

Robert Louis Stevenson KIDNAPPED

Kidnapped is a story set in 18th century Scotland about the adventures of a young man, David Balfour, who leaves his quiet hometown in search of a new life at the house of Shaws. However, he immediately runs into danger at the hands of his cruel uncle Ebenezer. He gets caught up with criminals but also makes friends with Alan Breck, a wild Highlander, who helps him as he tries to cross the Scottish Highlands. Will David manage to win back Shaws or will his uncle Ebenezer's cruel plan succeed?

In this reader you will find:

- Information about Robert Louis Stevenson
- Introduction: The Jacobite Rising
- Glossary of difficult words
- Comprehension and extension activities, including B1 Preliminary type, exercises
- Exit test

Tags

Classic Historical fiction Adventure Friendship Trust

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Book brief

- 1 *Kidnapped* is an adventure novel by Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson, first published in 1886 in the magazine 'Young Folks'.
- 2 The story is about David Balfour, a young Scottish boy, and his adventures from when he leaves his hometown after his father's death.
- 3 It is set in 18th century Scotland and includes characters and historical events from real life, especially the 'Appin Murder' of Colin Campbell of Glenure.
- 4 The story is full of movement and action and is told through the eyes of David.
- 5 Main themes include friendship, loyalty, and how people see what is right and wrong in different ways.

Robert Louis Stevenson

Kidnapped

Retold and Activities by
Silvana Sardi

Illustrated by
Federico Volpini

For Review Only

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Mr. Campbell's

A kind man who takes care of David after his parents die.



Captain Elias Hoseason

The captain of the ship Covenant.



Colin of

A Jacobite from the Scottish Highlands, he's against the English.

Alan Breck Stewart



David Balfour

He tells the story of his adventures.

Main Characters

David Balfour's
lawyer.



Once a leader of the Stewart
clan, he now has no power and
must hide from the
English who want to kill him.

Campbell
Glenure



He's part of the Campbell clan and
works for the King of England.
He wants to make the Jacobite
Stewarts leave their homes.

Cluny
Macpherson



Ebenezer
Balfour



David Balfour's
cruel uncle.

Kidnapped

- 2 Kidnapped is a historical novel that describes real 18th century Scottish events. Therefore, before reading, here is some information that will help you understand the story better.

The Jacobite Rising of 1745 is known in Gaelic as ‘The Year of Charles’. This was when Charles Edward Stuart, usually known as ‘Bonnie Prince Charlie’ tried to win back the British throne* for the exiled* House of Stuart. *The House of Stuart*, originally spelt ‘Stewart’ had been Kings and Queens of Scotland from the late 14th century until Scotland and England became all one country in 1707.

The Rising happened while most of the British Army was fighting abroad. Charles had a meeting with Highland clansmen at Glenfinnan in the Scottish Highlands. They wanted him to be King and formed an army to help him. He went south with these men and the Jacobite army won the first two battles and reached Derby in England. Then, the British called their soldiers back from abroad to fight the Jacobites. The British won and sent the Jacobites back north to Inverness in Scotland. This is where the last battle on Scottish land took place at Culloden. The Jacobites lost The Battle of Culloden but Charles Edward Stuart managed to escape and found a ship to take him back abroad.

throne where a king or queen sits

exile when you send or keep somebody away from their own country

Kidnapped

The British government* were used to fighting wars abroad and not on their own land, so the Jacobite Rising had been a terrible shock for them, especially since the Jacobites had managed to get so far south. To make sure that this didn't happen again, the government passed new laws to try and destroy Highland clans and their traditions. These new laws, introduced in 1746, were called the Act of Proscription and the Dress Act. With the introduction of these new laws, the clan leaders no longer had control of their people, who now had to follow the King's laws. Anyone who still believed in the Jacobites, and refused to respect these new laws, was executed*. The government also took control of the clans' lands and made the people pay rent to the King to continue living there. Highlanders couldn't carry weapons* and they weren't allowed to wear Highland clothes unless they were soldiers of the King.

The Clan Campbell from western Scotland were one of the biggest and most powerful Highland Scottish clans of this period. During the Jacobite Rising of 1745, the Clan Campbell fought with the British soldiers against the Jacobites. When Colin Campbell was murdered in Appin, the British Government blamed two Appin Stewarts. The first was Alan Breck, an outlaw*, while the second was James Stewart of the Glen. James was arrested and executed for the murder. It was clear that he wasn't to blame for the crime but the British Government used him as an example to stop any more Scots from going against the King. Until this day, nobody really knows who killed Colin Campbell of Glenure. As you'll see, the Appin murder is one of the events used by Stevenson in Kidnapped. 

government it has control of a country
execute kill, put to death

weapon a thing you use to fight
outlaw a criminal

Before you Read

Reading B1 Preliminary

- 1 Choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D) to complete the text about Kidnapped.

