Character Analysis

Name: _____

Date: _____

Complete the table for each member of the Otis family (chapter 1): full name, physical description, personality and at least one fun or interesting fact.

Member	Full name	Physical description	Personality	Fun fact
 MR OTIS				
 MRS OTIS				
 WASHINGTON				
 VIRGINIA				
 THE TWINS				

Matching exercise

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Match each phrase from the story with an image. Draw a line to join them.

1	*Everyone told him he was doing a very foolish thing, as there was no doubt at all that the place was haunted.*	A	
2	*She was a wonderful Amazon, and had once raced old Lord Bilton on her pony twice round the park.*	B	
3	*They were delightful boys, and, with the exception of the worthy Minister, the only true republicans of the family.*	C	
4	*Right in front of him he saw, in the wan moonlight, an old man of terrible aspect.*	D	
5	*"My dear sir," said Mr. Otis, "I really must insist on your oiling those chains, and have brought you for that purpose a small bottle of the Tammany Rising Sun Lubricator."*	E	
6	*Just, however, as he reached the top of the great oak staircase, a door was flung open, two little white-robed figures appeared, and a large pillow whizzed past his head!*	F	
7	*He contented himself with becoming faintly phosphorescent, and vanished with a deep churchyard groan, just as the twins had come up to him.*	G	
8	*He chuckled to himself, and turned the corner; but no sooner had he done so than, with a piteous wail of terror, he fell back, and his blanched face in his long, bony hands.*	H	

Glossary

Name: _____

Date: _____

Punctilious: (adj) showing great attention to detail or correct behaviour

Dowager: (n) a widow with a title or property from her late husband

Prima-donna: (n) the chief female singer in an opera

Gardenias: (n) a tree or shrub with large white or yellow flowers

Peerage: (n) a noble title and rank

Amazon: (n) a member of a legendary race of female warriors

Waggonette: (n) a horse-drawn vehicle

Knoll: (n) a small hill or mound

Quaint: (adj) attractively unusual or old-fashioned

Cheroot: (n) a cigar with both ends open

Dogmatic: (adj) tending to think of certain things as undeniably true

Sanguineous: (adj) resembling blood

Phantasmata: (n) illusions, apparitions, or ghosts

Hominy: (n) coarsely ground corn

Aspect: (n) appearance or quality

Gyves: (n) shackles

Efficacious: (adj) successful; effective

Eminent: (adj) famous and respected

Wainscoting: (n) wooden panelling on the lower part of a room's walls

Furore: (n) overexcited emotion or anger

Vermilion: (n) a brilliant red colour

The Virgin Queen: (n) a nickname for Queen Elizabeth I of England

Casque: (n) a helmet

Charnel-house: (n) a place where corpses or bones are piled; a place associated with violent death

Gaiety: (n) the state of being light-hearted or cheerful

Sallied: (v) to suddenly start into activity

Oriel: (n) a large upper-storey bay with a window

Azure: (n) a bright blue colour

Falchion: (n) a broad, slightly curved sword

Jack-boots: (n) large leather military boots

Dimity: (n) a cotton fabric

Chanticleer: (n) a name for a cockerel, used particularly in fairy tales

Perdition: (n) a state of eternal punishment and ruin

BEFORE YOU READ

If someone told you your new home was haunted, would you still move in? What would you do on the first night?

Why might a story set in an old English house be funnier when the new owners do not believe in ghosts?

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Quiz

Name: _____

Date: _____

Please choose the best option for each of the following questions.

1. What is the name of the American Minister who bought Canterville Chase?

(a) Moses R. Croft
(b) Hiram B. Otis
(c) Sydney P. Sherman
(d) Dudley M. Stokecroft

2. What frightened the Dowager Duchess of Bolton into a fit?

(a) A voice whispering her name as she slept
(b) The ghost of a pale girl floating down the corridor
(c) The baying of some unknown creature in the night
(d) Two skeleton hands on her shoulders

3. What does the American Minister say about ghosts in Europe?

(a) That if they existed, America would have them in museums soon
(b) That he looked forward to meeting one
(c) That his modern way of thinking would prevent him from witnessing them
(d) That he wasn't scared of silly little things like ghosts

4. What was Mrs Otis' maiden name?

(a) Miss Sandy J. Thomson
(b) Miss Adelaide R. Frank
(c) Miss Lucretia R. Tappan
(d) Miss Isabelle F. Potts

5. By how much did Miss Virginia E. Otis beat Lord Bilton in the pony race?

(a) A length and a half
(b) Two and a half lengths
(c) A fraction of a whisker
(d) An entire lap

6. What is the nearest railway station to Canterville Chase?

(a) Oxford
(b) Canterbury
(c) Peterborough
(d) Ascot

7. What does Washington use to remove the blood-stain by the fireplace?

(a) A powerful household cleaner
(b) Super-powered all-American bleach bar
(c) Pinkerton's Champion Stain Remover
(d) Addison's High-Powered Cleaning Fluid

8. What does Mr Otis suggest they do about Mrs Umney's fainting?

(a) Give her a week of sick leave
(b) Be extra nice to her
(c) Charge her money for fainting
(d) Fire her immediately

9. What do the Otis family find when they come down to breakfast on their first morning at Canterville Chase?

(a) Mrs Umney has been murdered
(b) The blood stain has returned
(c) The chairs have all been overturned
(d) Virginia has died

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Quiz

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10. What topics does the narrator suggest might form the ordinary conversation of cultured Americans of the better class? Select all that apply.

