



ABOUT YOU

Answer the questions and compare your ideas.

- 1 Why do you think people want to own jewels such as diamonds or pearls?
- 2 What do you know about where diamonds come from?
- 3 What do you think is the appeal of stories about people who try to steal something very valuable?

Mr. Betteredge works for Mrs. Verinder in a very large house in England. Mrs. Verinder's daughter is given an extremely valuable and important diamond on her eighteenth birthday. But the day after, the diamond disappears. The police have been called to the house.

- 1** Read the text. As you read, think about this question. What impression do you get of Mr. Betteredge, Sergeant Cuff and Mrs. Rachel Verinder? Think about their age, appearance and the clothes you imagine them wearing.

The Moonstone

Wilkie Collins

My lady lifted her head suddenly from her book as if she was going to say something. She then stopped herself with a great effort—and, looking back again at the open page, dismissed us with a sign of her hand.

- 5 “That’s a wonderful woman,” said Sergeant Cuff, when we were out in the hall again. “But for her **self-control**, Mr. Betteridge, the mystery that you are trying to understand would have been at an end tonight.”
- At those words, the truth finally came to me. For the
- 10 moment, I think I was out of control. I seized the Sergeant by the collar of his coat, and pushed him against the wall. “Tell me!” I cried out, “there’s something wrong with Miss Rachel, and you have been hiding it from me all this time!”
- Sergeant Cuff looked up at me, flat against the wall, without
- 15 moving a muscle of his **melancholy** face. “Ah,” he said, “you’ve guessed it at last.”
- My hand dropped from his collar, and my head sunk. Please remember, as some excuse for the way I behaved, that I had
- 20 **served** the family for fifty years. Miss Rachel had climbed up on my knees, and pulled my beard, many and many a time when she was a child. In my mind, Miss Rachel, with all her faults, had been the dearest and prettiest and best young



- mistress that ever an old servant looked after, and loved. I **begged Sergeant’s Cuff’s pardon**, but I am afraid I did it
- 25 with watery eyes.
- “Don’t **distress** yourself, Mr. Betteredge,” says the Sergeant, with more kindness than I had any right to expect from him. I led him into my own little sitting-room, and closed the door.
- “Tell me the truth, Sergeant,” I said. “What do you suspect?”
- 30 It’s no kindness to hide it from me now.”
- “I don’t suspect,” said Sergeant Cuff. “I know.”
- My temper began to **get the better of me** again.
- “Do you mean to tell me, in plain English,” I said, “that Miss Rachel has stolen her own diamond?”
- 35 “Yes,” says the Sergeant; “that is what I mean to tell you, in so many words. Miss Verinder has been in secret possession of the Moonstone from first to last. She has become very friendly with Rosanna Spearman, because she calculated we would suspect Rosanna Spearman of the theft. There is the
- 40 whole case **in a nutshell**.”

GLOSSARY

dismiss	give someone official permission to leave
self-control	the ability to control your emotions and actions
melancholy	a feeling of sadness
serve	do work in an organization (more formal)
beg someone’s pardon	apologise (more formal)
distress	the feeling of being extremely upset or worried
get the better of someone	when a feeling becomes too strong to control
in a nutshell	using as few words as possible

