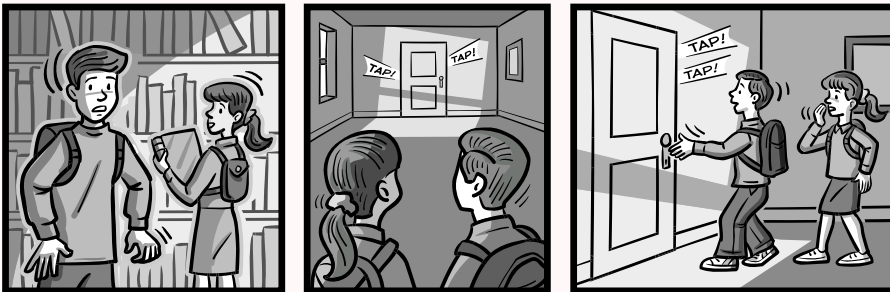


Three Skeleton Key

Literary Focus: Suspense and Foreshadowing

Do you ever sit on the edge of your chair in a movie theater, worrying what will happen next? Maybe you wonder, “What’s behind the door? Is she going to open the door?” Then you scream out, “Don’t open the door!” This feeling of nervous curiosity is called **suspense**.

Writers often build suspense by dropping clues about what may happen later in the story. This use of clues is called **foreshadowing**. For example: First, a character hears a noise. Then, the character looks at a door. Then, the character walks slowly to the door.



Reading Skill: Making Predictions

When you try to guess what will happen next, you are **making a prediction**. Don’t worry if your prediction isn’t correct. After all, if you could guess everything that happens in a story before it happens, you’d get bored. Clever writers will often surprise you.

Into the Story

Are you ready? You’re about to read a very scary story. As you read, look for clues that foreshadow something that will happen. As the suspense builds, try to predict possible outcomes. Stay calm, and watch out for the rats!

A black and white close-up photograph of a mouse's face, looking directly at the camera. The mouse has dark fur on its head and ears, and lighter fur on its muzzle. Its eyes are replaced by two bright, glowing red circles. The background is dark and out of focus.

Three Skeleton Key

BASED ON THE STORY BY
George G. Toudouze



Here's
HOW

**SUSPENSE AND
FORESHADOWING**

This writer hooked my interest with his very first sentence! I want to read more to find out the answer to his question.

Here's
HOW

**SUSPENSE AND
FORESHADOWING**

The island is very isolated. That means the men are all alone. This is a scary situation. If something happens, who will be there to help them?

Your
TURN

**SUSPENSE AND
FORESHADOWING**

Re-read lines 10–16. Do you think the story of the three men is a clue about what's going to happen? Why or why not?

YOU NEED TO KNOW The title of this story is the name of a key, or low-lying island. This island is located off the coast of French Guiana (gee AHN eh) in South America.

1 **W**hat was my most terrifying experience? Well, working in a lighthouse is mostly quite boring. You have to keep the light in order and write reports. However, in my thirty-five years of service, I certainly had a few frightening
5 experiences.

When I was young, I took a job in a newly built lighthouse off the coast of Guiana. The lighthouse was very isolated. It was about twenty miles from land. The pay was high, though, and I wanted to save money before I married.

10 The lighthouse stood on a small rock named Three Skeleton Key. It had earned its name from the story of three men who had escaped from prison in a stolen canoe. Their canoe wrecked on the rock, and the men eventually died of hunger and thirst. When the men were discovered, nothing
15 remained but three heaps of bones. The story was that the three skeletons danced over the small rock, screaming. . . .

Three Skeleton Key was an island of black rock. It was about one hundred fifty feet long, perhaps forty feet wide. The rocks were dangerously smooth. One wrong step, and
20 you'd fall into the sea. The sea was full of sharks.

Still, it was a nice life there. During the day, we would clean the rooms and the light itself. At night, we would sit on the balcony and watch the strong white bar of light shine over the sea. My fellow keepers were named Le Gleo and
25 Itchoua. We liked our life on the key.

