

***Dicky Holla* by Rod Lyon, chapters 10 – 18**

Dyskans 76

Dicky Holla: The Story So Far

There is no written work for this lesson to present to your tutor, although you do have a lot of reading to get through! If you have any questions please note these down for discussion with your teacher.

Begin by reading the *Kommendyans* on pages 1-4 of *Dicky Holla*.

The following notes summarise the story so far, chapters 1-9; however, if you have time, it is worth reading these chapters through for yourself.

Dicky Holla is the captain of a fishing boat called *An Rosenn Wynn*. He is also known as Kapten (or Kap'n) Pennberthi, and later on he is also called Hykka. He lives in a rented flat in the fictitious town of Porth Elin on the south coast of Cornwall with his two grown-up sons Wella Yowynk and Mab Jowann, who are also part of his crew. The fourth regular crew member is known as Tommi Tesenn. Dicky's landlady is Mrs Tamsin Stevens, who runs a bakery. Dicky visits Tamsin weekly to pay his rent.

Most of the chapters are standalone stories that don't affect any other chapters, but some deal with the developing relationship between Dicky Holla and Tamsin Stevens:

- In chapter 1, Dicky takes Tamsin out for a drink in the public house called *An Luggar*. Tamsin has white wine. The landlord mentions that wine has been hard to get hold of since the Second World War (WW2: 1939-1945).

- In chapter 2, Dicky trades with a Breton boat to smuggle in white wine for *An Lugger*, in return for spider crabs that he can't sell.
- In chapter 3, Dicky buys a short-wave radio so he can listen in to other boats' conversations, and work out where the good fishing is.
- In chapter 4, the fish merchant announces he will pay more for fish in boxes, but the fishing is so good that Dicky doesn't have enough boxes on board. They wait until the other boats have offloaded and secretly take their empty boxes, enabling them to sell more of their catch at the higher price.
- In chapter 5, Dicky recounts an experience from the war when he was transporting goods to Scottish islands, including 10,000 empty bottles for a whisky distillery on Skye. When they arrive, they find the distillery on fire. They manage to save most of the whisky, some of which makes it back on to their boat in some of the empty bottles.
- In chapter 6, Dicky's crew spend a day inland, cutting sticks for the flags of their crab pots. They also intend to shoot rabbits. The farmer asks Dicky to shoot his old donkey, but as a joke Dicky hides this from his crew, and pretends the farmer has refused permission for them to shoot rabbits. When Dicky shoots the donkey, he pretends he does it in retaliation for this lack of permission, and, believing Dicky's joke, and wanting to get back at the farmer, Tommi shoots a cow dead, too.
- In chapter 7, a rival fisherman, Benni Jakka, complains that Dicky is stealing his fish by going to the same grounds, and eventually of hauling in Benni's own pots. In retaliation, Dicky puts illegally young lobsters into Benni's boxes, knowing Benni would be caught by the Fisheries Protection Officer.
- In chapter 8, a new crew member has a run-in with a lighthouse, thinking it was a ship, and demanding it move out of their way.
- In chapter 9, Tommi Tesenn will not land in Llandhewi in Wales. Dicky discovers that during the war, Tommi had made a fool of himself in a Welsh church service by following what the man in front of him did, not speaking Welsh himself. He had stood up when the vicar asked a baby's parents to stand.

When is the novel set?

The stories are generally set in the early 1950s, with the main narrative lasting about two years, but some stories are set in an earlier time still, including during the war. Below is some evidence (from the whole book) that places the general run of stories in the early fifties:

- Chapters 1 and 36 fit with the difficulty of getting wine and spirits to Britain from France after WW2.
- In chapter 9, the vicar in Llandhewi, Wales reports seeing Tommi Tesenn ten or eleven years ago during the war.
- In chapter 27, Tommi Tesenn mentions watching horse racing on TV; however, the BBC first televised racing only in 1951.
- The Polish civil war mentioned in chapter 28 must be the one in the late 1940s and early 50s, as refugees are mentioned. (Note: the later Solidarność uprising in the 80s did not result a refugee situation.)
- Chapter 34 mentions 1940s and 50s film stars Jane Russell and Margaret Lockwood.
- Wooden fish boxes are mentioned in chapter 4 and afterwards; however, by the 1970s, these would have been plastic.

Anachronisms occur, perhaps the author's way of making the stories less attached to their time. Examples of these are:

- The radio in chapter 4 is priced in decimal currency, which was introduced in the UK in 1971.
- In chapter 25, Dicky receives a bill from EDF Energy who didn't trade in Britain until 2002.
- Chapter 19 features new self-adhesive stamps which didn't appear in Britain until 1993.
- Chapter 11 features a management consultant, very clearly not in wartime, yet set "ten years ago".
- Chapter 20 features the shop Martin's Newsagents; this well-known British chain (McColl's in Scotland) operated from 1973 to 2022.

