**Year 9 ILT Spring Term**

**Reading Comprehension 1- ‘Winter’s Bone’ by Daniel Woodrell**

Read the passage carefully and then complete the tasks below.

*Taken from the opening to ‘Winter’s Bone’, Ozark teenager Ree Dolly is faced with an unresponsive mother and a criminal father. Alone, she does what she can do to manage the household and take care of her two younger siblings.*

Ree Dolly stood at break of day on her cold front steps and smelled coming flurries and saw meat. Meat hung from trees across the creek. The **carcasses** hung pale of flesh with a fatty gleam from low limbs of saplings in the side yards. Three halt haggard houses formed a kneeling rank on the far Creekside and each had two or more skinned torsos dangling by rope from sagged limbs, venison left to the weather for two nights and three days so the early blossoming of decay might round the favour, sweeten that meat to the bone.

Snow clouds had replaced the horizon, capped the valley darkly, and chafing wind blew so the hung meat twirled from jigging branches. Ree, brunette and sixteen, with milk skin and abrupt green eyes, stood bare-armed in a fluttering yellow dress, face to the wind, her cheeks reddening as if smacked again. She stood tall in combat boots, scarce at the waist but plenty through the arms and shoulders, a body made for loping after needs. She smelled the frosty wet in the looming clouds, thought of her shadowed kitchen and lean cupboard, looked to the **scant** woodpile, and shuddered. The coming weather meant wash hung outside would freeze into planks, so she’d have to stretch clothes line across the kitchen above the woodstove, and the puny stack of wood split for the potbelly would not last long enough to dry much except Mom’s underthings and maybe a few T-shirts for the boys. Ree knew there was no gas for the chain saw, so she’d be swinging the axe out back while winter blew into the valley and fell around her.

Jessup, her father, had not set by a fat woodpile, not split what there was for the potbelly before he went down the steep yard to his blue Capri and bounced away on the rut road. He had not set food by nor money, but promised he’d be back soon as he could with a paper sack of cash and a trunkload of delights. Jessup was a broken-faced, **furtive** man given to uttering quick pleading promises that made it easier for him to walk out the door and be gone, or come back inside and be forgiven. Walnuts were still falling when Ree saw him last.

Walnuts were thumping to ground in the night like stalking footsteps of some large thing that never quite came into view, and Jessup had paced on this porch in a worried slouch, dented nose snuffling, lantern jaw smoked by beard, eyes uncertain and alarmed by each walnut thump. The darkness and those thumps out in the darkness seemed to keep him jumpy. He paced until a decision popped into is head, then started down the steps, going fast into the night before his mind could change. He said, “Start lookin’ for me soon as you see my face. ‘Til then, don’t even wonder.”

1. Based on their use in the following quotations, what do you think each of these key vocabulary mean?
   1. “The **carcasses** hung pale of flesh with a fatty gleam from low limbs of saplings in the side yards”
      * Bones
      * An empty shell.
      * A dead body or corpse
   2. “thought of her shadowed kitchen and lean cupboard, looked to the **scant** woodpile, and shuddered”
      * Little, barely sufficient
      * Overloaded
      * Scattered
   3. “Jessup was a broken-faced, **furtive** man”
      * Angry
      * Secretive
      * Excitable
2. What is hanging from the trees outside Ree’s home?
3. What is the weather like in this scene?
4. Why will Ree need to use an axe to chop more firewood?
5. What promise does Ree’s father make when he leaves
6. Find FOUR pieces of information about Ree’s appearance from lines 8-12.
7. Find a quotation which suggests Ree’s family do not have much money.
8. Find a quotation which suggests that Ree has not seen her father in a long time.
9. In lines 13-17, how does the writer convey the impression that Ree is determined?
10. From paragraph 4 (line 24 to end), what does the writer imply about Jessup’s behaviour? Use evidence to support your answer.