- [a] The difficulty of finding hominy in England
- [b] Henry the VIII's wives
- [c] The advantages of the baggage-check system
- [d] The sweetness of the New York accent
- [e] The obesity epidemic
- [f] The existence of ghosts and other supernatural beings

11. How does Mr Otis feel when he is woken by the sound of clanking metal?

- (a) Calm
- (b) Feverish
- (c) Terrified
- (d) Angry

12. Which descriptions below match the old man Mr Otis sees when he opens his bedroom door? Select all that apply.

- [a] Long grey hair
- [b] Long, matted beard
- [c] Soiled and ragged clothes
- [d] One hand missing
- [e] Carrying a heavy knife
- [f] Red eyes
- [g] Wearing manacles and gyves

13. What does Mr Otis do when he sees the ghost?

- (a) Screams and runs back into his bedroom, slamming the door
- (b) Faints
- (c) Gives him some lubrication for his chains
- (d) Stands completely still waiting for the ghost to do something

14. How does the ghost escape when a pillow is thrown at him?

- (a) He flies through the window
- (b) He runs out the back door
- (c) He uses the Fourth dimension of Space
- (d) He murders the twins

15. Which of the people below does the ghost recall scaring in his 300 year career? Select all that apply.

- [a] The Dowager Duchess
- [b] Sir Henry Hargreaves
- [c] Sir William Gull
- [d] Lady Ainsley of Canterbury
- [e] Madame de Tremouillac
- [f] Monsieur de Voltaire

16. How did Lady Stutfield die?

- (a) She died of fright
- (b) She was strangled by her lover
- (c) She was crushed by a horse and cart as she ran suddenly out of the house in hysterics
- (d) She drowned herself in a carp-pond

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Quiz

Name: _____

Date: _____

17. What does the ghost decide to do about the Otis family?

- [a] Leave the house and never return
- [b] Befriend them
- [c] Visit the council of ghosts for advice
- [d] Have his vengeance upon them

18. What different colours has the blood stain in the library been? Select all that apply.

- (a) Dull red
- (b) Bright orange
- (c) Sky blue
- (d) Vermilion
- (e) Rich purple
- (f) Deep black
- (g) Emerald-green

19. Which member of the family is distressed by the sight of the blood stain?

- (a) Virginia
- (b) Washington
- (c) The twins
- (d) Mrs Otis

20. What does Mr Otis do when he sees the Canterville ghost?

- (a) Takes the twins' pellet guns away from them
- (b) Points his gun at him
- (c) Asks if he has oiled his chains yet
- (d) Turns and runs away

21. What does Mrs Otis do when the Canterville ghost laughs his most terrible laugh?

- (a) Screams and jumps out of the nearest window
- (b) Bursts into tears and collapses on the floor
- (c) Breaks into a fit of uncontrollable laughter herself
- (d) Offers him a bottle of tincture

22. What annoyed the ghost the most about his latest encounter with the Otis family?

- (a) The twins shooting pellets at him
- (b) Mrs Otis' gross materialism
- (c) The fact that he hadn't been able to wear the suit of armour
- (d) The fact that Mr Otis aimed his gun at him

23. Why does the Canterville ghost bear Washington a special grudge?

- (a) Because he is the first born of the family
- (b) Because he keeps removing the blood stain
- (c) Because he is jealous of how tall and dashing Washington is
- (d) Because he thinks he has a stupid name

24. What character does the ghost intend to assume after sitting on the twins' chests and standing between them as a corpse?

- (a) Dumb Daniel
- (b) Martin the Maniac
- (c) Oliver of the Occult
- (d) Horrible Henry

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Quiz

Name: _____

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25. What time does the ghost set off to execute his plan?

(a) Half past ten

(b) Midnight

(c) 1 o'clock in the morning

(d) 2 o'clock in the morning

26. Where are the coats of arms of the Canterville ghost, and those of his wife, blazoned on the wall?

(a) By the doors to the grand ballroom

(b) By the great oriel window

(c) By the marble staircase

(d) Above the great fireplace

27. Why is the Canterville ghost so scared of the figure?

(a) It reminds him of his father

(b) It seems to come from the pits of hell themselves

(c) He has never seen a ghost before

(d) He hates it when others wear the same outfit as him

28. When does the Canterville ghost swear (according to the picturesque phraseology of the antique school) that deeds of blood will be wrought?

(a) At midnight that night

(b) After the cock crows twice

(c) Immediately

(d) After a man blows his trumpet

If you read it in the iClassics app

Answer these extra questions about what you discover as you read:

1. What happens when you tap the photograph of the house?

2. What does Washington do when you tap him?

3. What colours can you draw with on the painting behind the twins?

4. What is sitting in the armchair behind the text about the ghost reaching a small secret chamber in the left wing?

5. What can you see behind the coat of armour when you press it?

6. What flies past the house's turrets when the sun rises?

Think like a detective

Name: _____

Date: _____

Answer in full sentences. Support your ideas with evidence from the text.

1. Lord Canterville warns the Otises that the house is haunted, yet Mr Otis buys it and says ghosts do not exist. Which details in chapters 1–3 show his attitude? Is he foolish, sensible, or something else?

2. The Otises answer the ghost with practical remedies: stain remover, lubricant for his chains, pillows. Why does Wilde make this comic? What is he suggesting about old Europe and modern America?

3. The ghost sees himself as a terrifying figure, but the family make him look ridiculous. Choose one scene and explain who holds the power and how the ghost's feelings change.

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Writing

Name: _____

Date: _____

Choose one of the members of the Otis family. Write a message to your best friend back home in America, telling them all about your experience of moving to England. Tell them about any interesting things that have happened to you since you've moved, and explain the differences and similarities between England and America.