If you spot any others, do note them down for discussion with your tutor.

Story origins

The author sometimes adapts (or seems to adapt) old stories to present them in this new Cornish context. Examples are:

- Chapter 8 is a story from the 1930s. See Wikipedia page "Lighthouse and naval vessel urban legend".

- Chapter 11 is the story ‘The Fisherman and the Businessman’, often set in Mexico or Brazil.
- Chapter 17 is at times word-for-word (in translation) from what is apparently an old joke.
- Chapter 28 seems to be adapted from the 1969 BBC *Dad’s Army* episode “Sgt Wilson’s Little Secret”.
- Chapter 29 seems to be adapted from the 1969 BBC *Dad’s Army* episode “Sons of the Sea”.
- Some elements of chapter 30 are shared with the 1969 BBC *Dad’s Army* episode “Operation Kilt”.
- Chapter 33 seems to be adapted from the 1972 BBC *Dad’s Army* episode “Getting the Bird”.
- Some elements of chapter 34 are shared with the 1973 BBC *Dad’s Army* episode “The Deadly Attachment”.
- Chapter 35 has echoes of the 1933 Laurel and Hardy film “Dirty Work”.

If you spot any others, do note them down for discussion with your tutor.

A special mention must be made of the *Don Camillo* books by Giovannino Guareschi, featuring a priest and a communist mayor in Italy after the Second World War. These were adapted into five Franco-Italian films, and into a 1980 BBC series *The Little World of Don Camillo*, starring Mario Adorf and Brian Blessed. If you enjoy *Dicky Holla*, you’ll probably enjoy *Don Camillo*, with its 347 short, gently comic, stories.

General notes on language

Rod Lyon writes in an unusual mixture of Kernewek Kemmyn and Late Cornish. Most of the words are to be found in *An Gerlyver Meur*. The language the characters speak, particularly the fishermen, is much more like Late Cornish. For Middle Cornish speakers, here are some notes to help you.

a allja = a allsa

a ber’ ko’ = a berdh kov (a)

by’an = byghan

braws = bras

byska / byska’ = bythkweth

chy / chi = ty

dhanna = ena

durt = diworth

durtam = diworthiv / dhyworthiv

era = esa

et = yn
etta jy = ynnos jy
etto = ynno
for' = fordh
gen = gans
gwr'yl = gwruthyl
k'ar = kepar, kepar ha
koe'via = koedhvia
lawl = leverel
ma / 'ma = yma
nag eresta = nag esos ta
ny ellam / ny ellama / ny ella'ma = ny allav
ny vedn'ma = ny vynnav / vynsen
ny woera'ma = ny wonn vy
ny wo'ya = ny wodhya
ort = orth
o va = o ev
pejar = peswar
perri ko' = perthi kov
thera / 'thera = yth esa, yth esen, yth esewgh
theram / thera'ma / yth o'ma = yth esov
'therans = yth esens
'theren = yth esen
thero' hwi = yth esowgh hwi
theros = yth esos
'theron / eron = yth eson
'tho = ytho
uji / u jy = usi
var'as = varghas
a vedno'hwi = a vynnnowgh hwi
a woeres ta / a woer'es ta = a wodhes ta
a yllow' hwi = a yllowgh hwi
yth esa va = yth esa ev

The characters often (but not consistently) use pre-occlusions, such as 'hedna' for 'henna'.

=> Watch out for typos! For instance, Tamsin is spelt 'Tamsyn' 29 times out of 41 in chapter 22, the boat *An Rosenn Wynn* is called *An Sterenn Wynn* twice in chapter 20, and Mab Jowann is called 'Jowann Byghan' three times in chapters 20 and 21 and then 'Map Jowann' three times in chapter 27. A few typos are shown in the language notes of each chapter with the symbol =>. Can you find any more?

Dyskans 77

Dicky Holla Chaptra 10: Kelemmi

Read Chapter 10 if you haven't already done so.

To consider:

- Who makes the speech at the top of page 42? Surely it makes sense only if it is in fact spoken by Dicky Holla, even though the next speech is by him, too. The “y” of “y vroder” refers to Dicky’s father, just spoken of as “sira-wynn” by his son, Mab Jowann. And otherwise Tommi would also have an Ewnter Wella.
- How do homing pigeons help Dicky find where the *Ambos Hweg* is? Is it enough to know the direction they appear from? Could homing pigeons find a moving boat?

Language notes:

- kelemmi: plural of kolom(m)
- restys: from rostya
- marnas chi dhe dhiveri = unless you pour
- for'ow = fordhow

Write an answer in Cornish to this question, trying not to take more than 40 minutes:

- Pandr'a hwer yn Chaptra 10? Pyth o po da po drog genes a-dro dhe'n hwedhel ma? Ro ensamplow dhyworth an tekst rag skoodhya dha worthyp.

