

The Drover's Wife – Annotations

Quote or extract	Forms, features, or stylistic devices	Does it affirm, challenge or reveal your ideas about collective and individual cultural identity?
two-roomed big bark	<p>Hyphenated adjectives create multi layered images with an economy of words. Lawson was primarily a journalist and these descriptions are precise while also creating atmosphere</p> <p>Plosive alliteration expressing the harsh environment and the poverty of the occupants</p>	
<p>Bush all around – bush with no horizon, for the country is flat. No ranges in the distance. The bush consists of stunted, rotten native apple-trees.</p>	<p>Repetition emphasises the monotony of the bush and the lack of sensory variety.</p> <p>Biblical allusion. In Lawson's time the people would understand the connection-this is no garden of Eden.</p> <p>Use of hyphenated adjectives</p>	
few she-oaks which are sighing	Personification – the environment is the only company she has	
Four ragged, dried-up-looking children	<p>Anonymity of children. Consider if Lawson is saying these represent all children (they are not all given names). Hyphenated adjective strings create a clear image of poverty, neglect and hardship</p>	
Snake! Mother, here's a snake!"	Another biblical allusion- a symbol of both the ongoing threat of life in the bush but also connects to the concept	

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gaunt, sun-browned bushwoman	The adjectives describe her as a person, the verbs describe what she does .	
'Here! Gone in the wood-heap;' yells the eldest boy – a sharp-faced urchin of eleven. 'Stop there, mother! I'll have him. Stand back! I'll have the beggar!'	Look at the responsibility and air of authority the eldest (male) child assumes. Exclamation marks are used to show high excitement.	
'Tommy, come here, or you'll be bit. Come here at once when I tell you, you little wretch!'	Australian slang and vernacular expresses that Australia has its own language, quite distinct from the 'mother country' of England.	
At the same time the big, black, yellow-eyed dog-of-all-breeds, who has shown the wildest interest in the proceedings, breaks his chain and rushes after that snake.	The dog, in Lawson's stories and in our Australian identity, is man's best friend. The dog is often a character in these stories. The hyphenated descriptor implies that Australians themselves have quick temperaments, are loyal and so on.	
to tempt	Biblical allusion – snake and temptation Exclusive pronoun 'it' depersonalises the snake	
It is near sunset, and a thunderstorm is coming.	Foreshadowing of a thunderstorm builds tension	
must be brought	Imperative – she has duties, responsibilities as a bush mother as well as wife	
She will not take them into the house	Repetition of personal pronoun depersonalises the drover's wife	
an earthen one – called a 'ground floor' in this part of the bush	Specifically Australian vocabulary and language which needed explaining to the readers of the white, male, 'cultured' readers of The Bulletin	
Tommy turns in, under protest, but says he'll lie awake all night and smash that blinded snake.	Australian masculinity and protectiveness of its women comes in the expletive (blinded – it's like saying 'beep')	

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	over a swear word) uttered by the eleven year old in an attempt to be the male authority figure	
skinnin' me alive wif his club	Colloquialisms and incomplete words are a feature of the 'Australian way of speaking'	
D'yer 'you'll swell up, an smell, an' turn red an' green an' blue all over till yer bust. Won't he mother?'	Abbreviated words are part of 'the Australian' identity Cumulative listing of 'an' creates a humorous tone and creates the character of Australian children – storytellers and scallywags. This feeds into the ideology of the 'larrikin' who 'spins yarns'	
'Now then, don't frighten the child. Go to sleep,' she says	The exchange between mother and children creates a sense of realism. It is colloquial and shows that family and a close knit one is part of the national narrative. We don't know who is talking all the time which shows that 'family' is an idea not really a group of individuals	
But the remark makes her smile.	She smiles because her boys are growing up to be 'typical' Australians- not right to swear but expected that they will. It is a humorous exchange.	
Near midnight.	Truncated sentence, builds suspense	
The thunderstorm comes on, and the wind, rushing through the cracks in the slab wall, threatens to blow out her candle.	Candle is a metaphor for her family. Storm = nature's power	
the cracks between the slabs gleam like polished silver	Simile, like polished silver, appeals to the readership who would know (much better than the wife, what that looks like	
Besides, she has not heard from her husband for six months, and is anxious about him	Her husband is not her primary concern. He is an 'aside' (Besides). This shows the reader how long she has been alone and sets up the flashbacks.	

