books—and that seemed fine.

____ All four were out of print. I no longer had a publisher. I always sent a finished copy of my latest to my old friend with a warm dedication. He would thank me for it, but he never passed comment.

_____ I'm quite sure that after our Brixton days he never read a word of mine. He sent me early copies of his novels, too—nine to my four.

9. Listen, read, and find in the excerpt collocations for the following definitions _____:

an artefact, institution, or public figure regarded as being emblematic of a nation's cultural heritage or identity a _____ (2wds)

not very serious troubles _____ (3wds, pl)

a university teacher of the highest academic rank a _____ (2wds)

So you find us past midlife, around the age of fifty. Jocelyn was a national treasure, and I—well, it was wrong to think in terms of failure. All my children had processed or were processing through university, I still played a decent game of tennis, my marriage, after a few creaks and groans and two explosive crises, was holding together, and the rumor was that I'd be a full professor within the year. I was also writing my fifth novel—but that was not going awfully well.

10. Listen and read _____. Which collocation creates suspense in this short excerpt?

And now I come to the core of this story, the seesaw's crucial tilt. It was early July and I headed from Durham to Hampstead, as I often did straight after marking finals papers. As usual, I was in a state of pleasant exhaustion. But this was not the usual visit. The following day, Jocelyn and Joliet were going to Orvieto for the week and I was going to house-sit—feed their cat, water the plants, and make use of the space and the silence to work on the meandering fifty-eight pages of my novel.

