

# LORNA DOONE

by R.D. Blackmore



## THE AUTHOR

Richard Doddridge Blackmore (1825-1900) was born in Longworth near Oxford. His father was a clergyman, as were the fathers of his father, mother and stepmother, and several of his uncles; his great-great-grandfather was the famous minister and hymn-writer Philip Doddridge (*O Happy Day*), whose family name he bore. The death of his mother shortly after his birth left him sensitive to the problems of orphaned children. In his early childhood he was raised by an aunt, but when he reached school age he went to live again with his father and new stepmother. During this period of time the family lived in the regions of Devon and Somerset where his greatest novel is set. He even attended Blundell's School, the place where John Ridd supposedly received his education. He loved the classics - a love reflected in John Ridd's constant references to the works of Shakespeare, and went on to study them at Oxford University. Blackmore married a Catholic girl, Lucy Maguire, in 1853; she converted to Anglicanism shortly thereafter. They never had any children, but were very close to their many nieces and nephews. After completing his studies he read for the Bar and entered the field of law. He developed epilepsy, however, and turned to teaching on the advice of his doctor. When he received a large inheritance from an uncle, he left teaching and settled down to the pursuits of horticulture and writing (the latter undertaken chiefly to support the former, which always seemed to lose money), neither of which required him to appear or speak in public.

His earliest literary efforts were books of poetry, followed by his first novels, *Clara Vaughan* (1864) and *Cradock Nowell* (1866), both published in serial form like the novels of Dickens. His next novel, *Lorna Doone* (1869), went right to book form and was an abject failure, at least as far as sales were concerned. The following year, a fortuitous event changed the course of Blackmore's novel. Queen Victoria's daughter married the Marquis of Lorne, and the British public, mad for the latest inside information about the royal family, mistook Blackmore's book for such a volume. Sales took off and have hardly stopped since. He wrote many more novels, but none ever achieved the sales or lasting fame of his one fluke success. *Lorna Doone*, however, became such a symbol of Scottish heroism that Nabisco named a Scottish shortbread cookie after her in 1912.

The story bearing her name contains historical figures such as Charles II and James II, along with the notorious Judge Jeffreys. The church at Oare in which Lorna was shot still exists today, and contains a stained-glass window picturing John and Lorna. The Monmouth rebellion and the Battle of Sedgemoor in which Tom Faggus was wounded were quite real, as was Tom himself. The Ridd family was also real; the last member of the clan died in 1931, and claimed to have in his possession the gun owned by John Ridd and used by Carver Doone to shoot Lorna. The existence of the Doones is a matter of scholarly debate; critics in the nineteenth century asserted confidently that the outline of their story is real, while modern scholars doubt their existence, though not the existence of similar bands of outlaws in the region during the period in question.

Blackmore remained a strongly conservative Christian throughout his life, rejecting the traditionalism of the Tractarian Movement, the liberalism of various English political parties, and the growing influence of Darwinism. His works show a confident belief in the providence of God and the goodness of His purposes. Good always triumphs over evil and true love prospers. He also loved the natural world God made, and the descriptive passages in his novels most frequently dwell on the beauties of that world. Though a scholar himself, he most appreciated the simple laborers who lived close to the land and supported one another through poverty and plenty, in joy and in sorrow. A poem written when the beloved aunt who raised him died illustrates the strength of his Christian faith:

In the hour of death, after this life's whim,  
When the heart beats low, and the eyes grow dim,  
And pain has exhausted every limb -  
The lover of the Lord shall trust in Him.

When the will has forgotten the lifelong aim,  
And the mind can only disgrace its fame,  
And a man is uncertain of his own name -  
The power of the Lord shall fill this frame.

When the last sigh is heaved, and the last tear shed,  
And the coffin is waiting beside the bed,  
And the widow and child forsake the dead -  
The angel of the Lord shall lift this head.

For even the purest delight may pall,  
The power must fail, and the pride must fall,  
And the love of the dearest friends grow small -  
But the glory of the Lord is all in all.

## **PLOT SUMMARY**

The story is narrated by the protagonist, John Ridd. He tells the story from the standpoint of an old man, a grandfather and pillar of the community, reminiscing about the adventures of his youth. He speaks first of his upbringing on a reasonably prosperous farm in Exmoor, and of his education at the grammar school in Tiverton, where he learned the basics but never really succeeded in mastering Latin or Greek, and engaged in the usual childish pranks at the expense

of his tutors. On November 29, 1673, John's twelfth birthday, John Fry, a messenger, arrives at the school to bring him home, but must wait for John to engage in a fistfight with one of the other boys, which he wins. On the way home they stop at an inn, where they encounter an aristocratic lady, her small son and a daughter about John's age, and their ladies' maid. Later, in a thick fog, they pass a gallows from which hangs a sheep-stealer, then approach the lair of the Doones of Bagworthy - an infamous family of aristocrats, turned robbers and murderers after being dispossessed of their land. They hide while a raiding party of about thirty Doones passes, carrying sheep, deer, and a little girl - the same one John had seen earlier at the inn, though he does not yet realize this.

When they arrive at home, John discovers that his father has been murdered by the Doones. He and six other farmers had been riding home from market when the Doones set upon them to rob them. Ridd was the only one who resisted, and after fighting them off successfully for a time with his staff, was shot by one of them. John also finds that his mother had gone alone to the valley of the Doones to protest the murder of her husband, had been blindfolded and led to their headquarters, in a lovely, peaceful valley, and had met with Sir Ensor Doone, the captain of the band, who treated her kindly. She had demanded justice for the death of her husband, but when Sir Ensor summoned Counsellor Doone, the bearded advisor to the captain insisted that Ridd had been the attacker, and that Carver Doone had shot him accidentally in the course of defending the peaceful band coming home from the market and minding their own business. Mrs. Ridd, frustrated but helpless, was escorted home; the bag of gold slipped into her hand by the robbers she dropped on the ground before leaving their land.

At this point John interrupts the narrative to explain how the Doones had come to occupy their current place in society. Sir Ensor had lost his land in a dispute with his cousin in 1640. In the process of seeking justice he had insulted King Charles I and had been declared an outlaw. He moved with his family to southwestern England, and in time, unwilling to work, they had begun to make their living by robbery. They multiplied rapidly by kidnaping farmers' daughters as wives for their men, and soon became the terror of the region. Initially the local farmers had done nothing to stop the Doones because they pitied them for the injustice they had received and were in awe of them as aristocrats, but soon their strength grew and nothing could be done even had they desired to do so. The sons and grandsons of Ensor grew up wild and lawless, caring for nothing except their loyalty to one another. By the time of Ridd's murder, the magistrates were so afraid of the Doones that no inquiry was made by the authorities into his death. That winter, John begins to practice with his father's gun.

