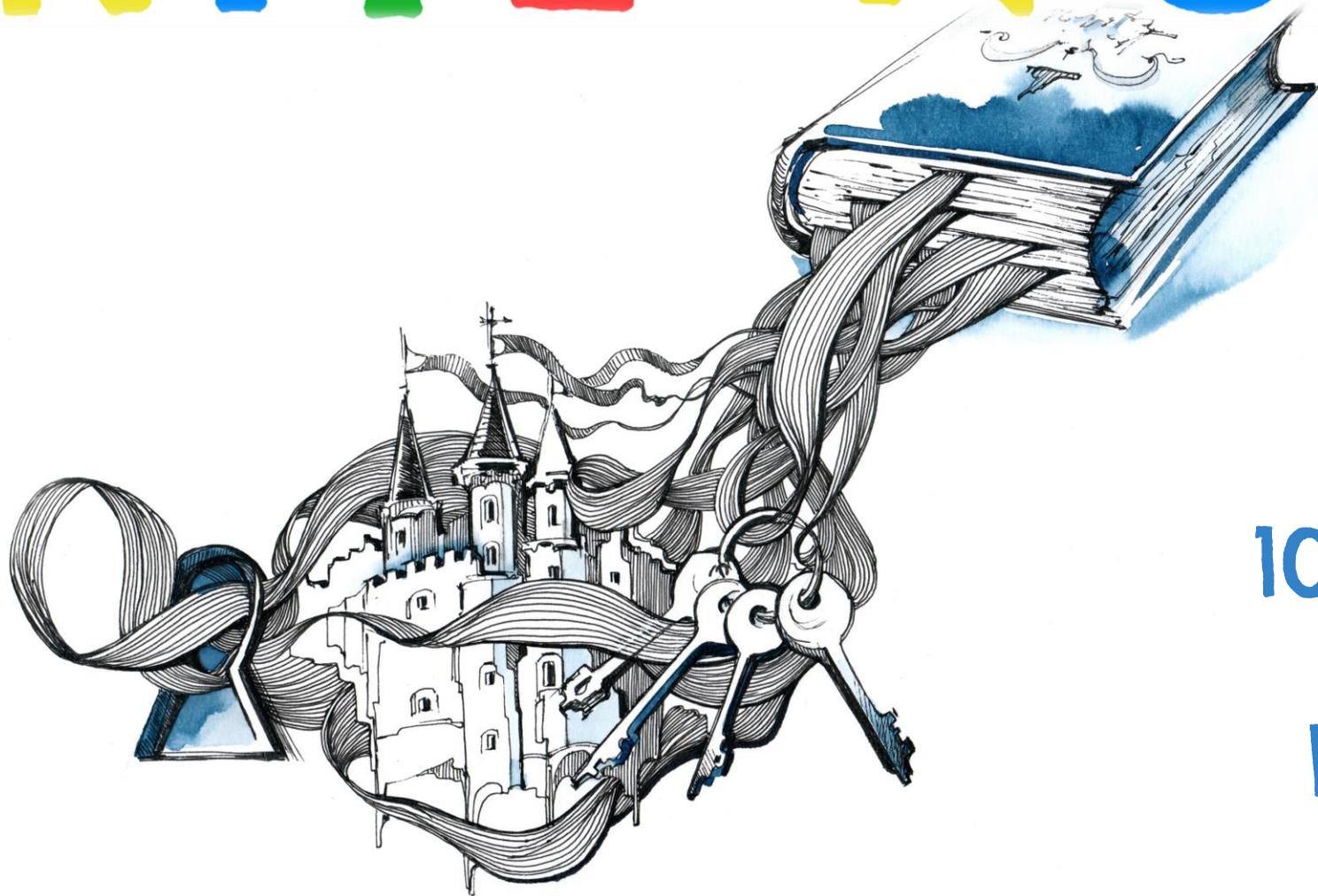


WRITE NOW!



10: Extracts  
from  
Literature

**WRITE NOW!**

# 10. Rites of Passage

Extracts from Literature

# WRITE NOW!

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## 1. Suggestions for how to use the extracts

In this booklet, you will find some literary extracts from various writers to help you think about rites of passage in interesting ways.

Rites of passage are often stories about growing up, or they might be about a change a person goes through - two common examples is either a character goes on a journey, or a character gets stuck somewhere, such as on an island. A popular film example of a rite of passage story might be Elf.