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He was a drover, and started squatting here when they were married. The drought of 18 – ruined him	Lawson often explains how the landscape or the government ruin people. This is part of our Australian identity. Consider current drought situations to see if this affirms or challenges the Australian identity	
gives her what she needs of it, and takes the rest in return for other provisions.	Consider the economic position of women – the man 'gives' and 'takes'	
usual castles in the air	This is authorial intrusion, explaining from his point of view, through metaphor, what women's dreams (castle in the air) were. The tone here is neutral. The Drover's wife accepts her life	
Heaven help her! Takes a pleasure in the fashion plates	Fashion plates were drawings of outfits and styles. This is clearly a man's voice here mocking women's interest in fashion but using the Drover's wife's inner monologue to mock itself	
were born in the bush	Plosive alliteration reinforcing the difficulties	
She prayed to God to send her assistance. God sent Black Mary – the 'whitest' gin in all the land. Or, at least, God sent King Jimmy first, and he sent Black Mary. He put his black face round the door post, took in the situation at a glance, and said cheerfully: 'All right, missus – I bring my old woman, she down along a creek.'	Representation of First Nations people. Remember The Bulletin's slogan was 'Australia for the White Man'. Aboriginal people in this story are represented in a few ways – here as childlike 'cheerful' and mocking their use of English 'she down along a creek'. The effect was intended to be humorous. Consider that it is the Aboriginal woman who safely delivers a child, who has lore, medicine and experience yet is still a 'Gin'	
must be near one or two o'clock	Brings us back to the moment and away from the flashback	
He is not a very beautiful dog, and the light shows numerous old wounds where the hair will not grow. He is afraid of nothing on the face of the earth or under it. He will tackle a bullock as readily as he will tackle a flea. He	Alligator is a character and very much a 'tough Australian' Cumulative description shows his physical	

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hates all other dogs – except kangaroo-dogs and has a marked dislike to friends or relations of the family.	appearance and his attitude. He is a metaphor for the Australian character- tough, resilient and so on.	
mother in trousers greatly amused Tommy	The woman is fighting a fire. The focus is on how she appears to her children as 'blackman' something to be feared) or as a man	
Alligator, trusting more to the child's sense than his own instinct, charged furiously, and (being old and slightly deaf) did not in his excitement at first recognize his mistress's voice	Alligator thinks she is Aboriginal so goes to attack. The alliteration of the 'saddle-strap' adds to the humour of the situation. Lawson uses the structure of tragi-comedy; a potentially tragic story injected with humorous moments to highlight the resilience and stoicism of Australian characters	
It was a glorious time for the boys; a day to look back to, and talk about, and laugh over for many years	This was a difficult experience for the woman who is expressed as responsible but a good 'story' and a 'glorious time' for the boys	
dam was broken, and her heart was nearly broken too	parallel statements emphasise that it is not her feelings that are counted but how her husband would feel when he came home	
have designs on her chickens	personification, making all animals in the bush part of a collection of Australian characters	
villainous-looking sundowner	Sundowners were men who arrived at sundown offering work for food or lodgings. They were mainly considered unsavoury people because they did not do the work but took the food. An Australian 'character' the drifter	
Only last week a gallows-faced swagman - having satisfied himself that there were no men on the place - threw his swag down on the veranda, and demanded tucker. She gave him something to eat; then he	Highlights the dangers for women living alone. Also outlines another Australian 'character'	

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expressed the intention of staying for the night. It was sundown then		
but on Sunday afternoon she dresses herself, tidies the children, smartens up baby, and goes for a lonely walk along the bush-track, pushing an old perambulator in front of her. She does this every Sunday.	Sunday was a day for church. This shows the woman as still morally righteous despite her surroundings	
girl-wife	An oxymoron which points out that in her early married days she could not imagine this would be her life	
She is glad when her husband returns, but she does not gush or make a fuss about it. She gets him something good to eat, and tidies up the children.	A cumulative list of expectations	
She seems contented with her lot. She loves her children, but has no time to show it. She seems harsh to them.	Authorial intrusion. Lawson is 'watching' her and reporting her to us. She 'seems' is key	
Yesterday she bargained with a stray blackfellow to bring her some wood, and while he was at work she went in search of a missing cow. She was absent an hour or so, and the native black made good use of his time. On her return she was so astonished to see a good heap of wood by the chimney, and she gave him an extra fig of tobacco, and praised him for not being lazy. He thanked her, and left with head erect and chest well out. He was the last of his tribe and a King; but he had built that wood-heap hollow.	Description of indigenous men 'stray blackfellow' equates him with a dog. Praised him 'for not being lazy' because that is her expectation. 'Last of his tribe and a King' places the white man in a position of superiority	
but pokes her eyes with her bare fingers instead. The handkerchief is full of holes, and she finds that she has put here thumb through one, and her forefinger through another.	Creates an image of the Australian sense of humour-laughing in the face of adversity	

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An evil pair of small, bright bead-like eyes glisten at one of these holes. The snake - a black one	Adjective strings and a reconnection to the image of the snake as evil	
'Mother, I won't never go drovin' blarst me if I do!'	For all the blustering masculinity from the child, this moment his away of the predicaments his mother has faced.	
worn-out breast	She is resilient and exhausted	
sickly daylight breaks over the bush.	Plosive alliteration. Even the sunlight is sickly.	