“Three Skeleton Key” by George G. Toudouze adapted from *Esquire*, January 1937. Copyright 1937 by Hearst Communications, Inc. All rights reserved. *Esquire* is a trademark of Hearst Magazines Property, Inc. Retold by Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Reproduced by permission of **Esquire Magazine**.

One night, Itchoua called Le Gleo and me from our rooms. We climbed to the balcony and stood beside him.

Itchoua pointed out to the sea. There we saw a big ship heading straight toward us. It was an odd course, we thought.
30 Ships were a rare sight in our waters. Our lighthouse existed to warn ships away from the rocks, so most ships steered clear of us.

Le Gleo cried out, “What’s wrong with the ship’s crew? Are they all drunk or insane? Can’t they see us?”

35 Itchoua looked at us sharply and said, “See us? I’m sure they do—if there *is* a crew aboard!”

Then we understood the ship’s odd behavior. For some reason, the ship’s crew had abandoned it. Then, the ship had sailed by itself, guided by the wind.

40 We kept watching as the ship sailed on. In the light of our lantern, the ship seemed strong. Itchoua cried out, “Why was the ship abandoned? Nothing is smashed. There’s no sign of fire. And, it doesn’t look like it’s sinking.”

For the next four hours, the ship played around us. It
45 zigzagged, stopped, and then suddenly sailed forward.

When dawn broke, we got out our binoculars to inspect the ship.

Just then, the wind rose, and the ship changed course. It headed straight for us again. This time, it came very close.

50 We knew it could not turn in time.

All this time, we kept our binoculars aimed at the ship. We suddenly cried out together, “The rats!”

Now we knew why the ship was sailing without a crew. The crew had been driven out by rats. The rats of the sea are
55 large, strong, intelligent, and brave. If you harm one, his sharp cry will bring crowds of his fellows to tear your flesh. They will not stop until nothing is left of you but bones.



Here's HOW

MAKING PREDICTIONS

Why is the ship sailing so close to the lighthouse? I bet the crew has a message for the men in the lighthouse. Or maybe the crew is in trouble?

Your TURN

SUSPENSE AND FORESHADOWING

Re-read lines 28–50. Why doesn't the writer tell us right away what has happened to the ship? How does that passage make you feel?



Here's HOW

VOCABULARY

What are *masts* (line 64)? I know they're part of a boat, but I need to check in my dictionary for the exact meaning. My dictionary says that *masts* are poles that hold up sails on a boat. OK. Now I see how the rats got to the rocks!

Your TURN

VOCABULARY

What is a *horde* (line 75)? For a clue, re-read lines 69–71. Underline the word that helps you understand the meaning of *horde*. Then, check your meaning in a dictionary.

Your TURN

MAKING PREDICTIONS

Do you think the rats will eventually get into the lighthouse? Explain.

At times, the rats will attack a ship's crew. They either drive them from the ship or eat them alive. Studying the ship,
60 I turned sick. Its lifeboats were all in place. Its crew had not abandoned ship.

The ship came for us at full speed. It crashed on a sharp point of rock and then split in two. It sank like a stone.

But the rats did not drown. They sprang along the masts
65 and onto the rocks right before the ship sank. Then they noticed us—fresh meat.

We barely had time to jump back. We closed the door leading to the balcony, and we went down the stairs. We shut every window tightly. It didn't take long for the horrible
70 group of rats to run up the tower. They scratched at the glass. There were so many rats that it seemed as if a fur coat covered the tower. Just a few millimeters of glass separated our faces from their beady eyes, sharp claws, and teeth. We were sealed alive in our own lighthouse. We were prisoners
75 of a horde of starving rats.

When night came, we lit the light. As the light turned, it blinded thousands of rats crowded against the glass. Their cries were so loud we had to shout to hear one another. We couldn't sleep all night.

80 The next day, we were calmer. We had fun by teasing the rats. We would place our faces against the glass. The rats couldn't understand the invisible barrier that separated us from them. But, the day after that, we realized how serious our position was. The air in the lighthouse smelled of rats. Of
85 course, we couldn't open the windows to get fresh air.