On the Valentine's Day after his fourteenth birthday, John goes to catch some loach for his mother, who has not been feeling well. He follows his usual route and finds nothing, then decides to venture into the Bagworthy - untested waters because they lead into the Valley of the Doones. Here he finds an abundance of loach, but also discovers that the going is harder. Finally he reaches the base of a waterfall and decides to climb it. He barely reaches the top before giving himself up for lost and collapsing with fatigue. When he wakes, he finds himself on the grass by the river with an eight-year-old girl massaging his forehead. She asks his name, then introduces herself as Lorna Doone. She is clearly ashamed of who she is, and when she begins to cry, John comforts and kisses her. She is offended by this liberty, but obviously likes the strong boy who has found his way into Glen Doone. Soon they hear a band of men searching for "their queen." Lorna is terrified and tells John that the men will kill both of them if they find that he has entered the valley. She shows him how to escape and warns him never to come back again. She then

pretends to be asleep while he hides. The men find her and carry her home, and after dark John takes the secret passage Lorna had shown him.

In the year that follows, John continues to work on his marksmanship and labors hard on the farm, avoiding getting anywhere near the site of his adventure, but constantly thinking of the beautiful little girl he had met in Glen Doone. One day near John's fifteenth birthday, he and Annie hear the ducks making a commotion in the farmyard. They go outside and find the creek at flood stage and their old drake caught against a hurdle and about to drown. John prepares to enter the swollen creek and rescue the hapless duck, but hears a voice warning him against the attempt. A man on horseback then enters the stream and rescues the victim. When he comes ashore, he introduces himself as Tom Faggus, Mrs. Ridd's cousin and a famous highwayman. John, awestruck, asks to ride his horse. Tom doubts that he can do it, but allows him to try. Despite the horse's tricks, John manages to hang on throughout the wild ride until, overcome by fatigue, he drops off as the horse reenters the farmyard. John's mother scolds Tom for letting him ride such a horse, but she soon relents and invites him to dinner. He plays games with the children and tells them stories, and everyone has a delightful evening, though young Annie seems to take a special liking to the highwayman.

The narrator then takes a few pages to tell Tom's story. He had originally been a successful blacksmith, but his success created jealousy among many who thought him of too humble station to do so well for himself. He was engaged to be married to a young lady, but shortly before the wedding he was hit with a lawsuit by a rich man. He lost everything trying to defend himself - his farm, his livestock, his smithy and, because of his poverty, his fiancée. He then turned outlaw, though always acting like a gentleman - he was always polite to those he robbed, and even paid the coach fare to enable them to get safely home. He quickly became known for his charitable spirit and his generosity in treating others with the benefits of his occupation. He soon became quite popular with noblemen and laborers alike, who sought his company and always set their women to watch out for any officers in the neighborhood. One of his first targets was the man who had taken him to court; he robbed him of money, watch, and ring, then gave them all back because he said it was against all principle to rob a robber. As his reputation grew, he never shed blood or robbed a poor man nor insulted a woman, and always was generous to the church. While the general populace hated the Doones, they loved Tom Faggus. Later Tom bought John a gun and helped him learn to use it properly, and also taught him to ride Winnie, the strawberry mare who had given him such a hard time on Tom's earlier visit.

As the years pass, John grows bigger and stronger until, at the age of twenty-one, he is the largest man in the district, and gives little thought to Lorna Doone. Annie grows into a beautiful young woman, but Eliza remains small and sharp-tongued. The Doones continue to rob and plunder and no authority dares interfere; even the king, when informed of their behavior, makes a joke of it and does nothing. Tom Faggus, meanwhile, has moved to another district where the pickings are richer for robbers. The winter of John's twenty-first birthday brought no snow, but two months of fog because of the Gulf Stream coming near the coast. Conditions were ideal for smugglers, but fishing was sparse and hunting near impossible. People were also frightened by a strange noise in the air at night that sounded like the cry of a woman being chased by evil spirits. On New Year's Eve, John's great-uncle Reuben Huckaback, a rich merchant, is due to visit, but does not arrive at the expected time. After dinner John goes in search of him, and after getting lost in the fog, he hears his voice moaning piteously. He finds him tied to the back of a wild pony; he had been robbed by the Doones and chased around the moors for three hours for the fun

of it. John takes him safely back to the Ridd farm, where Reuben promptly declares that John will be his heir and marry his granddaughter Ruth.

For the next week he complains of his ill fortune, and when a local farmer joins the party, he demands that justice be served upon his robbers. As all present realize besides himself, nothing can be done, but Reuben does not give up easily, and the next day asks John to accompany him on a trip to Baron de Whichehalse, a local magistrate, to swear out a warrant and gather a posse against the Doones. The Baron refuses to issue a warrant because Reuben can name no names or even guarantee that his assailants were Doones, but the old man does not give up easily. He then indicates his intention to go straight to the king at the nearest opportunity - or, better yet, to Judge Jeffreys, England's Chief Magistrate. Because this would not occur for some months, Reuben asks John to take him to a place where he could see Glen Doone and plan an assault. John does so, taking him to the top of a high hill that overlooks the valley. John is again struck by the beauty and security of the place, but his heart skips a beat when he sees in the distance a girl who can be none other than Lorna, whom he has now not seen for seven years. Noticing his reaction, Reuben pries for information and discovers that John had been in the valley years before, and makes him promise to make a return visit as soon as possible. Of course, John tells him nothing about Lorna.

When Valentine's Day arrives, exactly seven years after their first encounter, John returns to Glen Doone by the route he had taken before to try to find Lorna. He finds her in the same place as before, but is awestruck by her great beauty - she is now fifteen, and a lovely lady. She knows him immediately and warns him to go away because of the danger of discovery. He does, but promises to return as soon as possible. By this time, he is completely smitten, wanting to make her his but fearing to think such thoughts of one so highborn as she. Though no one knows his secret, his absent-mindedness and reduced appetite cause all around to tease him, and finally conclude that he must have been bitten by a mad dog. John wants to visit Lorna again, but is ashamed of sneaking in secretly, afraid that Lorna might think him a coward, and concerned about his chapped face, acquired from working in the winds of March. Since he has no one to consult on the subject, he decides to seek advice from the local witch, an old woman named Mother Melldrums. One day after church John visits the old woman, but feels terribly guilty for doing so, knowing it to be wrong. Amazingly, Mother Melldrums knows who he is; she explains that he had saved her granddaughter a year before when she had tumbled into a bog. When John tells her his business, she warns him to have nothing to do with the Doones, but John refuses to heed her warning.

A few weeks later spring arrives in earnest and John again sets off for Glen Doone. He arrives near nightfall and falls asleep at the top of the waterfall. He awakens with Lorna's shadow over him, and she quickly seizes his hand and warns him to hide from the approaching patrol. She leads him into her bower concealed in the rocks, and there tells him her story. She knows nothing of her parents, but has been told that she is the daughter of the oldest son of Sir Ensor Doone, who she thinks is her grandfather. She is surrounded by ignorance and violence, and the only people to whom she can speak are Sir Ensor, who is rough with everyone else but kind to her, and Counsellor Doone, who listens but only makes jests at her questions; his son Carver, a vicious brute, hopes to succeed Sir Ensor as captain of the band and to marry Lorna. Since the death of a kindly old woman named Aunt Sabina, her only female confidant has been her maid, Gwenny Carfax. Gwenny is not intimidated by the men at all, and has been given freedom to go wherever she pleases, even outside the valley, but Lorna has no such privilege. She is terribly lonely, and

longs to know who she is and what lies beyond the valley to which she has been confined as long as she can remember. For most of her life, Lorna has been protected from the evil doings of the Doones, hearing only what seemed heroic and noble. Whatever the men may think or wish to do, she is safe under Sir Ensor's protection. But the previous July, an incident had occurred that disabused her once and for all about the kind of people among whom she lived. She was going home for dinner through the forest one day and was surprised by a young man who introduced himself as Alan Brandir and said he was her cousin. He had come from Scotland to take her back home to her aunt and uncle. She refused to go with such a youth without Sir Ensor's permission. He pleaded with her to leave the Doones forever, but as he did so, Carver came up behind him, seized him, carried him off into the woods and murdered him. She now had no doubts about the true nature of the Doones of Bagworthy.