'Kidnapped' was written by Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson.

This story is about the adventures of a young boy, David Balfour in Scotland in the 18th century. During the story, David meets Alan Breck Stewart, a Scottish soldier (1) actually existed in real life. Alan Breck Stewart (2) from the Highlands, in the north of Scotland, (3) David Balfour lives in the Lowlands, the part of Scotland nearest the border with England. Even if they're very different, David and Alan become great friends and help (4) other during their long journey across the Scottish countryside. In the story, Stevenson also talks about events that really happened about that time (5) the 'Appin Murder' when Colin Campbell of Glenure was killed in a wood in the Highlands. As you read, you'll see how all the problems that David has, help him (6) a stronger person.

- | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|----------|---------|
| 1 A who | B which | C what | D whose |
| 2 A has been | B goes | C are | D comes |
| 3 A rather | B so | C while | D then |
| 4 A one | B each | C all | D every |
| 5 A as | B like | C such | D which |
| 6 A begin | B believe | C become | D find |

Speaking – Pair Work

21st Century Skills

- 2 Surf the Internet and find the answers to the following questions about Scotland with your partner.

- 1 What's another name for Scotland?
- 2 What's its capital city?
- 3 What's its largest city?
- 4 How many people live in Scotland now?
- 5 What famous inventions were made by Scottish people in the past?
- 6 What's the weather like?
- 7 Which sports are popular in Scotland?
- 8 Which famous bands or singers come from Scotland?



Vocabulary

3 You'll find these Scottish words in the story. Try and match them to the correct definition or English word. You can find them all on the Internet.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 ☐ glen | a an area in northern Scotland with many mountains |
| 2 ☐ loch | b family |
| 3 ☐ clan | c traditional Scottish skirt usually worn by men |
| 4 ☐ laird | d valley |
| 5 ☐ tartan | e a person who owns land in Scotland |
| 6 ☐ kilt | f lake |
| 7 ☐ ben | g traditional Scottish woollen material for clothes |
| 8 ☐ The Highlands | h mountain |

Listening

3 **4** Listen to the start of Chapter 1 and decide if these sentences are true (T) or false (F).

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| The story starts in 1741. | ☐ | ☒ |
| 1 The weather was nice. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2 It was late morning. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3 Mr Campbell was waiting inside the church. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4 Davie hasn't had breakfast yet. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5 Mr Campbell and Davie start walking towards the river. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6 This is the first time Davie will leave his home town. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7 Davie's family are still alive. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8 Mr Campbell has a letter from Davie's mother. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 9 Cramond is a fishing village. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 10 Davie's father came from Cramond. | ☐ | ☐ |



Leaving Home

- ▶ 3 The story of my adventure begins early one morning in the month of June 1751, when I took my key for the last time out of the door of my father's house. The sun was beginning to shine on the top of the hills as I went down the road to the church.

Mr Campbell, the head of the church of my town, Essendean, was waiting for me in the churchyard. He was such a good man! He asked me if I'd had breakfast; when I said yes he took my arm in his and said:

'Well, Davie, my boy, I'll walk with you as far as the low part of the river before saying goodbye.'

So, we began to walk together without speaking. After some time he said:

'Are you sorry to leave Essendean Davie?'

'Well sir, Essendean is a pleasant place and I've been very happy here, but then I've never been anywhere else. Since my mother and father are both dead, I've nothing to keep me here; but if I thought I had the chance of a better life, I'd go with a lighter heart.'

'Yes?'- said Mr Campbell. 'Very well, Davie. I have something to tell you about your future. Before dying, your father, good man, gave me a letter for you. He said it was your inheritance* and that you must go to the house of Shaws not far from the fishing village of Cramond. This is where your father came from and he wanted you to go back there.'

inheritance money or land you get from someone when that person dies

4 'The house of Shaws!' I said surprised. 'Who did my poor father know at the house of Shaws?'

'I don't know Davie,' said Mr Campbell, 'but your surname is Balfour and that's the family name of the people who live in that house, the *Balfours of Shaws*. It was a famous, important house at one time, though now a lot of it is old and broken. Your father was just a poor teacher at the local school, but it was obvious that he was a well learned man.'

He gave me the letter, and on the envelope*, I read: '*To the hands of Ebenezer Balfour, House of Shaws, given to him by my son, David Balfour.*' I felt very excited. I was only seventeen years old, a poor teacher's son, and here was the chance of a great adventure.

'Mr Campbell,' I said, 'and if you were me, would you go?'

'Of course Davie!' said Mr Campbell. 'You're a young, brave boy. Cramond is near Edinburgh. It'll only take you two days to walk there. If you don't like your relatives then you can always come back. I hope you like them and that one day you'll become an important man. But, Davie you must be careful of the dangers of the world.'