The morning of the fourth day, I saw that the wooden frame of my window had been eaten away from the outside. I called Le Gleo and Itchoua. They helped me seal the window over with a sheet of tin. When we finished, Itchoua pointed

90 at the tin plate. “If that gives way,” he said, “they can change the name of the place to Six Skeleton Key.”

The next six days and seven nights, we had nothing to do but watch clusters of rats fall from the rock. The rats would fall a hundred and twenty feet into the water. There the
95 sharks could eat them. It didn’t seem to matter, though. There were still so many rats left.

We thought often of those three prisoners who had died on the rock. We imagined our bones joining theirs. The darkness of our prison increased our gloom. We had to seal
100 every window with tin. The only light came in through the lantern room at the very top of the tower.

Le Gleo had nightmares where he saw the three skeletons of the prisoners dancing around him. His crazy descriptions were so clear that Itchoua and I began to see the three
105 skeletons, too.

There was only one thing left to do. We decided not to light the lantern on the ninth night. This is never done unless the lighthouse keepers are dead. The light is necessary to warn ships away from the rock. But that night, Three
110 Skeleton Key was dark.

At two in the morning, the sheet of metal sealing Itchoua’s window gave way. Itchoua just had time to leap to his feet and cry for help. The three of us fought the maddened rats that flowed through the open window.

115 They bit. We struck them down with our knives. Then, we went back up the stairs, fighting off the rats that leaped on us. We found ourselves on the floor of the lantern room. We had no food or drink. We were bleeding all over. Our clothes were shredded.

120 Le Gleo stared at Itchoua and me. Then he looked at the rats and began laughing horribly, “Hee! Hee! The Three Skeletons! Hee! Hee! The Three Skeletons are now *six* skeletons! *Six* skeletons!”



Your TURN

SUSPENSE AND FORESHADOWING

Why does Itchoua say that the name of the island can be changed to Six Skeleton Key (lines 89–91)?

Your TURN

MAKING PREDICTIONS

The men in the lighthouse are being attacked by rats. They are cut off from their supplies (line 118). Do you think they’ll survive? Explain your prediction.



Here's
HOW

**SUSPENSE AND
FORESHADOWING**

As you read about the rescue crew's arrival, what questions are on your mind? Write your questions below.

Your
TURN

**SUSPENSE AND
FORESHADOWING**

Do you enjoy scary stories? Why or why not?

He threw his head back and laughed. I did the only thing
125 I could—I swung the back of my hand across his face. His laughing stopped. Then, he began to cry like a child.

As morning arrived, the patrol came to find out why our lighthouse was dark. Through my binoculars, I could see the horrified faces of the patrol officers and crew. I learned later
130 that they thought we had been eaten alive.

The crew were about to leave when Itchoua managed to signal them. They signaled back.

The patrol boat came back at noon, along with a supply ship, two small coast-guard boats, and a fireboat.

135 The fireboat's powerful jet of water knocked many rats from the tower into the sea. There the sharks gulped them down. Yet more rats swam out to the fireboat. The men were forced to fight the rats with their bare hands. At last, all but one of the boats left. All that night, Le Gleo raved about
140 skeletons, while Itchoua and I burned with fever.

The next afternoon, I saw a tugboat towing a huge barge filled with meat. The tugboat dragged the barge close to the island. The rats swam out and boarded it. The tug dragged the barge about a mile from shore. There, the barge was
145 soaked in gasoline and set on fire.

As the barge burned, the rats tried to escape. A patrol boat bombed them. The sharks finished off the rest.

A small boat from the patrol boat took us off to the hospital. Le Gleo's mind had cracked; he went completely
150 crazy. He was locked up in an insane asylum, the poor man! Itchoua's bites were infected; he died within a week.

As for me—when they aired out the lighthouse and repaired the damage done by the rats, I returned to Three Skeleton Key. Why not? I liked the place. To be honest, it was
155 the most pleasant job I ever had.

