

Lesson 12: Creating A Character

Read the passage and highlight details that create a vivid picture of the Matron.

**The Matron**

None of us dared to sit up in bed, but all eyes were on the Matron now, watching to see what she was going to do next. She always had a pair of scissors hanging by a white tape from her waist, and with this she began shaving thin slivers of soap into the palm of one hand. Then she went over to where the wretched Tweedie lay and very carefully she dropped these little soap-flakes into his open mouth. She had a whole handful of them and I thought she was never going to stop.

What on earth is going to happen? I wondered. Would Tweedie choke? Would he strangle? Might his throat get blocked up completely? Was she going to kill him?

The Matron stepped back a couple of paces and folded her arms across, or rather underneath, her massive chest.

Nothing happened. Tweedie kept right on snoring.

Then suddenly he began to gurgle and white bubbles appeared around his lips. The bubbles grew and grew until in the end his whole face seemed to be smothered in a bubbly foaming white soapy froth. It was a horrific sight. Then all at once, Tweedie gave a great cough and a splutter and he sat up very fast and began clawing at his face with his hands. ‘Oh!’ he stuttered. ‘Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh no! Wh-wh-what’s happening? Wh-wh-what’s on my face? Somebody help me!’

The Matron threw him a face flannel and said, ‘Wipe it off, Tweedie. And don’t ever let me hear you snoring again. Hasn’t anyone ever taught you not to go to sleep on your back?’

With that she marched out of the dormitory and slammed the door.

1. Notice how Dahl describes the Matron. Find at least one quote to show:

What the Matron <b>does</b>	What the Matron <b>says</b>

2. Based on your highlighted details, what are some words to describe the Matron?

3. Identify focused moments in this excerpt. Organize these **events in order**:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Review these quotations from Chapter 12:

*"She went crunching along the corridor flinging open all the dormitory doors and switching on all the lights. The intensity of her fury was frightening." (14)*

*"Wragg kept quiet. I didn't blame him for that. Had he owned up, it was certain his fate would have been a terrible and a bloody one." (16)*

*"Hand the keys to Matron, who will keep them for the rest of the term! And all parcels coming from home will be confiscated from now on! I will not tolerate this kind of behaviour!" (20)*

What central idea about the Matron is developed in these moments? (select one)

- a) The Matron is strict in trying to make sure the boys follow the rules.
- b) The boys are mischievous and enjoy playing pranks on the Matron.
- c) The Matron is a cruel and terrifying presence in the boys' lives.
- d) The Matron doesn't care if the boys go hungry.