Lorna's account hits John hard. He is now convinced more than ever that she is of noble birth and therefore can have no dealings with a yeoman such as himself, but he also fears for her safety. He is also frustrated with himself because he feared to profess his love for Lorna openly despite the certainty of her refusal. Before leaving he had agreed, because of her fears for his safety, to refrain from coming back for at least a month unless she faced real danger, in which case she would leave a prearranged signal where he could see it from the cliff above the valley. For John, the next month drags interminably while his mind is always on Lorna. As the day approaches for his return to Glen Doone, Jeremy Stickles, a messenger from the king, arrives, summoning John to appear before the Court of the King's Bench. The warrant was signed by Judge Jeffreys. The messenger immediately assures John that he is not in trouble, but John realizes that the trip to London will prevent him from keeping his appointment with Lorna. Despite all efforts to delay the trip, the messenger insists on leaving the day before John's month expires.

John's journey to London with the messenger is uneventful, largely because the now-retired Tom Faggus had sent word along the road that the travelers were to be undisturbed. When John gets to London, he is disappointed and disgusted, both with the noise and dirt with which the town is filled and by the interminable delays of the law. What he expected to be a short trip turned into a wait of two months, during which he had to pay for his own lodgings while wondering what Lorna must think of him for breaking their arranged time of meeting. While he waits at Westminster he encounters Counsellor Kitch, a lawyer in the court who tries to charge him for advice freely given. John gets the better of him, then is escorted into the presence of the Lord Chief Justice. John tells him that he has been waiting for two months for his summons to the court, and the Chief Justice tells him that the king should have been paying his expenses rather than himself. The frightened official in charge of disbursements offers John much more than he is owed, but John refuses anything more than a precise accounting. The next day, he is ushered into the presence of Judge Jeffreys to give his evidence. The Judge begins by making jests about John's extraordinary size, then gets down to business. Jeffreys asks him about the Doones and suggests that Baron de Whichehalse might be in league with them, a thought that had never occurred to John before. He also asks about Tom Faggus, then tells John that he is a good man, but says he should warn him to watch his step lest some unscrupulous judge should hang him for his earlier lifestyle. He also warns John against getting involved with any of the rebel agitation developing in his part of the country. Having proved to be of little value, John is then dismissed, and is only able to afford the trip home because the messenger gives him five pounds, promising to get the money from the suddenly-stingy disbursement officer. John has little money to get home

because he spends most of what he has on presents for his family and friends (and Lorna, of course), so makes most of the trip home on foot, after which he is joyously received by his very worried family.

Soon he visits Lorna again. She is at first cool to him because she had put out her signal two months earlier and he had never answered it. She takes him again into her bower, where she tells him of the plan to marry her to Carver after the death of Sir Ensor. John then professes his love for her and asks her if she loves him. She says she does not, but that she likes him very much. He gives her the pearl and sapphire ring he had purchased for her in London, but she refuses it, telling him that she would not take it until she had earned it by returning the love he gave so freely to her. John then returns home with renewed hope in his heart that Lorna does indeed love him despite her protestations to the contrary. They arrange to continue the system of signals while agreeing to part for two months, knowing that Lorna is safe as long as Sir Ensor lives and faithful Gwenny is there to keep watch and, in an emergency, come to fetch John.

Harvest time arrives, and the crop is a bountiful one. After the feast on the first day of the harvest, John goes alone to visit his father's grave, thinking how he would have loved the bounty of the land and the celebration that the neighbors shared. He finds Annie already there, dressed in her finest. She breaks down in tears and confesses her love for Tom Faggus. John rebukes her for sneaking around behind his back and forming an attachment without his knowledge, not realizing that in criticizing Tom's behavior he is also describing his own. Annie, in fact, accuses him of doing the same thing, and even mentions the Doones, though she is only guessing. Finally, though, she wheedles the truth out of him and he tells her about Lorna. She promises to help him and keep his secret. They then return to the house, where a dance is about to begin. John dances with Ruth Huckaback and Annie with Baron de Whichehalse's son, though both wish they could be dancing with someone else.

Much curiosity is aroused by the presence of Reuben Huckaback during the busiest time of the year for his business. He takes strange trips by himself almost every day and tells no one what he is doing. Soon the girls talk John Fry into following him, and he finds that he goes deep into Black Barrow Down and pulls something that looks like a body out of a deep hole near a quicksand pit called Wizard's Slough. At this point Fry gets so scared that he comes home without gaining further information. John Ridd becomes suspicious that Uncle Reuben might be involved in one of the plots against which Judge Jeffreys had warned him. Shortly thereafter Betty Muxworthy takes John out to the pig pen and indicates that she knows his secret about Lorna. She also tells him that he had been unable to contact her for a few weeks because she was now only free in the mornings (she had gotten this information through a secretive visit by Gwenny Carfax, but John doesn't know this yet). The next morning John goes to Glen Doone and finds Lorna, and she professes her undying love for him. She fears, though, that they can never be together because, even if he could spirit her away from the valley, the Doones would pursue her and kill John and his entire family. John knows this is true, but still maintains hope that circumstances will change. Lorna, meanwhile, insists that John tell his mother about their relationship. John is reluctant to do this, but when he gets home he finds that Tom Faggus has already told her of his love for Annie. She is predictably furious. John decides to ease the pressure on Annie by telling his mother about Lorna immediately. After she rages for a short time, she comes around and blesses them both, even looking forward to getting Lorna into their home and teaching her to be a proper farmer's wife. Later Sarah compares Ruth Huckaback unfavorably to Lorna, not realizing that Ruth is behind her. Ruth responds with considerable spirit to the insult, impressing

John to the extent that he swears that he would marry her were he not in love with Lorna. On his next visit, Lorna accepts John's ring, which she had refused before, and gives him a thumb ring that, unbeknownst to her, ties her to her aristocratic past.

Jeremy Stickles returns, on the lookout for potential uprisings against King Charles II. Believing that John deserves an explanation for his actions, he tries to explain that Protestants are planning an uprising in support of the king's illegitimate son, the Protestant Duke of Monmouth, to keep the king's Catholic brother, James II, from ascending the throne. John, who cares nothing for politics, can't understand what Stickles is talking about and assures him that he has no intention of becoming involved. Later, John realizes that the kindhearted character of his family, who would be willing to harbor fugitives regardless of their politics, puts them in a dangerous position should an uprising occur. In the days that follow, John returns often to Glen Doone, at one point penetrating deeper into the settlement than he had ever done before, but sees no sign of Lorna. He begins to fear that she has been harmed, is being held captive, or, worst of all, has been forced to marry Carver Doone. He resolves to return by night and look for her, but first goes to a lawyer and makes out a will. This time he makes for the Doone-gate rather than going through the secret passage. He manages to sneak past the sentries and reach Sir Ensor's house, where Lorna is still awake. She tells him that she is closely watched and that Gwenny is no longer allowed to leave the valley. The Cornish maid comes into the room and meets John for the first time; she now knows him if any emergency arises. Lorna then arranges a new signal. A nearby cliff bears seven rooks' nests; if one is missing, she is in peril, and if two are gone, she has been taken by Carver. She urges John to leave immediately, but promises him that Carver will never have her alive.