Suspense and Foreshadowing

“Uh-oh. What’s under the bed?” “Is he going to look under the bed?” A good **suspense** writer has you wondering what’s going to happen next. To heighten the suspense, a writer will use clues, or **foreshadowing**, to suggest events that will happen later in the story. These clues lead you to ask many questions.

What kinds of questions did you ask yourself when you were reading “Three Skeleton Key”? Chart your reading below. In the first column, read the foreshadowing clues. In the second column, write the questions that were in your mind when you read each clue in the story. In the third column, write what happens in the story to answer your question. Part of the chart has been filled in for you.

Foreshadowing Clues	My Questions	What Happens in the Story
1. The narrator tells the story of how Three Skeleton Key got its name. (lines 10–16)		
2. The men try to guess why the ship is sailing so close to the lighthouse. (lines 28–52)		
3. The wooden frame of the window is eaten away by the rats. (lines 86–87)	Oh, no. What will the men do? Will the rats get into the lighthouse?	The men put up a sheet of tin to seal the window, but the rats get in anyway.
4. The fireboat tries to knock the rats off the tower with a powerful jet of water. The plan doesn’t work, so the rescue team leaves. (lines 135–139)		

Rikki-tikki-tavi Page 1

Page 2

Retelling

Rikki met Nag, a cobra.

Page 3

Retelling

Rikki fights Karait next.

Vocabulary

Sample responses: Rikki knows the little muskrat cannot hurt him or the family; Rikki thinks the little animal is too afraid of everything.

Conflict

Sample response: Rikki's conversation with Chuchundra will move the plot forward because the conversation is about Nag and Nagaina's plan to attack the family. More conflict will occur between Rikki and the snakes as the plot progresses.

Page 4

Retelling

Sample response: The conflict in lines 70–78 is settled when Teddy's father shoots Nag with a gun. Rikki had jumped on Nag's head and bitten him. He continued to hold on with his teeth, even though Nag tried to shake him off, until Teddy's father shot the snake.

Page 5

Retelling

Sample response: When Nagaina asks Rikki to give her back the egg, he responds that she will go away to the trash heap, and he challenges her to fight. By saying that she will go away to the trash heap, Rikki is letting her know that he plans to kill her.

Page 6

Conflict

Line 130 should be checked.

Page 7

Graphic Organizer: Conflict Diagram

Sample responses are provided.

Event/Conflict: Rikki fights and kills Karait.

Event/Conflict: Rikki fights and helps kill Nag.

Event/Conflict: Rikki tricks Nagaina and distracts her from striking Teddy.

India's History Page 8

Page 9

Text Structure

The table of contents covers the following topics on India: "Physical Geography," "India's History," and "India Today."

Page 10

Text Structure

Circled caption: "Mohenjo Daro was one of the largest cities of the Harappan civilization."

Page 11

Text Structure

The Taj Mahal is in the northern part of India.

Text Structure

Circled word: sepoys. Underlined meaning: "Indian troops commanded by British officers."

Page 12

Text Structure

Circled Reading Check: "Reading Check: Do you know why India was divided when it became independent?"
Circled section of text: "Independence and Division."

Text Structure

Mohandas K. Gandhi was the most important leader of the Indian independence movement. His strategy was nonviolent mass protest.

Page 13

Graphic Organizer: Reading Check

1. Chapter 30, India, and Chapter 31, The Indian Perimeter, are covered in Unit 9.
2. Chapter 30, India, and Section 2, India's History, are covered.
3. Reading Focus questions tell you what the text is about and what points are important.
4. Early Indian Civilizations, The British, and Independence and Division are the main topics.
5. Answer provided.

Three Skeleton Key Page 14

Page 16

Suspense and Foreshadowing

Sample responses: No, the three convicts died long ago, and the story of the dancing convicts is just superstition; yes, because the convicts' deaths suggest the danger of trying to survive on an isolated island.

Page 17

Suspense and Foreshadowing

Sample response: The narrator doesn't tell us right away what happened to the ship because he wants to build suspense by stretching out the action. Like the men on the island, I feel curious and nervous. I'm trying to figure out what is going on and what will happen next.