Then he sat down under the shade of a big tree and said:

'Davie, always remember where you've come from. Show respect for the laird and do what he tells you.'

'Well sir,' I said, 'I promise you, I'll try.'

Then he stood up and took me in his arms. At last, he said goodbye and then went back down the road we had walked along together.

He almost ran and looked quite funny, but I didn't feel like laughing at that moment because I knew he was sad to see me go. I even felt a bit guilty* because I was happy about going away from that quiet countryside to a great, busy house, with rich and important people who had my own name.

envelope you put a letter in this

guilty when you feel bad about something

Robert Louis Stevenson

At the top of the hill, David looks for the last time
at Essendean church where his parents are buried.



I took my things, crossed the river and went up the hill. At the top, I stopped and looked for the last time at Essendean church where my parents were buried.

On the second day of my journey, I arrived at the top of a hill and looked down at the city of Edinburgh with its castle and ships in the sea. I stopped at a house to ask for directions to Cramond. On my way, I was excited to see a group of 'red coats', the King's soldiers.

The red coats
were King
George II's
soldiers, who
beat Charles
Edward Stuart
and the
Jacobites at
the Battle of
Culloden in
April 1746.

When I arrived in Cramond, I asked where the house of Shaws was. People seemed surprised when they heard the word Shaws. At first I thought it was because of my country clothes; they were very simple and a bit dirty now and I was asking the way to a great house. Then I began to think that maybe there was something strange about Shaws itself. I decided to change my question and the next man I saw, I asked if he knew anything about the house of Shaws.

'It's a great house,' said the man.

'And what about the people who live there?' I asked.

'People?' said the man. 'Are you mad? There aren't any people!'

'What?' I said. 'Not even Mr Ebenezer?'

'Oh yes,' said the man. 'There's the laird for sure. Why?'

'I'm looking for a job,' I said.

'What?' shouted the man. 'Listen, you seem a good young man. If I were you, I wouldn't work there.'

With these words, he turned and went on his way. I was a bit worried now, so the next person I saw, I asked:

'What sort of a man is Mr Balfour of Shaws?'

'No kind of a man at all!' said this man as he went on his way.

I felt even more worried now. I almost wanted to go back home, but I was far from Essendean and I was also too proud to turn back.

I walked some more. Then, I met a woman and asked her where the Shaws was. She took me up a hill and pointed to the ruins of a



great big house in the green valley. The countryside around was lovely but the building looked terrible. There wasn't even a path up to the house and no garden. I felt really sad and disappointed.

'Is that the house of Shaws?' I asked.

'That's the house of Shaws!' said the woman angrily. 'Blood built it: blood stopped the building of it: blood will bring it down!'

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. The woman ran away before I could ask her anything else. I sat down and looked at the house. I felt miserable. I stayed there until the sun went down. Then I saw some smoke rising above the roof of the house. *So there is somebody! And maybe a warm fire and some food!* I thought.

I started walking towards the house. As I came nearer, it looked even worse. Many of the windows were broken and bats were flying in and out of them. It was nothing like the palace I had imagined. I saw the light of a little fire from one of the windows above me. It was now almost dark. I knocked on the door and waited. Nobody answered. I knocked again and still nobody answered. I began to get angry and started shouting: 'Mr Balfour!!' I heard someone open the window above me. I looked up. There was a man with his gun pointed at me.

'I've come here with a letter,' I said, 'for Mr Ebenezer Balfour of Shaws. Is he here?'

'Who's it from?' asked the man with the gun.

'That's not your business. It's for Mr Balfour. It's a letter of introduction,' I said.

'What!' shouted the man. 'Who are you?'

'They call me David Balfour,' I said.

The man jumped when he heard my name, then said:

'Is your father dead?'

Kidnapped

I was so surprised I didn't answer.

'Yes,' continued the man, 'he'll be dead for sure; that's why you've come to my door. Well then, I'll let you in.'

With these words, he left the window and opened the door to me.

'Go into the kitchen and don't touch anything,' he said.

It was very dark inside and I could hardly see anything until I entered the kitchen where there was the fire. The kitchen was very empty. There were only a few dishes on the shelves. On the table there was a bowl of porridge* and a small cup of beer.

Now I could see the man who had opened the door to me. His face was grey and he didn't look friendly at all. His clothes were old and he looked untidy and dirty. He must be a servant*, I thought.

'Let's see the letter,' he said.

I told him the letter was for Mr Balfour and not for him.

'And who do you think I am?' he said. 'Give me Alexander's letter!'

'You know my father's name!' I said surprised.

'It'd be strange if I didn't,' he answered. 'He was my brother, and like it or not, I'm your uncle and you're my nephew. So give me the letter!'

