

A PASSAGE FROM THE MOVIE "AMISTAD"

Directed by Steven Spielberg

PART 1 / 01'13 – 01'17 (chapter 11)

- 1) Where does the scene take place at the beginning of the passage?

- 2) What suddenly happens? (*use the passive voice = be + PP*)

- 3) Where are they taken to? What do you think of the way they are being treated? Describe and explain.

- 4) Describe the characters' feelings at the end of the scene. How does the director manage to convey an impression of nightmare, of a complete panic?

PART 2 / 01'17 – 01'20 (chapter 11)

- 1) What happens to most slaves on board? Use the passive voice (be + PP)

- 2) Why are other slaves forced to watch their tortured friends?

- 3) How do you account for the woman's decision?

- 4) One of the characters receives blood on his face. Can you imagine his feelings at that particular moment?

- 5) What are your impressions when you see how slaves are fed on board? Justify your opinion.

- 6) Can you imagine why some slaves are thrown into the sea?

PART 3 / 01'20 -01'22 (chapter 11)

- 1) Where does the scene take place?

- 2) In your opinion, why are slaves cleaned and washed?

- 3) What is happening in this passage? What are these people shouting and raising their hands?

- 4) Why does make this scene shocking?

- 5) Why can we say that each slave's identity is denied and destroyed?

- 6) In your opinion, where is the ship "The *Amistad*" sailing to?

- 7) Concentrate on the last picture: what can you see? What has just happened? Try to reconstruct what happened.

GRAMMAR / AMISTAD

Pour répondre aux questions posées sur le passage du film «Amistad», quelle forme verbale a-t-on le plus souvent utilisée ?

Pourquoi ?

Exemples extraits du commentaire du passage du film :

a- Construction et valeur de cette forme :

b- REVISIONS / conjugaison de « BE » :

➤ *Présent be+v-ing :*

➤ *Present simple :*

➤ *Present perfect :*

➤ *Prétérit :*

➤ *Avec des auxiliaires modaux (futur, conseil, obligation, interdiction...) :*

c- Avec cette forme verbale, doit-on toujours mentionner le complément d'agent ? Expliquez.

EXERCISES

1) *One of the slaves on board of The Amistad has survived and has decided to write his memories. He deals with the way white people treated him on the ship. Write a paragraph. (80 words).*

2) ACTIVE OR PASSIVE VOICE? Choose the right forms and the right tenses.

When we (*arrive*).....on the American land, most of us (*suffer from*)starvation and thirst. We (*ill-treat*).....and many of my friends (*injure*) We (*separate*).....and we (*send*).....to different plantations in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. I (*work*).....on this plantation since 1832. My master and his family (*own*).....a cotton plantation. They (*treat*)us like animals! Every day, we (*get up*).....at dawn and we (*work*).....until the sun (*set*)..... We (*not –allow*).....to talk while working. We (*forbid*)to take more than two breaks a day. Some of my friends have a plan: they want to run away. They say they (*escape*)in a few days but I think they're wrong. They (*catch*).....and who knows what (*happen*).....to them afterwards? They (*may – torture*)....., or (*may – kill*) I hope that one day, we (*free*).....but legally, with the help of sensible politicians.

BILAN:

/20

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PART 1 / 01'13 – 01'17 (chapter 11)

1) Where does the scene take place at the beginning of the passage?

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3) Where are they taken to? What do you think of the way they are being treated? Describe and explain.

They are ill-treated, as if they were animals / cattle. Some of them are shot because they try to rebel, to escape or they are whipped. Then, They are packed in the dark and damp holds.

4) Describe the characters' feelings at the end of the scene. How does the director manage to convey an impression of nightmare, of a complete panic?

They are in a panic. They don't understand what is happening to them. They are yelling / screaming, they are crying. The director manages to convey an impression of nightmare by shooting this passage at night, under a violent storm. We can only see the characters' faces when there are flashes of lightning. He also does close-ups on their faces. We can also hear their screams. He shoots a baby who is yelling and who is passing from hand to hand to be protected. = very shocking pictures, realistic scene.

PART 2 / 01'17 – 01'20 (chapter 11)

1) What happens to most slaves on board? Use the passive voice (be + PP)

Some women are raped, some men are whipped / tortured. They are all ill-treated.

2) Why are other slaves forced to watch their tortured friends?

They are standing in line and they are forced to watch the others while they are tortured. The whites want to intimidate them, to set the example and to deter the others from rebelling / to prevent them from rebelling.

3) How do you account for the woman's decision?

A woman chose to commit suicide with her baby: she jumps into the sea: she'd rather die than live in those conditions. She wants to spare her baby; she refuses to suffer. She is hopeless.

4) One of the characters receives blood on his face. Can you imagine his feelings at that particular moment? **He may feel outraged/revolted/disgusted: he must think about taking his revenge on the whites: he feels hatred/contempt.**

5) What are your impressions when you see how slaves are fed on board? Justify your opinion.

They are fed as if they were cattle. Only the strongest can eat, the others are left starving. The food looks disgusting. There is not enough food so the slaves fight to get some.

6) Can you imagine why some slaves are thrown into the sea?

They are thrown into the sea with stones to make sure they drown. They are killed because the slave-owners want to get rid of the ill, of the weak = they are a burden, they are considered as useless. They can't be sold or bought if they are not healthy.

PART 3 / 01'20 -01'22 (chapter 11)

7) Where does the scene take place?

They have landed in Cuba : a slavery station (triangular trade: Africa – cuba- the usa)

8) In your opinion, why are slaves cleaned and washed?

They must look clean and healthy to be sold and to be bought = they are treated like goods.

9) What is happening in this passage? What are these people shouting and raising their hands?

People are bidding (enchérir): slaves are put up for auction (=être mis aux enchères). They are chosen by slave owners to work on plantations or as servants.

10) Why does make this scene shocking?

It is very humiliating / degrading: they are displayed as if they were goods.

11) Why can we say that each slave's identity is denied and destroyed?

They are given new names: they lose their roots, their identity.

12) In your opinion, where is the ship "The *Amistad*" sailing to?

The Amistad must sail to the USA, to the southern states.

13) Concentrate on the last picture: what can you see? What has just happened? Try to reconstruct what happened.

We can see one of the slaves on board, at night, under a storm. He has just stabbed a man. His sword is covered with blood. He may have rebelled against the whites: the slave may have mutinied and may have killed all the whites. They may intend to sail back to Africa.