Page 18

Vocabulary

Sample responses: crowd, swarm, lots of, many.
Underlined clue: "There were so many rats that it seemed as if a fur coat covered the tower."

Making Predictions

Sample responses: Yes, the rats will eventually get into the lighthouse because they've already eaten away the window frame; no, they won't get in because the men put up a tin sheet to protect the window—also, the narrator is obviously still alive to tell the story.

Page 19

Suspense and Foreshadowing

Sample response: Itchoua means that they will die. The island is named after three men who escaped from prison, became stranded on the island, and eventually died of hunger and thirst. Itchoua is saying that the total number of skeletons on the island will increase to six.

Making Predictions

Sample responses: No, I don't think they will survive because even if the rats don't kill them, they don't have anything to eat or drink; yes, they'll survive because they didn't light the lamp on the previous night, so help may be on the way; maybe Le Gleo and Itchoua will die, but the narrator has to survive to tell the story.

Page 20

Suspense and Foreshadowing

Sample questions: Will the rescue crew be able to kill the rats? How? Will they think the men are already dead? Or will they be able to save the men?

Suspense and Foreshadowing

Sample responses: No, I don't like scary stories because they give me nightmares and make my heart beat too fast; yes, I enjoy feeling scared because I know they're just stories and that I'm really safe.

Page 21

Graphic Organizer: Suspense and Foreshadowing

Sample responses are provided.

1. My Questions

Will the three convicts who died on the island come back to haunt the three men who are on the island now? Will the narrator and the other two men end up the same way as the three convicts?

What Happens in the Story

The three convicts don't come back to haunt the men, but Le Gleo does have nightmares about the three skeletons. The men don't end up exactly like the three convicts: The narrator survives and even goes back to the island; Itchoua's bites become infected, and he dies within a week; and Le Gleo goes crazy and is locked up in an insane asylum.

2. My Questions

What happened to the ship? Will it reach the lighthouse? Will the crew have a message? Is the crew in trouble, or are all the crew members dead?

What Happens in the Story

Killer rats have eaten the ship's crew alive. The ship eventually crashes on the island and sinks, but the rats don't drown. They go looking for food.

3. Answers provided.

4. My Questions

Will the rescue team come back? How will they save the men? Will they even know the men are still alive?

What Happens in the Story

The rescue team comes back the next afternoon with a tugboat. The tugboat is towing a huge barge filled with meat. The rats get on the barge, and then the men on the tugboat set the barge on fire. The rats try to escape, but a patrol boat bombs them. The sharks finish off the rest.

Ekering Out a Life Page 22

Page 24

Structure and Purpose

Sample responses are below.

Where: The rat was rescued from the wilderness.

How: The rat came out and sat on Rose's shoe.

Why: The new owners obviously love animals.

Page 25

Graphic Organizer: Inverted Pyramid Structure

Sample responses are provided.

Summary Lead, or Most Important Information: No one knows what dangers the rat named Sunny Jim faced when he was lost.

Most Important Details: The rat has new owners, Hayley Huttenmaier and Nachshon Rose. The owners already have two dogs and three cats. Rose found the rat when he was out walking. The rat is brown and white, tiny, clean, and friendly. The rat's new home has brick walls, toys, a soft bed, and lots of food. The new owners think he was someone's pet, and they advertised in the paper. He is not a dangerous, wild rat.

Least Important Details: Some people belong to the American Fancy Rat and Mouse Association. They raise and show the animals like dogs.

Cellular Telephone Owner's Manual

Page 26

Page 27

Sequence

Circled sentence: "You have five seconds to press PWR before your call is disconnected."

Page 28

Graphic Organizer: Sequence Charts

Standard Method

Step 1: Turn off your telephone.

Step 2: Answer provided.

Step 3: Answer provided.

Step 4: Replace the battery by sliding it into the grooves until it clicks into place.

Quick-Change Method

Step 1: Answer provided.

Step 2: Take out the battery.

Step 3: Put in the extra battery.