Each day John works at the end of the farm nearest Glen Doone so he can keep an eye on the rooks' nests, but sees no change. One day as he is about to go home for the evening he hears something on the other side of the hedge - three men armed with carbines. The three turn out to be Carver and Charlie Doone and Marwood de Whichehalse. As John listens to their conversation, he discovers that they intend to lie in wait and murder Jeremy Stickles. John is unarmed, so he circles the hiding place of the outlaws and reaches Jeremy in time, though he doesn't reveal the names of the ambushers. The two then go home by another route, with Jeremy assuring John of his undying gratitude. Part of Jeremy's duty is to deal with the Doones, but he is given no resources for the task - merely a few soldiers and the hope that he can raise support among the locals. John himself refuses to get involved despite the fact that the Doones murdered his father; of course, his concern for Lorna plays a part in his passivity.

Tom Faggus, meanwhile, obtains a royal pardon from the king, though he can't resist playing a trick on a group of local squires on his way home. They have decided to catch Tom in order to get the reward on his head. He rides up, pretending to be the king's commissioner, shows them his pardon, and claims that it is a warrant for Tom Faggus' arrest (not one of them can read). They tell him they are prepared to catch the rogue, but he rebukes them for having rusty muskets and insists that they all fire their guns to make sure they work. As soon as they do so, he pulls out his pistol and robs them, riding away in high good humor and distributing the money to the poor, who have never had such a good Christmas present. John and Annie, instead of finding the incident amusing, worry that Tom will get himself in trouble some day with his recklessness.

Soon after John sees that one of the rooks' nests is gone and heads immediately for the valley of the Doones. He is met by Gwenny Carfax, who tells him that Sir Ensor is dying and wants to speak to him, Lorna having told him about their relationship. Sir Ensor is furious that

John should aspire so far above his station and insists that John swear never to see or even think of Lorna again. John, assured of Lorna's love for him, refuses, and Sir Ensor gives them neither his blessing nor consent, but dies the next day with the two of them by his side. Before his death, he gives Lorna the necklace from which she had taken the ring she had earlier given to John; she then entrusts it to John for safekeeping. John stays for the funeral despite the threats of revenge directed toward him by Carver and Counsellor. The night he returns home, the region is hit by its worst snowstorm in more than fifty years. For weeks John and his men fight to save the livestock on the farm and keep their families alive. Lizzie does some research and shows John how to make snowshoes, after which he quickly learns to navigate the deep drifts. Knowing that no one else is equipped to travel through such terrible conditions, he goes back to Glen Doone to see Lorna. He finds her and Gwenny nearly starved to death - Counsellor and Carver had decreed that they should get no food until Lorna agreed to marry Carver. John gives them food he brought with him for the journey, then concocts a plan to get both of them out of the valley while the Doones build a great bonfire and drink themselves into unconsciousness celebrating Carver's appointment as Captain. He goes home to fetch a sledge on which to transport his passengers, then returns to the valley. When he arrives, he goes into Lorna's cabin and finds her and Gwenny under assault by Charleworth Doone and Marwood de Whichehalse; he quickly subdues both, throwing the former out a window and the latter headfirst into a snowdrift. He then takes Lorna and Gwenny to his sledge, and thence back to Plover's Barrows (his farm). When they arrive Lorna is unconscious because of the extreme cold, but she soon recovers and is introduced to Sarah Ridd, with tears of joy on both sides.

Spring finally arrives with heavy rains, but because the drifted snow is now frozen over, the rainwater threatens to flood the farmhouse and barn, keeping John busy again trying to save the remaining livestock. Lorna, meanwhile, is at home and happier than she has ever been in her life. Tom Faggus has bought a farm and has collected more than 300 horses (cleverly but legally), and now is confident enough of his financial stability to ask Annie to set a date for their wedding. When he comes to Plover's Barrows in order to make the arrangements, he meets Lorna for the first time and notices her necklace. After she leaves, he tells John that it is the most valuable piece of jewelry he has ever seen, worth more than any plot of land in the county. John is astounded, since Lorna herself thinks it is a cheap bit of glass with nothing more than sentimental value. When Tom tells her that it is worth more than one hundred thousand pounds, she first tries to give it to Sarah Ridd, who of course refuses it, then entrusts it to John for safekeeping.

After Tom leaves, Jeremy Stickles returns with a harrowing tale of his narrow escape from three Doones who chased him through the snow. Later, Carver catches Lorna alone near the boundary of the Ridd farm. Though they are separated by a raging stream, he points his gun at her and discharges it between her feet, telling her that she must return to Glen Doone within 24 hours or the Ridd farm will be burned to the ground and all its inhabitants, her included, slaughtered without mercy. When Lorna tells John about this encounter, he, knowing that the Doones are not to be trusted, is certain that the attack will come that night. Jeremy only has one soldier with him and John little more than a few farmhands and a few neighbors of marginal competence, but they intend to be prepared. Lorna encourages John by suggesting that the valley of the Doones is surely flooded from the rains, so that they will be unlikely to be able to spare a large number of men for the assault.

While the men catch up on their sleep, Gwenny climbs a tree and keeps watch. When the moon rises and floods the valleys with light, Lorna wakes John, who rouses the men for the

coming assault. Carver soon leads his men into the farmyard. John has him in his sights, but can't bring himself to pull the trigger and knocks him to the ground instead. John then maims two of the Doones near the hayricks, while Jeremy and his man kill two with their muskets. The Doones then flee in disarray, leaving their horses behind them, and the two wounded Doones are sent to the magistrates to be hanged.

Since the farm is now safe and the time has not yet arrived for the planned invasion of Glen Doone, John turns his thoughts toward marrying Lorna. Sarah objects because Lorna is too young and is still a Catholic. They begin to take her to church, where the curious gather to see the strange sight of a lovely Doone maiden in a Protestant church. Sarah, meanwhile, wants to stay on good terms with her rich relatives the Huckabacks, and sends John to invite Ruth to stay with them for a while. When John arrives at her home, he finds that she is hopelessly in love with him, though she will not admit it. He doesn't want to hurt her feelings, so he invites her to his wedding as a way of breaking the news to her about Lorna. He then tells her the whole story. She handles the situation with a great show of character and wishes him the best, though she is uncertain about whether or not she can attend the wedding.

