



Lorna Doone

LORNA DOONE

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to describe 17th-century life in the English countryside by analyzing *Lorna Doone*, an historical tale of revenge, love, and war.

NATIONAL STANDARDS

- **History** (Era 6, Standards 27 & 29) – 17th century England, its politics and its people.
- **Geography** (Standard 2) – the British Isles (comprised of England, Scotland and Wales); the West Country of England (Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire counties); France and the Continent; North America.
- **Language Arts** (Standard 9) – *Lorna Doone* (1869) is a historical novel written by R.D. Blackmore. It is set at the time of Monmouth's Rebellion (1685) in Exmoor, Devonshire, the West Country of England.

OVERVIEW

THE HISTORY

The year depicted in the film is approximately 1685. Prior to watching it, students should have a general understanding of England in the late 17th century when Charles II ruled England. The issue of who would succeed Charles II was a major concern in England. Students need to know that the church and state were one. Students should be able to locate the British Isles on a map, as well as the West Country of England, and London.

- **Issue of Succession** – Charles II died in 1685. Charles' brother James II was next in line to the throne, but he was a Roman Catholic and many opposed him on those grounds. (He indeed did become King James II.) Charles had an illegitimate son, James, the Duke of Monmouth, a Protestant, who also staked a claim to the crown. Monmouth raised an army of sympathizers to try and win the crown when his father died. The uprising, known as Monmouth's Rebellion, ended in 1685 in Sedgemoor, Somersetshire, England, when Monmouth's army was defeated and he and his followers were convicted of treason and beheaded.
- **Politics and Religion** – King Charles II was a Protestant King, and England a Protestant nation. Roman Catholicism had been successfully driven out of the country a century before during the Reformation.

OVERVIEW

CAST OF CHARACTERS

- **Ridd Family** – The Ridds are an honest and successful farming family in the West Country. As a child John witnesses the Doones murder his father. John's mother Sarah admonishes her son to live peaceably and not to seek retribution against the Doones. John has two sisters, Annie and Lizzie. Other family members include Uncle Reuben Huckaback, a wealthy and influential man, and his granddaughter Ruth, who has healing powers. John's cousin Tom Faggus is an unabashed highwayman.
- **Doone Family** – Sir Ensor Doone is head of the Doone Clan. His son, Counsellor, seems to be the voice of reason, yet he is not to be trusted. Carver is the Doone's designated heir. When Carver marries Sir Ensor's granddaughter Lorna, the Doones will regain the Scottish lands and status they once enjoyed as landed gentry.
- **Whichehalse** – Hugh, Baron de Whichehalse, and his son, Marwood de Whichehalse, are in the employ of the Doones, providing much-needed information of London and the court in exchange for protection.

VOCABULARY

coincidence – (n.) a combination of events that is accidental but seems to have been planned

dowry – (n.) money or property brought by a bride to her husband when they are married

gullible – (adj.) easily deceived or tricked

highwayman – (n.) a man who robs travelers on a road

monarch – (n.) a person who rules over a country, usually for life and by hereditary right, such as a king or queen

papist – (n.) a Roman Catholic who strongly believes

in the authority of the pope; an offensive term given to Roman Catholics by their opponents

peasant – (n.) a member of the class of small farmers and tenants, and farm laborers

pyre – (n.) a pile of wood for burning a dead body as part of a funeral ceremony

traitor – (n.) a person who commits treason or betrays a cause or trust

treason – (n.) betrayal of one's country, especially by waging war against it or helping an enemy



WATCHING LORNA DOONE

While your students view *Lorna Doone*, ask them to consider the following questions (Below you will find the answers to the questions in parentheses, and time codes that may vary depending on your video equipment. See the last two pages of this guide for a list of these questions and extended activities to hand out to your class.):

PART ONE

TIME CODE 01:53 – In the opening sequences the camera flips between a band of men riding horses at top speed, carrying weapons, and the sounds and sights of a country marketplace. How much information is imparted through this technique? What role does the musical score play in these scenes? (Contrasts are set between the sinister riders and the peaceful peasants, upon whose lives the riders wreck havoc. The music is fast and furious when the men are riding, and melodic when focusing upon a child holding flowers in the marketplace. Throughout the film the musical score heightens suspense, adds fear, danger, joy.)