Dyskans 78

Dicky Holla Chaptra 11: An Kusulyas Dyghtyans

Read Chapter 11 if you haven't already done so.

To consider:

- When is this story set? It mentions “nans yw a-dro dhe dheg blydhen”, but is definitely not in wartime.

To find:

- Other examples of the story of ‘The Fisherman and the Businessman’.

Language notes:

- masout = mazut, a heavy fuel oil; it may refer to diesel, which you can get from distilling mazut.

Write an answer in Cornish to this question, trying not to take more than 40 minutes:

- Pandr'a hwer yn Chaptra 11? Pyth o po da po drog genes a-dro dhe'n hwedhel ma? Ro ensampLOW dhyworth an tekst rag skoodhya dha worthyp.

Dyskans 79

Dicky Holla Chaptra 12: An Kraf

Read Chapter 12 if you haven't already done so.

Language notes:

- pub dydh tirans an puskes = every fish-landing day
- durt = diworth / dhyworth
- kychys => kechys (from kachya)
- den an klogh = sexton, the person who looks after the church and its churchyard, digging graves, and sometimes acts as an undertaker
- geler = coffin
- ugens mil peuns => ugens mil beuns
- 'kijyow = shoes (eskisyow)
- heb may => heb mar
- ar'antti = bank (arghantti)

Write an answer in Cornish to this question, trying not to take more than 40 minutes:

- Pandr'a hwer yn Chaptra 12? Pyth o po da po drog genes a-dro dhe'n hwedhel ma? Ro ensampLOW dhyworth an tekst rag skoodhya dha worthyp.

Dyskans 80

Dicky Holla Chaptra 13: An Dhew Havyas

Read Chapter 13 if you haven't already done so.

Language notes:

- dantor => danter (suiter, lenited from tanter)
- namna y worthugher => namma y worthugher (ruin his evening)

Write an answer in Cornish to this question, trying not to take more than 40 minutes:

- Pandr'a hwer yn Chaptra 13? Pyth o po da po drog genes a-dro dhe'n hwedhel ma? Ro ensamplow dhyworth an tekst rag skoodhya dha worthyp.

Dyskans 81

Dicky Holla Chaptra 14: An Poisson d'Or

Read Chapter 14 if you haven't already done so.

To consider:

- Dicky and Tamsin were supposed to be having a free meal, so why did they attempt to pay?

Language notes:

- kloch => klogh
- Kap'n Jack => Kap'n Dicky

Write an answer in Cornish to this question, trying not to take more than 40 minutes:

- Pandr'a hwer yn Chaptra 14? Pyth o po da po drog genes a-dro dhe'n hwedhel ma? Ro ensamplow dhyworth an tekst rag skoodhya dha worthyp.

Dyskans 82

Dicky Holla Chaptra 15: Dicky Holla ha'n Gwrekk

Read Chapter 15 if you haven't already done so.

Language notes:

- hantedydh => hanterdydh
- lurneth => leurnedh (area)

- An Hor' = An Hordh
- haylya => halya (haul)
- kruppya => kreupya (creep)
- stras an kok = the boat's hold
- dalla' = dalleth

Write an answer in Cornish to this question, trying not to take more than 40 minutes:

- Pandr'a hwer yn Chaptra 15? Pyth o po da po drog genes a-dro dhe'n hwedhel ma? Ro ensamplow dhyworth an tekst rag skoodhya dha worthyp.

Dyskans 83

Dicky Holla Chaptra 16: Ewnter Hykka

Read Chapter 16 if you haven't already done so.

To consider:

- Who is speaking for most of page 63? The paragraph beginnning 'Ny yw dyffrans ...' doesn't have a speaker allocated. It seems most likely that the story in this and the next two paragraphs (starting 'Ha chy ow koslowes ...' and 'Mes yn lakka prys ...') is told by Dicky Holla. It can't be Tommi, as we see at the bottom of the page.
- "Lebmyn, mar kwruss'ta gorra tabm a'th mona war an moyha kerys ha nebes kevrynnys yn-mysk tri po pejar margh aral, 'fia chons dell wrusses ta gwaynya neppyth." Is this true?

Language notes:

- Kap'n Dick => Kap'n Dicky
- halljans = allsons / hallsons
- manyylon => manylyon (details)

Write an answer in Cornish to this question, trying not to take more than 40 minutes:

- Pandr'a hwer yn Chaptra 16? Pyth o po da po drog genes a-dro dhe'n hwedhel ma? Ro ensamplow dhyworth an tekst rag skoodhya dha worthyp.

Dyskans 84

Dicky Holla Chaptra 17: An Prov

Read Chapter 17 if you haven't already done so.