When John returns home he finds that Counsellor Doone has come to pay a visit. The crafty old scoundrel, claiming to be Lorna's legal guardian, generously gives his consent to the wedding of John and Lorna, but expresses a wish that the couple will take up residence in Glen Doone - an idea that Sarah bluntly rejects. Counsellor, in fact, is willing to admit that John, as an honest man, would probably be out of place among the Doones. He then tells the young couple that their fathers killed one another, though both John and Lorna consider this a despicable lie intended to disrupt their relationship. Because of the lateness of the hour, Counsellor asks permission to stay the night. The following morning, he accompanies Annie into the dairy and tells her he knows a secret way to make cream rise. He tells her that this can be accomplished by moving glass beads across its surface and then placing the beads underneath the bowl of cream for several hours. Poor, gullible Annie follows Counsellor's suggestion and fetches Lorna's priceless diamonds, which Counsellor then steals. Everyone seems more upset about this than Lorna, who cares nothing for the value of the diamonds. Sarah fears that the value can never be repaid, John is furious about Counsellor's betrayal of the sanctity of hospitality, while Annie is ashamed at having been tricked so badly.

Jeremy Stickles then arrives and tells John a story about a recent rip of his. Bad weather forces him to travel along the coast and he stops at a small inn for the night. The proprietor, Benita Odam, is obviously foreign, and they strike up a conversation. She tells him that she is Italian, but had been hired as a servant by a wealthy Scottish couple with two small children. On the way home from Italy, the husband dies. The wife then returns to England, but on the journey home, their coach is stopped by a band of outlaws. The coach overturns as they try to escape. The young son is killed and the mother dies of grief soon thereafter, but the daughter is nowhere to be found. The Italian woman, having nowhere to go and no means of returning home, settles in the area and marries. When she reveals to Jeremy that she had hidden a valuable diamond necklace on the little girl, hoping the bandits would not find it, Jeremy discerns the identity of the missing child. John cannot guess who she was, but Jeremy tells him that the little girl was none other than his beloved Lorna. John then quickly connects Jeremy's story with his own childhood experience of the foreign woman at the inn and the little girl being carried away by Doone raiders. Jeremy then swears John to secrecy until he is prepared to share his newfound knowledge.

As the attack on Glen Doone approaches, Jeremy's fifteen troopers are joined by about a hundred and twenty militiamen. On the day of the assault, the group divides into three teams to invade the valley from three sides. The attack is a dismal failure. Jeremy and John are in the group that storms the Doone-gate, and they fall into an ambush; several men are killed and Jeremy is wounded. On the tops of the cliffs, the other two groups, one from Somerset and the other from Devonshire, soon begin firing at one another when a cannon shot from one goes awry. When the two groups of militia retreat, the Doones simply mop up behind them, killing a few more after the troops have done such an efficient job of killing one another. Jeremy recovers from his wounds slowly and the Doones become bolder than ever.

John longs to tell Lorna of her true parentage, but cannot because of his promise to Jeremy; meanwhile, the seeds sown through Counsellor's lie begin to bear fruit in the household, as a subtle estrangement grows between Lorna and Sarah Ridd. Soon two representatives of Chancery Court appear at Plover's Barrows with a writ demanding that Lorna appear at court when summoned; no one has any idea how the Court found out about Lorna. Having no choice at this point, John tells his mother and Lorna the true story of her high birth and capture by the Doones, though he does not yet know her name or parentage, which Lorna has no desire to discover. John then goes to seek her mother's grave and discovers that she was the Countess of Dugal, of an old and wealthy family. He also visits Benita Odam and brings her back with him to see Lorna, and the two are overjoyed to see one another once again.

Despite Sarah and John's misgivings about Tom's reliability, they finally agree to make plans for his marriage to Annie two weeks hence. Lorna, an heiress without access to a penny, begs John for a loan of twenty pounds to buy a present for Annie, and John agrees on condition that he be in charge of purchasing the gift. He goes for that purpose to see Reuben Huckaback, hoping also to convince him to attend the wedding. He is received very politely by Ruth, but finds Reuben to have aged considerably. Reuben expresses disappointment that John shows no interest in marrying Ruth, but takes John into his confidence, telling him that the rumors of rebellion in the west country, along with his strange comings and goings and the weird noise heard in the marshes are all part of a great secret that he is now prepared to share with John in exchange for his help. John agrees, but only on condition that the secret involve nothing disloyal to the king. Reuben tells John to meet him the next morning at Wizard's Slough, where John Fry had earlier followed him and observed strange doings. There the men descend into a pit by means of a bucket on a pulley, where John finds a gold mine in operation and is asked to shatter a great boulder that blocks the dig. He also discovers that one of the miners is Simon Carfax, Gwenny's father, who had been told by the miners that his daughter had been killed in a fall down the mineshaft. John soon reunites the two, to the delight of both.

Annie is married as planned, and shortly after John, who is the wrestling champion of the region, is challenged by an enormous Cornishman to a match. John cannot refuse without loss of dignity, so travels to Cornwall, where he beats the giant easily. Upon his return home, he discovers that Lorna has been taken away. Officials from the Lord Chancellor's office have taken her to London, where she is to be the ward of the Court until she reaches her twenty-first birthday. She leaves a letter for John assuring him of her undying faithfulness to him, but he fears that he has lost her for good, though not by her own choosing. Getting little comfort at home, John visits Annie and Tom and finds them living comfortably, though Tom clearly misses the old days on the high road. John rebukes him for his longings and leaves abruptly, then heads for Dulverton to see Ruth Huckaback, hoping to get some comfort from her. He meets Ruth in town, but his horse

bites her arm. He takes her to her home and cares for her, then tells her about Annie and Lorna. When he asks her advice as to what to do about his love, she tells him to go to London and seek to win her.

King Charles II dies suddenly in February 1685, throwing all into chaos. The heir to the throne was the king's brother, James II, an avowed Catholic. Many devout Protestants preferred the king's illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth, and civil war loomed over the kingdom. Hearing nothing but contradictory news about the rebellion, John urges his fellow parishioners to remain neutral and not get involved. The Doones, knowing they are marked men in the eyes of the present dynasty, forget their Catholicism and decide to support Monmouth. One day Annie arrives at Plover's Barrows with her newborn son, John Faggus, and tearfully tells her family that Tom, tired of the life of a country squire, has gone off to join the rebels. She begs John to follow him and bring him home safely. John is little inclined to involve himself in the violence, and gives as his excuse his fear of leaving the Ridd womenfolk to the tender mercies of the Doones should he go off to find Tom. Annie, however, pays a surprise visit to Counsellor Doone and demands a favor in return for his trick in stealing the diamond necklace - a signed promise to leave the Ridd farm alone while John is gone. Confronted with such a document, John must go in search of Tom. On the way he stops again at Dulverton to say goodbye to Ruth, since he fears he may not return alive.

After a week of searching for the rival armies, John finally locates the scene of battle. He gets lost in the unfamiliar marshland, but is led by a young man to the rear of Monmouth's rebel army. There he finds that the battle is all but over, with the King's forces having exacted a fearsome toll of slaughter; dead bodies lay everywhere and the King's soldiers are riding among the wounded and finishing them off. While attempting to assist a dying man, John is nuzzled by Winnie's Tom's horse, who leads him to the badly-wounded country squire. Tom has lost a lot of blood, but he begs John to put him on Winnie, which he does, and off he rides. John's horse is exhausted, so he takes a nap in a shed while the horse recovers its strength. He is awakened by twenty of the King's soldiers, who are prepared to hang him as a rebel without trial. He challenges all twenty to fight him unarmed, and so badly hurts two of them that the rest flee and he escapes. He then encounters another group of soldiers and enjoys a pleasant breakfast with them. At that point the first group arrives, and the two troops begin to fight each other, though all part of the same brigade. Their commander, Colonel Kirke, rides up and stops the scuffle, then orders that John be hanged as a rebel. Jeremy Stickle arrives just in time to prevent the lynching, but is only permitted to take John away if he promises to bring him before the Lord Chief Justice. John thus technically remains a prisoner of the Crown.

