

# The Librarian

from *A Career in Witchcraft* by Kaye Umansky

- 1 Mr Smike wasn't fond of children. Noisy, ill-mannered little brats with their shrill little voices and grubby little hands. The less he had to do with them, the better. Normally, he would be over in the reference section of the main library, but Miss Jaunty, the children's librarian, had rung in sick and there was nobody else to fill in.
- 5 He cast a jaundiced eye over the place. Picture books, hah! Cushions, jigsaw puzzles, mobiles, posters, murals, double hah! This wasn't a proper library. It didn't have QUIET notices all over the place. There wasn't even a box marked FINES. Great hordes of schoolchildren had been in and out all day, putting their unwashed fingers all over the books. The place had been chocka-block with chattering mums pushing buggies full of snotty-nosed toddlers who waddled around the place getting underfoot. They treated the place like a hotel. It wasn't his kind of library at all.
- 13 Oh well. Thankfully, it was nearly closing time. With a bit of luck, the Jaunty creature would be back tomorrow dispensing books and smiles and organising poetry competitions and storytelling sessions and whatever else the silly woman did to keep the little monsters happy.
- 17 Briskly, he gathered up his papers, slipped them into his briefcase and clipped his pen into his breast pocket. He would finish the list of overdue books at home. It would be something to look forward to after supper. Then, if there was time, he would write another of his complaining letters to the local paper. (Mr Smike wrote a lot of complaining letters to newspapers. It was a kind of hobby. He wrote letters about the state of the drains, the surliness of dustmen, the laziness of the unemployed and the trouble with Youth today. If the paper didn't publish them, he wrote and complained about that.)



Name:

Class:

Date:

1. Mr Smike "*wasn't fond of children*" (paragraph 1). Find and copy two phrases in the text that show this.

2g

☐

2 marks

2. What does the word "*hah!*" (paragraph 2) tell you about Mr Smike's attitude towards picture books?

2d

☐

1 mark

3. "*The Jaunty creature would be back tomorrow dispensing books*". Which of the following words is closest in meaning to the word "*dispensing*" in this sentence? Tick one.

handing out ☐      medicating ☐      sharing ☐      withholding ☐

2a

☐

1 mark

4. "*With a bit of luck, the Jaunty creature would be back tomorrow.*" (paragraph 3). What does the underlined phrase tell us about Mr Smike's view of his colleague?

2g

☐

1 mark

5. The author tells us that Mr Smike doesn't like children. Find two other ways she makes him seem an unpleasant character.

2b

☐

2 marks

6. List two things Mr Smike would expect to find in a 'proper' library.

2b

☐

1 mark

7. Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement from the text is a fact or one of Mr Smike's opinions.

	Fact	Opinion
Miss Jaunty had rung in sick.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This wasn't a proper library.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picture books, hah!	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
They treated the place like a hotel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thankfully, it was nearly closing time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mr Smike wrote a lot of complaining letters to the newspaper.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2c

☐

1 mark

8. Match the paragraph number to its summary statement.

Paragraph 1

How Miss Jaunty encourages people into the library

Paragraph 2

How the children's library is used by the community

Paragraph 3

What Mr Smike likes to do after work

Paragraph 4

Why Mr Smike is in the children's library

2c

☐

1 mark

9. How does Mr Smike's mood change between the beginning and end of this extract?

Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2h

☐

2 marks