TIME CODE 06:12 – Widow Sarah Ridd is a strong woman who is unafraid to go the Doone's settlement to complain about her husband's murder, even though neighbors tell her that "to go to the Doones you might as well go to the Devil." Sarah does not accept Sir Ensor's money. Why? (Sarah possesses a strong sense of right and wrong, a trait she instills in John. To accept the Doone money would be to agree to their terms—that her husband started the fight that ended in his death.)

TIME CODES 24:44 & 30:10 – When Reuben Huckaback is beaten by a Doone, he goes to the local law enforcer, Hugh, Baron de Whichehalse, and his son, to complain. Instead, they ridicule him. The Whichehalses then tell Sir Ensor that if an influential man such as Huckaback complains to London, the law may be forced to act against the Doones. Sir Ensor reminds Whichehalse that "if the Doones fall, you fall too." What does he expect Whichehalse to do? (To intervene and tell his friends in London to ignore Huckaback's complaints.)

TIME CODES 39:21 & 43:00 – Huckaback writes to the King's Lord Chief Justice, Justice Jeffreys, about the attack. Jeffreys summons John to London and tells him that "treason is in the air." King Charles II is ill, and the Duke of Monmouth, a Protestant, is mounting a campaign against the rightful heir, James II, a Catholic. Why does Jeffreys summon John to London? (The West Country is a stronghold of Protestant faith, and he suspects that the Doones will be sympathetic to Monmouth. Jeffreys wants inside information on the Doones, and

believes that John will provide it. John tells Jeffreys that Monmouth "would do well to have the Doones on his side," due to their organized army.)

TIME CODE 45:00 – Why does Jeffreys show John a beheading? (To show him what happens to traitors to the Crown. Traitors are accused and sentenced without a trial; it is a dangerous thing to become entangled in intrigues against the Crown, and the Lord Chief Justice wants to make an impression upon John.)

TIME CODES 33:01 & 49:00 – John and Lorna have fallen in love, despite the fact that she tells John she is the Doone "Queen, ...heir to the realm of violence." Against her will Lorna is engaged to marry Carver, who vows to marry her the day after Sir Ensor dies. Although Lorna loves John, she will not leave her grandfather's side. Why? (She owes her life to him. Sir Ensor sees that she is treated with respect and goes unharmed. Her devotion to her grandfather is a trait that John loves about Lorna.)

TIME CODE 1:02:20 – On his deathbed Sir Ensor gives Lorna her mother's necklace. He speaks cryptically saying, "you don't know who you are," and demands her forgiveness. How does this scene add to the film? (A sense of mystery has been added. Sir Ensor is desperate to gain Lorna's forgiveness, and this imparts great intrigue to the tale.)

TIME CODE 1:03:00 – True to his word, Lord Jeffreys sends in a militia to battle the Doones. Unfortunately, the militia are but a handful of men. Why don't the authorities in Devon or Somerset give men to the militia? (The Doones are a powerful clan, noted for their cruelty and wrath. Local authorities know that if they get involved, the Doones will repay them in kind.)

TIME CODE 1:11:36 – Sarah welcomes Lorna into her home, but Lizzie is not so kind to Lorna. She accuses John of being a fool, saying that Lorna only pretends to love him. What does she mean? (Lizzie tells John that Lorna had "no way out of marrying a man she hates until [John] came long...John Ridd, the gullible farmer." John begins to question Lorna's love for him.)

PART TWO

TIME CODES 02:23, 05:00 & 06:40 – Carver tells his men to “Kill every man and child, and burn the house,” and then searches for John. John is about to kill Carver when Lorna stops him. **Why does she stop him?** (She doesn’t want John to be the murderer that Carver is.)

TIME CODE 08:00 – Carver returns to the Ridd home and threatens Lorna that if he cannot have her “no man will.” **Why doesn’t he kill her?** (Because he loves her and still hopes to marry her. If he kills Lorna, his hopes and the hopes of the Doone clan to reclaim their land in Scotland will be dashed.)

TIME CODES 09:45 & 17:00 – By having her necklace appraised, Tom discovers that Lorna is not a Doone but the long-lost daughter of Countess of Dougall and Lord Lorne. Years earlier, in a land dispute with his cousin Lord Lorne, Sir Ensor led a band of men to gain revenge against his cousin. **Why didn’t Ensor kill Lorna?** (He needed Lorna for his scheme to work. Ensor knew that if a Doone married the heir of Lord Lorne, the Doones would regain their land and gain great wealth. And so he raised Lorna as his granddaughter, and planned to have her marry Carver, his real grandson.)