John spends five weeks in London before he is even able to get a glimpse of Lorna. He has not heard one word from her since she left Plover's Barrows, and is becoming uncertain of his status, especially when he hears gossip all around town of her exalted position in society. He finally sneaks a peek of her at a Catholic Mass, where he catches her eye. He soon receives a message to visit her at the home of her uncle, Lord Brandir, the father of the young boy who had sought out Lorna in Glen Doone and had been murdered by Carver. The young lovers are somewhat tentative because neither had heard from the other, but they soon discover that Gwenny had been hiding the letters because she was convinced that her fine lady could have nothing to do with a common farmer. They reaffirm their love for one another, and soon John is a favorite with Lord Brandir, who is stone deaf and cannot seem to understand his true relationship with Lorna. One night John spies two thieves waiting outside the Brandir mansion and waits for them to make

their move. He then enters the house and beats them soundly, saving Lord Brandir's life and cashbox in the process. As the two turn out to be notorious rogues and enemies of the Crown, John is summoned to appear before the King, who grants him a coat of arms and a knighthood.

Tiring of London and knowing the farm needs attention, Sir John Ridd returns home, now the envy of all his neighbors. He finds that the Doones are again becoming restless, not only kidnaping two young women and carrying them off to their valley, but also killing a toddler by throwing him high in the air and watching him crash into the floor for the fun of it, then carrying off the mother. The people of the region insist that John should lead them in an attack against the Doones. John reluctantly agrees, but insists on first speaking with Carver and asking for redress of the wrongs that were committed. He goes to Glen Doone under a flag of truce, but Carver treats him scornfully and sets up an ambush to try to kill him. John escapes, but is convinced that an assault is the only solution. He gathers men from throughout the area, including Tom Faggus, and prepares a plan by which Simon Carfax will lure a score of Doones out of their fortress by promising to betray a gold shipment from Reuben Huckaback's mine. Meanwhile, the volunteer militia will attack Glen Doone, feinting an assault led by Tom Faggus at the Doone-gate while John led a small force up his old water slide and launched a surprise attack from the rear. John's troops enter the glen without being noticed while those at the Doone-gate keep the main body of the Doones occupied. John and his men burn the buildings in the valley and send the women to summon their husbands, after which a raging battle ensues. The Doones leave the Doone-gate undefended to meet John's men, allowing Tom Faggus' troops to enter unmolested. The Doones, badly outnumbered, are slaughtered; only Counsellor and Carver are unaccounted for, and the Doone Valley is left a smoldering ruin.

As John leaves the scene of the battle he sees Counsellor creeping away on all fours. The old man begs John to spare him, which he does very willingly under two conditions. The first is that he reveal the name of the man who killed his father; Counsellor admits that Carver had done the deed. The second is that Counsellor return Lorna's necklace. He claims not to have it, but John searches him and finds it, after which the old man pulls a knife and tries to kill him. John disarms him easily, but he then has the nerve to beg to be allowed to keep the best diamond in the necklace, to which John, for some unknown reason, agrees. John later finds that Carver had escaped the ambush set by Carfax and those guarding the gold shipment.

With the Doones now being destroyed, all their women and children remained to be cared for. Some returned to the families from which they had been stolen, while others ventured abroad or wandered elsewhere. One young boy, Carver's son Ensie, was taken in and cared for by John and his family. Everyone, from the government to the church to the participants in the raid, wanted a piece of the plunder from Doone Valley. John prevented further conflict by turning it all over to Chancery and letting the claimants fight over it in that notoriously slow and money-consuming body.

Lorna soon returns home to Plover's Barrows, bearing the good news that she had convinced Judge Jeffreys, who is now the Lord High Chancellor, to free her to marry John - for a substantial payment, of course. All is soon arranged for the wedding, and the day finally arrives. John and Lorna are filled with happiness as they are united to one another, but as John bends to kiss his new bride, a shot rings out and Lorna collapses, spurting blood from her breast. John, knowing that Carver has done the deed, pursues him immediately and follows him to Black Barrow Down. Carver, not knowing the terrain, tries to conceal himself by the Wizard's Slough, from which there is no escape. John there confronts him and the two fight fiercely. So intense

is their conflict that Carver doesn't notice that his feet are gradually being dragged down into the Slough. When they separate, John manages to extricate himself, but Carver is consumed by the quicksand. Young Ensie, whom Carver had taken from the Ridd farm, runs up to John, begging him to save him from the mean man who had taken him away.

John, severely wounded and thinking Lorna to be dead, returns to Plover's Barrows in great sorrow. Lorna is not dead, but is so near death that the women will not allow John to see her. Ruth Huckaback attends to her nursing, while Annie takes care of John, who contracts an infection and is so badly weakened by being constantly bled by the doctor that he takes months to recover, all the while convinced that the girls are lying to him when they tell him that Lorna still lives. Finally she is well enough to come to see him, and they fall into one another's arms. Ruth chases the doctor away and takes over John's care herself, and he soon recovers. They live happily ever after, with John becoming a prosperous farmer and Lorna his loving wife. They adopt Ensie, who is the heir to the Doone lands, but rename him "Ensie Jones" so he will not have to bear the stigma of his ancestors. Tom Faggus, after a brief return to the highway, gets a renewed pardon when William III ascends the throne and again settles down to the life of a country squire. Lizzie marries Captain Bloxham, who has taken Jeremy Stickles' post when the latter is promoted. Ruth never marries, though John holds out hope that she may be married yet.

## **MAJOR CHARACTERS**

- John Ridd - The narrator and protagonist, he is a young boy when the story begins. He accidentally meets young and lovely Lorna Doone in the forbidden Valley of the Doones, eventually falls in love with her, rescues her from her captors and marries her.
- Sarah Ridd - John's mother, a brave woman whose husband is murdered by the Doones.
- Annie Ridd - John's sister, two years his junior, she is a pretty girl and an expert cook; she falls in love with and marries Tom Faggus.
- Eliza (Lizzie) Ridd - John's youngest sister, she remains small, though sharp-witted, all her life as a result of an injury suffered by her mother the day before her premature birth. She falls in love with and eventually marries Bloxham.
- Tom Faggus - A famous highwayman and John's first cousin; he wants to leave the life of the highway and settle down. Eventually he marries John's sister Annie.
- John Fry - An elderly worker on the Ridd farm.
- Betty Muxworthy - An old servant on the Ridd farm who had cared for John's father as well as himself.
- Reuben Huckaback - Sarah Ridd's rich uncle, a merchant; he tries to dig and conceal a gold mine in Exmoor.