They do not have to be fictional – we have included a fabulous non-fiction example for you to enjoy too. I Am Malala is an outstanding autobiography.

As you read them, think about:

1. How the writer has used thoughts or experiences to convey a central message.
2. How the writer has used dialogue to explore different ideas.
3. How the writer has used the narrator's voice to connect with the reader and to appear trustworthy.

You should also pay attention to:

1. Use of detail – how much detail a writer puts into individual paragraphs
2. Vocabulary
3. Punctuation use
4. Use of central ideas or themes – such as love, pain, relationships etc.
5. Use of facts and details
6. Use of metaphors and pathetic fallacy

# WRITE NOW!

## 2. The Velveteen Rabbit – Margery Williams

In this extract, Williams uses dialogue to explore love, relationships and pain. Dialogue can be a good way to ask questions or to pose multiple perspectives.

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nanna came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in your joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

# WRITE NOW!

## 3. The Catcher in The Rye – J D Salinger

This extract is taken from Chapter 1. In it, Salinger's narrator speaks directly to the audience. This is a good way to connect with your reader – it sounds authentic.

If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth. In the first place, that stuff bores me, and in the second place, my parents would have about two hemorrhages apiece if I told anything pretty personal about them. They're quite touchy about anything like that, especially my father. They're nice and all--I'm not saying that--but they're also touchy as hell. Besides, I'm not going to tell you my whole goddam autobiography or anything. I'll just tell you about this madman stuff that happened to me around last Christmas just before I got pretty run-down and had to come out here and take it easy. I mean that's all I told D.B. about, and he's my brother and all. He's in Hollywood. That isn't too far from this crummy place, and he comes over and visits me practically every week end. He's going to drive me home when I go home next month maybe. He just got a Jaguar. One of those little English jobs that can do around two hundred miles an hour. It cost him damn near four thousand bucks. He's got a lot of dough, now. He didn't use to. He used to be just a regular writer, when he was home. He wrote this terrific book of short stories, *The Secret Goldfish*, in

case you never heard of him. The best one in it was "The Secret Goldfish." It was about this little kid that wouldn't let anybody look at his goldfish because he'd bought it with his own money. It killed me. Now he's out in Hollywood, D.B., being a prostitute. If there's one thing I hate, it's the movies. Don't even mention them to me.

Where I want to start telling is the day I left Pencey Prep. Pencey Prep is this school that's in Agerstown, Pennsylvania. You probably heard of it. You've probably seen the ads, anyway. They advertise in about a thousand magazines, always showing some hotshot guy on a horse jumping over a fence. Like as if all you ever did at Pencey was play polo all the time. I never even once saw a horse anywhere near the place. And underneath the guy on the horse's picture, it always says: "Since 1888 we have been molding boys into splendid, clear-thinking young men." Strictly for the birds. They don't do any damn more molding at Pencey than they do at any other school. And I didn't know anybody there that was splendid and clear-thinking and all. Maybe two guys. If that many. And they probably came to Pencey that way.

# WRITE NOW!

## 4. The Alchemist – Paulo Coelho

in this extract, Coelho uses Santiago's thoughts to explore love, judgement and story-telling. It also has a beautiful pace and rhythm.

The boy's name was Santiago. Dusk was falling as the boy arrived with his herd at an abandoned church. The roof had fallen in long ago, and an enormous sycamore had grown on the spot where the sacristy had once stood.

He decided to spend the night there. He saw to it that all the sheep entered through the ruined gate, and then laid some planks across it to prevent the flock from wandering away during the night. There were no wolves in the region, but once an animal had strayed during the night, and the boy had had to spend the entire next day searching for it.

He swept the floor with his jacket and lay down, using the book he had just finished reading as a pillow. He told himself that he would have to start reading thicker books: they lasted longer, and made more comfortable pillows.

It was still dark when he awoke, and, looking up, he could see the stars through the half-destroyed roof.

I wanted to sleep a little longer, he thought. He had had the same dream that night as a week ago, and once again he had awakened before it ended.

He arose and, taking up his crook, began to awaken the sheep that still slept. He had noticed that, as soon as he awoke, most of his animals also began to stir. It was as if some mysterious energy bound his life to that of the sheep, with whom he had spent the past two years, leading them through the countryside in search of food and water. "They are so used to me that they know my schedule," he muttered. Thinking about that for a moment, he realized that it could be the other way around: that it was he who had become accustomed to their schedule.