I didn't know what to say, so I gave him the letter and sat down at the table. He told me to eat the porridge, but I wasn't hungry anymore.

'So what are you hoping for?' he asked me.

'Nothing, if you don't want to give me any help,' I said angrily. 'Maybe I'm poor but I've got lots of friends, who would be happy to help me.'

'Well now!' said uncle Ebenezer, 'don't get angry with me, and if you've finished with that porridge I'll have it. If you're thirsty, there's some water behind the door. Your father liked his food; instead I never ate a lot.'

porridge cereal made soft and thick with water or milk

servant someone who works for a person in their house

He then finished the porridge left in the bowl. As he ate, he looked at me and said:

‘When did your father die?’

‘Three weeks ago,’ I answered.

‘Did he ever speak about me or Shaws,’ he asked.

‘Not a thing,’ I answered.

He seemed happy with this answer. Then he said:

‘You’ll see, Davie, we’ll become friends! Right, time for bed!’

I followed him to my room. It was very dark and I could see nothing. I asked for a light, but uncle Ebenezer said there was enough light from the moon. The room was cold and the bed was wet, but I was so tired, I was soon asleep.

When I woke up next morning, I could see that maybe 20 years ago the room had been nice. Now it was old and dirty and the glass in all three windows was broken. Uncle Ebenezer was in the kitchen with two bowls of porridge on the table this time. There was only one cup of beer. When uncle Ebenezer saw me looking at it, he got another cup and gave me half of his. He wasn’t generous for sure! When we had finished eating, he said:

‘And your mother?’

‘She’s dead too,’ I replied.

‘She was a beautiful woman,’ he said. ‘What about these friends of yours?’

I told him I had lots of friends from the Campbell family, even if there was only really Mr Campbell, but I didn’t want my uncle to know that. He thought for a moment then said:

‘You did the right thing coming here Davie. Family means a lot to me and I’ll make sure you do better than any Campbell. But you mustn’t write any letters or messages to anybody; or else – there’s my door.’

During the Jacobite Rising, the Clan Campbell fought on the side of the British government against the Jacobites.

Reading Comprehension

1 Choose the correct answer, A, B or C about Chapter 1.

David's surname is

- ☐ **A** Shaws.
- ☐ **B** Campbell.
- ☒ **C** Balfour.

1 Before dying, David's father wrote a letter to

- ☐ **A** Mr Campbell.
- ☐ **B** his son.
- ☐ **C** his brother Ebenezer.

2 David was sad when he saw the house of Shaws

- ☐ **A** because it was old and not kept well.
- ☐ **B** because it was in the countryside.
- ☐ **C** because it was far from his home.

3 David's father had died

- ☐ **A** three months before.
- ☐ **B** three weeks before.
- ☐ **C** three days before.

4 Ebenezer said David's father

- ☐ **A** was better at school than him.
- ☐ **B** was his twin.
- ☐ **C** used to eat more than him.

5 Ebenezer gave David

- ☐ **A** £30.
- ☐ **B** £40.
- ☐ **C** £45.

6 Ebenezer asked David to go up to the tower

- ☐ **A** to kill the bats.
- ☐ **B** to get him some documents.
- ☐ **C** to see if a storm was coming.

7 David was angry with his uncle because

- ☐ **A** he didn't tell him that the stairs in the tower were dangerous.
- ☐ **B** he wanted more money.
- ☐ **C** he was frightened of the thunder and lightning.

Grammar

- 2 Complete the sentences with a verb from the box in the correct form.

look (2) • ~~walk~~ • break • try • take • help • come

- Mr Campbell *walked* with David to the river.
- 1 David's father from the house of Shaws near Cramond.
 - 2 Mr Campbell says it David two days to get to Cramond.
 - 3 David told a man that he for a job at the house of Shaws.
 - 4 Many of the windows in the house of Shaws
 - 5 Ebenezer old and untidy.
 - 6 David told Ebenezer he had lots of friends who him.
 - 7 David wanted to know why Ebenezer to kill him.

Speaking 21st Century Skills

- 3 Discuss the following questions with a partner.

- 1 How would you feel if you had to leave your hometown like David did?
- 2 What would you miss the most?
- 3 What do you think would be difficult about going to live in another country?

Pre-Reading Activity • Chapter Two

Listening B1 Preliminary

- 5 4 Listen to the beginning of Chapter 2 and complete the sentences with the words you hear.

- The next morning it was cold and *windy*
- 1 David sat in front of the fire to
 - 2 David knew that his uncle Ebenezer him.
 - 3 Some people say you can see your in the fire.
 - 4 David didn't see any of the he was about to have.
 - 5 David says he had thought his uncle was a man.
 - 6 David opened the door and found a young boy there.
 - 7 The boy's face was with the cold.