- Ruth Huckaback - Reuben's granddaughter; she wants to marry John Ridd, but winds up nursing both him and Lorna after the disaster of the wedding day.
- Baron Hugh de Whichehalse - A local magistrate who is in league with the Doones.
- Marwood de Whichehalse - His son, who finds Annie attractive; he is killed during the destruction of Doone Valley.
- Jeremy Stickles - The king's messenger who escorts John to London and treats him very kindly, he is also an agent on the lookout for plots against the king; he saves John's life when John is captured trying to retrieve Tom Faggus during Monmouth's rebellion.
- Sergeant Bloxham - Jeremy's second in command, he falls in love with and marries Lizzie Ridd.
- Judge Jeffreys - Lord Chief Justice of England, he is a capricious and dangerous man who cares nothing for human life.
- Mother Melldrum - A local witch whose real name is Maple Durham; John seeks her advice during his pursuit of Lorna.
- Sir Ensor Doone - The captain of the Doones and the most kindly of the group, but a robber nonetheless. Lorna believes him to be her grandfather.
- Lorna Doone - Daughter of an aristocrat, Lord Dugal, she is kidnaped as a child by the Doones and raised as one of them. Destined to marry Carver Doone, she meets and falls in love with John Ridd, who rescues her and marries her. She is shot by Carver on her wedding day, but survives.
- Carver Doone - The most vicious of the lot, he wants to marry Lorna and succeed Ensor as captain, but his ambitions are frustrated by John Ridd. He shoots Lorna on the day she marries John. When John pursues him, the two engage in the novel's climactic battle, and Carver dies in a pit of quicksand.
- Counsellor Doone - Advisor to Sir Ensor and Carver's father, he is wily and unscrupulous. He steals Lorna's priceless diamond necklace, but John retrieves it.
- Charleworth (Charlie) Doone - A young member of the clan who would like to woo Lorna were it not for Carver, he dies in the sack of Glen Doone.
- Gwenny Carfax - Lorna's Cornish maid, a young girl who was abandoned by her father after her mother died. Lorna saved her life, and she is the only female among the Doones whom Lorna can trust.

- Benita Odam - An Italian woman who was hired by Lorna's parents as a lady's maid; she revealed information that led Jeremy Stickles to deduce Lorna's history.
- Alan Brandir - A young cousin of Lorna's who seeks her out in Glen Doone and is apprehended and murdered by Carver.
- Lord Brandir - Alan's father, he is given custody of Lorna when her identity is determined and she is brought to London. For saving the old man's life, John is awarded a knighthood.

### NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

"But whatever lives or dies, business must be attended to; and the principal business of good Christians is, beyond all controversy, to fight with one another." (John Ridd, ch.2, p.7)

"I had never heard so sweet a sound as came from between her bright red lips, while there she knelt and gazed at me; neither had I ever seen anything so beautiful as the large dark eyes intent upon me, full of pity and wonder." (John Ridd, ch.8, p.56)

"And so, methinks, he who reads a history cares not much for the wisdom or folly of the writer (knowing well that the former is far less than his own, and the latter vastly greater), but hurries to know what the people did, and how they got on about it." (John Ridd, ch.9, p.68)

"And yet my heart came to my ribs, and all my blood was in my face, and pride within me fought with shame, and vanity with self-contempt; for though seven years were gone, and I from boyhood come to manhood, and she must have forgotten me, and I had half-forgotten; at that moment, once for all, I felt that I was face to face with fate (however poor it might be), weal or woe, in Lorna Doone." (John Ridd, ch.15, p.116)

"To forget one's luck of life, to forget the cark of care, and withering of young fingers; not to feel, or not be moved by, all the change of thought and heart, from large young heart to the sinewy lines, and dry bones of old age - this is what I have to do, ere ever I can make you know (even as a dream is known) how I loved my Lorna." (John Ridd, ch.17, p.122)

"Alas, I feared it would come to this. I know he has been here many a time, without showing himself to me. There is nothing meaner than for a man to sneak, and steal a young maid's heart, without her people knowing it." (John Ridd to Annie, ch.30, p.222)

"Darling, you have won it all. I shall never be my own again. I am yours, my own one, for ever and ever." (Lorna, ch.33, p.255)

"Sir, the Ridds, of Oare, have been honest men, twice as long as the Doones have been rogues." (John Ridd to Sir Ensor, ch.40, p.316)

“For instance now, among young folks, when any piece of news is told, or any man’s conduct spoken of, the very first question that arises in your minds is this - ‘Was this action kind and good?’ Long after that you say to yourselves, ‘Does the law enjoy or forbid this thing?’ Now here is your fundamental error: for among all truly civilized people the foremost of all questions is, ‘how stands the law herein?’ And if the law approve, no need for any further questioning.” (Jeremy Stickles, ch.53, p.433-434)

“Hope, of course, is nothing more than desire with a telescope, magnifying distant matters, overlooking near ones; opening one eye on the objects, closing the other to all objections. And if hope be the future tense of desire, the future of fear is religion - at least with too many of us.” (John Ridd, ch.56, p.467)

“My mind has been made up, good John, that you must be my husband, for - well, I will not say how long, lest you should laugh at my folly. But I believe it was ever since you came, with your stockings off, and the loaches. Right early for me to make up my mind; but you know that you made up yours, John; and, of course, I knew it; and that had a great effect on me. Now, after all this age of loving, shall a trifle sever us?” (Lorna, ch.67, p.583)

“Weapon of no sort had I. Unarmed, and wondering at my strange attire (with a bridal vest, wrought by our Annie, and red with the blood of the bride), I went forth just to find out this; whether in this world there be, or be no, God of justice.” (John Ridd, ch.74, p.639)

“And if I wish to pay her out for something very dreadful - as may happen once or twice, when we become too gladsome - I bring her to forgotten sadness, and to me for cure of it, by the two words, ‘Lorna Doone.’” (John Ridd, ch.75, p.653)

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. At one point in the story, John Ridd, the protagonist and narrator of R.D. Blackmore’s *Lorna Doone*, says, “And so, methinks, he who reads a history cares not much for the wisdom or folly of the writer (knowing well that the former is far less than his own, and the latter vastly greater), but hurries to know what the people did, and how they got on about it.” Discuss the extent to which Blackmore followed his own advice. Do the narrative style and pacing of the novel fit Ridd’s description of what readers look for in a story? Why or why not? Be sure to use specific examples to support your argument.
2. Discuss the view of women presented in R.D. Blackmore’s *Lorna Doone*. Focus on the view of the narrator, but also incorporate the perspectives of other major characters such as Carver Doone and Tom Faggus. Does the point of view of the book betray bias on the part of the author, or does it simply reflect in a realistic manner the ethos of the Victorian age?