But there were certain of them who took a bit longer to awaken. The boy prodded them, one by one, with his crook, calling each by name. He had always believed that the sheep were able to understand what he said. So there were times when he read them parts of his books that had made an impression on him, or when he would tell them of the loneliness or the happiness of a shepherd in the fields. Sometimes he would comment to them on the things he had seen in the villages they passed.

But for the past few days he had spoken to them about only one thing: the girl, the daughter of a merchant who lived in the village they would reach in about four days. He had been to the village only once, the year before. The merchant was the proprietor of a dry goods shop, and he always demanded that the sheep be sheared in his presence, so that he would not be cheated. A friend had told the boy about the shop, and he had taken his sheep there.

"I need to sell some wool," the boy told the merchant.

The shop was busy, and the man asked the shepherd to wait until the afternoon. So the boy sat on the steps of the shop and took a book from his bag.

"I didn't know shepherds knew how to read," said a girl's voice behind him.

The girl was typical of the region of Andalusia, with flowing black hair, and eyes that vaguely recalled the Moorish conquerors.

"Well, usually I learn more from my sheep than from books," he answered. During the two hours that they talked, she told him she was the merchant's daughter, and spoke of life in the village, where each day was like all the others. The shepherd told her of the Andalusian countryside, and related the news from the other towns where he had stopped. It was a pleasant change from talking to his sheep.

"How did you learn to read?" the girl asked at one point.

"Like everybody learns," he said. "In school."

"Well, if you know how to read, why are you just a shepherd?"

The boy mumbled an answer that allowed him to avoid responding to her question. He was sure

the girl would never understand. He went on telling stories about his travels, and her bright, Moorish eyes went wide with fear and surprise. As the time passed, the boy found himself wishing that the day would never end, that her father would stay busy and keep him waiting for three days. He recognized that he was feeling something he had never experienced before: the desire to live in one place forever. With the girl with the raven hair, his days would never be the same again.

But finally the merchant appeared, and asked the boy to shear four sheep. He paid for the wool and asked the shepherd to come back the following year.

# WRITE NOW!

## 5. I Am Malala – Malala Yousafzi

This extract is taken from chapter one when Malala recounts her birth. Through telling this story, she exposes attitudes to women, family, love – and the special way in which her incredible story begins.

**WHEN I WAS** born, people in our village commiserated with my mother and nobody congratulated my father. I arrived at dawn as the last star blinked out. We Pashtuns see this as an auspicious sign. My father didn't have any money for the hospital or for a midwife so a neighbour helped at my birth. My parents' first child was stillborn but I popped out kicking and screaming. I was a girl in a land where rifles are fired in celebration of a son, while daughters are hidden away behind a curtain, their role in life simply to prepare food and give birth to children.

For most Pashtuns it's a gloomy day when a daughter is born. My father's cousin Jehan Sher Khan Yousafzai was one of the few who came to celebrate my birth and even gave a handsome gift of money. Yet, he brought with him a vast family tree of our clan, the Dalokhel Yousafzai, going right back to my great-great-grandfather and showing only the male line. My father, Ziauddin, is different from most Pashtun men. He took the tree, drew a line like a lollipop from his name and at the end of it he wrote, 'Malala'. His cousin laughed in astonishment. My father didn't care. He

says he looked into my eyes after I was born and fell in love. He told people, 'I know there is something different about this child.' He even asked friends to throw dried fruits, sweets and coins into my cradle, something we usually only do for boys.

I was named after Malalai of Maiwand, the greatest heroine of Afghanistan. Pashtuns are a proud people of many tribes split between Pakistan and Afghanistan. We live as we have for centuries by a code called Pashtunwali, which obliges us to give hospitality to all guests and in which the most important value is nang or honour. The worst thing that can happen to a Pashtun is loss of face. Shame is a very terrible thing for a Pashtun man. We have a saying, 'Without honour, the world counts for nothing.' We fight and feud among ourselves so much that our word for cousin – tarbur – is the same as our word for enemy. But we always come together against outsiders who try to conquer our lands.

All Pashtun children grow up with the story of how Malalai inspired the Afghan army to defeat the British in 1880 in one of the biggest battles of the Second Anglo-Afghan War.