To find:

- Other examples of the 'ladle in the bed' joke.

Language notes:

- pa / pa' = pan
- ker'es = kerdhes
- treth = ynter
- ar'ans = arghans
- lawll => lawl (leverel)

Write an answer in Cornish to this question, trying not to take more than 40 minutes:

- Pandr'a hwer yn Chaptra 17? Pyth o po da po drog genes a-dro dhe'n hwedhel ma? Ro ensamplow dhyworth an tekst rag skoodhya dha worthyp.

Dyskans 85

Dicky Holla Chaptra 18: Diank Feusik

Read Chapter 18 if you haven't already done so.

To consider:

- How many times does *An Rosenn Wynn* come alongside *An Marie-Michelle* this chapter? In the narration, this occurs once to ask for the brandy, and once to take on the two cases. But then we read, "*An Rosenn Wynn* re beu gwelys peder gweyth lemmyn dres an diwettha tri po peswar mis ryb denewen a gok bretonnek, hag ost *An Luggar* re beu ow tos yn kompes a-dro dhe'n keth termyn es vysytyw *An Rosenn Wynn* dhe'n Vretonyon." Note that this is a key plot point.

Language notes:

- a bes an mona => a beas an mona
- stras an kok = the boat's hold
- gorgrysi => gogrysi (suspect)
- yn kompes = consistently

- an bykadoryon => an byskadoryon
- Dicky Holla wosa prederi yn y geveur sur dell wrussa Benni skon leverel neppyth dhe'n awtoritys.
=> Dicky Holla wosa prederi yn y geveur **o** sur dell wrussa Benni skon leverel neppyth dhe'n awtoritys.
A main verb is needed. Note that the author sometimes uses 'dell' to introduce indirect statements.
- penntii => pennti
- glyp => glyb
- slynkya faglenn yn y boket => ha slynkya faglenn yn y boket (?)
- an sagh hag ynno an legesti: this is a great way of making an oblique relative, as an alternative to 'an sagh mayth usi ynno an legesti'
- gwirosow = drinks, specifically spirits (sing. gwires)

Write an answer in Cornish to this question, trying not to take more than 40 minutes:

- Pandr'a hwer yn Chaptra 18? Pyth o po da po drog genes a-dro dhe'n hwedhel ma? Ro ensamplow dhyworth an tekst rag skoodhya dha worthyp.

Dyskans 86

Dicky Holla: Gorwolok 1

Write an answer in Cornish to one or both of these questions, trying not to take more than 40 minutes each:

- Fatel dhyffer kows an dus yn *Dicky Holla* a yeth an hwedhlans?
- Dell welsyn, yma kammgemeryansow yn *Dicky Holla*. Fatel wrug hemma menni dha lowender a'n hwedhlow? Ro ensamplow dhyworth an tekst rag skoodhya dha worthyp.

Dyskans 87

Dicky Holla: Gorwolok 2

Write an answer in Cornish to either question, trying not to take more than 40 minutes:

- P'eur yw settyans a *Dicky Holla*, ow kul vri a japters 10-18?
- P'eur yw settyans a *Dicky Holla*, ow kul vri a'n lyver kowal?

Dyskans 88

Dicky Holla: Gorwolok 3

Write an answer in Cornish to one or both of these questions, trying not to take more than 40 minutes each:

- Pyth yw kesweyth *Dicky Holla*? Dhe'th vreus jy, pyth yw an sewenyansow ha falladowyow a'n lyver? Ro ensamplo dhyworth an tekst rag skoodhya dha worthyp.
- Fatel gehevel an lyver ma dhe hwedhlow komparek yw aswonys dhis?

Dyskans 89

Dicky Holla: Gorwolok 4

Write an answer in Cornish to one or both of these questions, trying not to take more than 40 minutes each:

- Kepar hag awtour *Dicky Holla*, dres termyn hir skriforyon re gemeras hwedhlow koth ha'ga gorra yn desedhansow nowydh. Fatel omglewydh a-dro dhe hemma, po yn ollgemmyn po yn arbennik? (Noten: *desedhansow* = *settings*)
- Y kodh dhis aswiwa *Dicky Holla* rag an ganel bellwolok *BBC Kernow*. Py par chanjow a wrusses rag dha viroryon?

Dyskans 90

Dicky Holla: Gorwolok 5

Write an answer in Cornish to one or both of these questions, trying not to take more than 40 minutes each:

- Nyns yw an tekst settys ma y'n FSS. Ywa tybyans da dhe'th breus jy? Dadhel lesow hag anlesow yn redya a-dreus lytherenansow. (Noten: *lesow* = *advantages*; *anlesow* = *disadvantages*)
- A omlowenhasys redya ha studhya *Dicky Holla*? Ro ensamplo dhyworth an tekst rag skoodhya dha worthyp.