3. In R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, narrator John Ridd claims to hate braggarts more than anything. Does he practice what he preaches? Assess the way in which John describes his actions and his motives. To what extent is he free from self-laudatory prose? Be sure to use specific examples.
4. In R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, narrator John Ridd is by his own profession slow of mind. Is this assessment of his mental capacity borne out by the narrative, or is John displaying false modesty in this respect? Be sure to discuss the style as well as the content of the narrative in supporting your conclusion.
5. One of the stylistic peculiarities of R.D. Blackmore was his tendency to inject wry humor into the last sentence of a paragraph. Harsh words and sentiments were often softened by self-deprecating words that showed the protagonist laughing at himself and caused the reader to laugh along with him. Show how Blackmore uses this technique in *Lorna Doone* and discuss the impact it has on the reader's enjoyment of and appreciation for the work and its characters.
6. In Oscar Wilde's comic masterpiece *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Miss Prism says in reference to her lost novel, "The good ended happily and the bad unhappily. That is the meaning of fiction." Wilde could very easily have been referring to R.D. Blackmore in this witticism. Consider R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* in the light of this comment. Does Blackmore's love of happy endings add to or detract from the credibility, effectiveness, and enjoyable quality of the novel? Use details from the novel to address the validity of Wilde's implied criticism.
7. R.D. Blackmore was a devout Christian. Discuss how his Christian convictions and worldview shaped his most famous novel, *Lorna Doone*. Use details from the novel to support your conclusions.
8. R.D. Blackmore was a devout Christian, but he was nonetheless critical of the inconsistencies and hypocrisies in the way some Christians lived. Use his novel *Lorna Doone* to discuss his criticisms of the church of his day. To what extent were these criticisms valid? What do you learn about the church in Victorian England by reading the novel?
9. In R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, he often criticizes Christians who do not live up to the faith they profess. At one point in the novel, John Ridd says, "Hope, of course, is nothing more than desire with a telescope, magnifying distant matters, overlooking near ones; opening one eye on the objects, closing the other to all objections. And if hope be the future tense of desire, the future of fear is religion - at least with too many of us." What does he mean by the last part of the quotation? Is this a valid criticism of the way some Christians approach religion? What is wrong with this way of looking at Christianity?

10. Family values play a central role in R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*. What aspects of family life does Blackmore consider most important? Do you agree with his values? Illustrate your evaluation using contrasts between the Ridds and the Doones, and support your conclusions from Scripture.
11. Both R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* are coming-of-age tales that narrate the ripening of childhood loves. Compare and contrast the scenes in which the protagonists first meet the loves of their lives. Discuss the extent to which the scenes reveal the characters of John and Lorna, on the one hand, and Pip and Estella on the other, and the extent to which the scenes contain foreshadowing of later events.
12. Both R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* are coming-of-age tales that narrate the ripening of childhood loves. Compare and contrast the ways in which the authors use these young loves to drive the plots of the novels. Which protagonist's history was shaped more by his obsession with the love of his life, John Ridd or Philip Pirrip? Why do you think so? Support your conclusion with specifics from the two novels.
13. At one point in R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, John Ridd is criticizing his sister Annie for her secret rendezvous with highwayman Tom Faggus. He says, "Alas, I feared it would come to this. I know he has been here many a time, without showing himself to me. There is nothing meaner than for a man to sneak, and steal a young maid's heart, without her people knowing it." At the same time, John has been sneaking into Glen Doone to pursue his relationship with Lorna. The contradiction doesn't seem to occur to him, however. Discuss the self-awareness of John Ridd as he narrates the novel. He is looking back many years to his early life, but to what extent does he really understand himself as he was at the time? Support your assessment of his self-understanding with specific quotations from the novel.
14. The values of country folk play an important role in R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*. In reference to this, Jeremy Stickles says at one point, "For instance now, among young folks, when any piece of news is told, or any man's conduct spoken of, the very first question that arises in your minds is this - 'Was this action kind and good?' Long after that you say to yourselves, 'Does the law enjoy or forbid this thing?' Now here is your fundamental error: for among all truly civilized people the foremost of all questions is, 'how stands the law herein?' And if the law approve, no need for any further questioning." Is Jeremy's assessment of country ways an accurate one in the context of the story? Why or why not? Support your answer with details from the novel.

15. The values of country folk play an important role in R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*. In reference to this, Jeremy Stickles says at one point, "For instance now, among young folks, when any piece of news is told, or any man's conduct spoken of, the very first question that arises in your minds is this - 'Was this action kind and good?' Long after that you say to yourselves, 'Does the law enjoy or forbid this thing?' Now here is your fundamental error: for among all truly civilized people the foremost of all questions is, 'how stands the law herein?' And if the law approve, no need for any further questioning." If this is indeed a true expression of country values, is this approach biblical? To what extent do individuals have the right to discriminate between legality and morality? Use incidents from the book to support the biblical arguments you construct.
16. In R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, the author often uses contrasts to convey the major themes of the story. One of those contrasts is between city and country life. How do the values advocated by the author stand out more readily in contrast to life in London as it is described in John Ridd's visits to the big city?
17. In R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, the author often uses contrasts to convey the major themes of the story. One of these contrasts is between characters who are polar opposites, known as *foils*. The most obvious foils in the story are John Ridd and Carver Doone among the men, and Lorna Doone and Annie Ridd among the women. Choose one of these sets of foils and discuss how Blackmore uses their differences to bring out the themes of his novel.
18. Stories like Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* abhor the horrors of Chancery Court, but in R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* the evils of Chancery are but a minor part of the evils of city life in general. Discuss ways in which Blackmore uses the endemic corruption of Chancery to advance his plot and engage in social criticism, and compare and contrast these with the role the Court plays in the Dickens novel of which it is the center.
19. R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* is set in an era when differences between Protestants and Catholics had not only religious significance, but political significance as well. How do the religious prejudices that existed in England during the reigns of Charles II and James II influence the attitudes of the characters and the narrative built around them? What does the author think of these religious prejudices? How do you know? Support your analysis with details from the novel, referring both to quotations and incidents.
20. One critic writing in the year R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* was published suggested that the novel is, in its basic outline, a fairy tale, with its strong and virtuous young hero rescuing the beautiful princess from the lair of the evil ogre. To what extent is this observation valid? Is the novel really a traditional fairy tale placed in an historical setting? If so, what are its key elements? Does the historical setting detract from the essential aspects of the fairy tale that the story contains? Would Blackmore have been better off setting the story "Once upon a time, in a kingdom far, far away"? Why or why not?

21. Discuss the nature of the title character in R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*. To what extent is she believable? Consider matters such as her values in the context of her upbringing, her lack of education, either theoretical or practical, and her love for a simple farmer, especially when she comes to know her true history and spends time in the luxury due her station in London. What about Lorna, and about the story of which she is a major focus, causes the reader to find her credible or lacking in credibility? When you read the story, were you able to maintain a willing suspension of disbelief in relation to her personality and her faithful love for John Ridd? Why or why not?
22. To what extent is knowledge of the political conflicts in England in the late 1600s necessary for an appreciation of R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*? Must one understand something of Charles II, his brother James II, the Duke of Monmouth, Judge Jeffreys, and the conflicts between Protestants and Catholics in England in order to appreciate the novel fully? Why or why not? In what ways does a comprehension of the story's historical backdrop enable one to enjoy the novel more fully?
23. The theme of love between people of differing social classes is common in nineteenth-century English novels. In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, the woman is of a lower social class than the man. In Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* and R.D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, the man is of the lower class. In all four cases, however, the narrator or protagonist aspires to the love of someone higher than himself or herself. What is the significance of this? Use illustrations from *Lorna Doone* and one of the others to support your analysis. Be sure to comment on the social criticism enabled by such a plot device.