Malalai was the daughter of a shepherd in Maiwand, a small town on the dusty plains west of Kandahar. When she was a teenager, both her father and the man she was supposed to marry were among thousands of Afghans fighting against the British occupation of their country.

Malalai went to the battlefield with other women from the village to tend the wounded and take them water. She saw their men were losing, and when the flag-bearer fell she lifted her white veil up high and marched onto the battlefield in front of the troops.

# WRITE NOW!

## 6. Robinson Crusoe – Daniel Defoe

This extract is from the ship wreck at the end of chapter 4 when Crusoe is first stranded on the island.

After we had rowed, or rather driven about a league and a half, as we reckoned it, a raging wave, mountain-like, came rolling astern of us, and plainly bade us expect the coup de grâce. It took us with such a fury, that it overset the boat at once; and separating us as well from the boat as from one another, gave us no time to say, “O God!” for we were all swallowed up in a moment.

Nothing can describe the confusion of thought which I felt when I sank into the water; for though I swam very well, yet I could not deliver myself from the waves so as to draw breath, till that wave having driven me, or rather carried me, a vast way on towards the shore, and having spent itself, went back, and left me upon the land almost dry, but half dead with the water I took in. I had so much presence of mind, as well as breath left, that seeing myself nearer the mainland than I expected, I got upon my feet, and endeavoured to make on towards the land as fast as I could before another wave should return and take me up again; but I soon found it was impossible to avoid it; for I saw the sea come after me as high as a great hill, and as furious as an enemy, which I had no means or strength to contend with: my business was to hold

my breath, and raise myself upon the water if I could; and so, by swimming, to preserve my breathing, and pilot myself towards the shore, if possible, my greatest concern now being that the sea, as it would carry me a great way towards the shore when it came on, might not carry me back again with it when it gave back towards the sea.

The wave that came upon me again buried me at once twenty or thirty feet deep in its own body, and I could feel myself carried with a mighty force and swiftness towards the shore—a very great way; but I held my breath, and assisted myself to swim still forward with all my might. I was ready to burst with holding my breath, when, as I felt myself rising up, so, to my immediate relief, I found my head and hands shoot out above the surface of the water; and though it was not two seconds of time that I could keep myself so, yet it relieved me greatly, gave me breath, and new courage. I was covered again with water a good while, but not so long but I held it out; and finding the water had spent itself, and began to return, I struck forward against the return of the waves, and felt ground again with my feet. I stood still a few moments to recover breath, and till the waters went from me, and then took to my heels and ran with what strength I had further towards the shore. But neither would this deliver me from the fury of the sea, which came pouring in after me again; and twice more I was lifted up by the waves and carried forward as before, the shore being very flat.

The last time of these two had well-nigh been fatal to me, for the sea having hurried me along as before, landed me, or rather dashed me, against a piece of rock, and that with such force, that it left me senseless, and indeed helpless, as to my own deliverance; for the blow taking my

side and breast, beat the breath as it were quite out of my body; and had it returned again immediately, I must have been strangled in the water; but I recovered a little before the return of the waves, and seeing I should be covered again with the water, I resolved to hold fast by a piece of the rock, and so to hold my breath, if possible, till the wave went back. Now, as the waves were not so high as at first, being nearer land, I held my hold till the wave abated, and then fetched another run, which brought me so near the shore that the next wave, though it went over me, yet did not so swallow me up as to carry me away; and the next run I took, I got to the mainland, where, to my great comfort, I clambered up the cliffs of the shore and sat me down upon the grass, free from danger and quite out of the reach of the water.

I was now landed and safe on shore, and began to look up and thank God that my life was saved, in a case wherein there was some minutes before scarce any room to hope. I believe it is impossible to express, to the life, what the ecstasies and transports of the soul are, when it is so saved, as I may say, out of the very grave: and I do not wonder now at the custom, when a malefactor, who has the halter about his neck, is tied up, and just going to be turned off, and has a reprieve brought to him—I say, I do not wonder that they bring a surgeon with it, to let him blood that very moment they tell him of it, that the surprise may not drive the animal spirits from the heart and overwhelm him.

“For sudden joys, like griefs, confound at first.”

I walked about on the shore lifting up my hands, and my whole being, as I may say, wrapped

up in a contemplation of my deliverance; making a thousand gestures and motions, which I cannot describe; reflecting upon all my comrades that were drowned, and that there should not be one soul saved but myself; for, as for them, I never saw them afterwards, or any sign of them, except three of their hats, one cap, and two shoes that were not fellows.

I cast my eye to the stranded vessel, when, the breach and froth of the sea being so big, I could hardly see it, it lay so far off; and considered, Lord! how was it possible I could get on shore?

After I had solaced my mind with the comfortable part of my condition, I began to look round me, to see what kind of place I was in, and what was next to be done; and I soon found my comforts abate, and that, in a word, I had a dreadful deliverance; for I was wet, had no clothes to shift me, nor anything either to eat or drink to comfort me; neither did I see any prospect before me but that of perishing with hunger or being devoured by wild beasts; and that which was particularly afflicting to me was, that I had no weapon, either to hunt and kill any creature for my sustenance, or to defend myself against any other creature that might desire to kill me for theirs. In a word, I had nothing about me but a knife, a tobacco-pipe, and a little tobacco in a box. This was all my provisions; and this threw me into such terrible agonies of mind, that for a while I ran about like a madman. Night coming upon me, I began with a heavy heart to consider what would be my lot if there were any ravenous beasts in that country, as at night they always come abroad for their prey.

All the remedy that offered to my thoughts at that time was to get up into a thick bushy tree

like a fir, but thorny, which grew near me, and where I resolved to sit all night, and consider the next day what death I should die, for as yet I saw no prospect of life. I walked about a furlong from the shore, to see if I could find any fresh water to drink, which I did, to my great joy; and having drank, and put a little tobacco into my mouth to prevent hunger, I went to the tree, and getting up into it, endeavoured to place myself so that if I should sleep I might not fall. And having cut me a short stick, like a truncheon, for my defence, I took up my lodging; and having been excessively fatigued, I fell fast asleep, and slept as comfortably as, I believe, few could have done in my condition, and found myself more refreshed with it than, I think, I ever was on such an occasion.

# WRITE NOW!

## 7. The Lord of The Flies – William Golding

This extract is taken from Chapter 8 where Simon hears the dead pig speak to him as the Lord of the Flies. Here, Golding cleverly uses a fantastical, supernatural scene to foreshadow expectations to the reader.

“You are a silly little boy,” said the Lord of the Flies, “just an ignorant, silly little boy.”

Simon moved his swollen tongue but said nothing.

“Don’t you agree?” said the Lord of the Flies. “Aren’t you just a silly little boy?”

Simon answered him in the same silent voice.

“Well then,” said the Lord of the Flies, “you’d better run off and play with the others. They think you’re batty. You don’t want Ralph to think you’re batty, do you? You like Ralph a lot, don’t you? And Piggy, and Jack?”

Simon’s head was tilted slightly up. His eyes could not break away and the Lord of the Flies hung in space before him.

“What are you doing out here all alone? Aren’t you afraid of me?”

Simon shook.

“There isn’t anyone to help you. Only me. And I’m the Beast.”

Simon’s mouth laboured, brought forth audible words.

“Pig’s head on a stick.”

“Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!” said the head. For a moment or two the forest and all the other dimly appreciated places echoed with the parody of laughter. “You knew, didn’t you? I’m part of you? Close, close, close! I’m the reason why it’s no go? Why things are what they are?”

The laughter shivered again.

“Come now,” said the Lord of the Flies. “Get back to the others and we’ll forget the whole thing.”

Simon’s head wobbled. His eyes were half closed as though he were imitating the obscene thing on the stick. He knew that one of his times was coming on. The Lord of the Flies was expanding like a balloon.

“This is ridiculous. You know perfectly well you’ll only meet me down there—so don’t try to escape!”

Simon’s body was arched and stiff. The Lord of the Flies spoke in the voice of a schoolmaster.

“This has gone quite far enough. My poor, misguided child, do you think you know better than I do?”

There was a pause.

“I’m warning you. I’m going to get angry. D’you see? You’re not wanted. Understand? We are going to have fun on this island. Understand? We are going to have fun on this island! So don’t try it on, my poor misguided boy, or else—”

Simon found he was looking into a vast mouth. There was blackness within, a blackness that spread.

“—Or else,” said the Lord of the Flies, “we shall do you? See? Jack and Roger and Maurice and Robert and Bill and Piggy and Ralph. Do you. See?”

Simon was inside the mouth. He fell down and lost consciousness.