TIME CODE 19:40 – After learning of Lorna’s real identity, Captain Stickles insists that Lorna is a ward of the King and must return with him to London. **John is heartbroken. Explain these notions of class, of stations in life.** (A Lady and an heiress such as Lorna cannot be in the company of farmers, such as the Ridds. John is now unsuitable as a suitor—he is lowborn and she is not. Class stations were strictly adhered to in 17th-century England, and even though Lorna says she will return to John, he knows it will be impossible for her to do so. Marriages of the wealthy were usually arranged affairs.)

TIME CODE 29:00 – Baron de Whichelas and his son visit the Doones and inform them that Jeffreys now considers the Doones rebels, traitors to the King. **The Baron advises them to join Monmouth’s Rebellion. Why does Carver attack the Baron?** (Carver does not like taking suggestions from anyone, and he is especially irked when the Baron suggests that he is in love with Lorna—which indeed he is. With his father’s prodding, Carver agrees to back Monmouth and fight against the King.)

TIME CODE 32:00 – John urges his fellow Protestant churchgoers not to join Monmouth’s army, but to follow the rightful king, James II, despite the fact that he was a Roman Catholic. **Why?** (Because Ridd has witnessed firsthand what becomes of those accused of treason.)

TIME CODE 45:00 – John is sentenced to die as a traitor, but Captain Stickles convinces Jeffreys that John can help the Crown. **How?** (The Doones are traitors now, and John can provide invaluable information about their stronghold—he has been inside their settlement several times, and he knows the secret passageway under the waterfall.)

TIME CODE 50:00 – Why did Lorna’s maid withhold John’s letters from her? (Gwennie thinks she did it to help Lorna, saying Lorna couldn’t be “some common farmer’s wife. High don’t mix with low,” but she underestimated the love Lorna and John share.)

TIME CODE 59:00 – Lord Jeffreys and the King are very pleased with John’s bravery and the Doones’ defeat. **John is pardoned, and he receives a knighthood. Why?** (Without it he will never be able to marry Lorna.)

TIME CODE 01:07:00 – As Carver sinks in the quicksand, John tries to save him. **Why?** (John is a good person and cannot watch a man, even Carver, die such a horrible death.)

TIME CODE 01:08:00 – Why does Carver bat John’s hand away? (Carver cannot bear to be saved by John, a farmer who has destroyed all that he and the Doones have. To be rescued by John would shame Carver, even though the consequence is his death. There is nothing left for Carver to live for—he has lost Lorna and is the last of the Doones.)

TIME CODE 01:113:00 – The film ends as we watch Lorna, John, and the extended Ridd family walk through the golden wheat fields. **What effect does this technique achieve?** (The golden wheat, the pairs of lovers walking through the field, connotes abundance and growth and inspires hope. The viewer learns that the tale ends “happily ever after.”)

Student Handout



VIEWING QUESTIONS

PART ONE

1. In the opening sequences the camera flips between a band of men riding horses at top speed, carrying weapons, and the sounds and sights of a country marketplace. How much information is imparted through this technique? What role does the musical score play in these scenes?
2. Widow Sarah Ridd is a strong woman who is unafraid to go the Doone's settlement to complain about her husband's murder, even though neighbors tell her that "to go to the Doones you might as well go to the Devil." Sarah does not accept Sir Ensor's money. Why?
3. When Reuben Huckaback is beaten by a Doone, he goes to the local law enforcer, Hugh, Baron de Whichehalse, and his son, to complain. Instead, they ridicule him. The Whichehalses then tell Sir Ensor that if an influential man such as Huckaback complains to London, the law may be forced to act against the Doones. Sir Ensor reminds Whichehalse that "if the Doones fall, you fall too." What does he expect Whichehalse to do?
4. Huckaback writes to the King's Lord Chief Justice, Justice Jeffreys, about the attack. Jeffreys summons John to London and tells him that "treason is in the air." King Charles II is ill, and the Duke of Monmouth, a Protestant, is mounting a campaign against the rightful heir, James II, a Catholic. Why does Jeffreys summon John to London?
5. Why does Jeffreys show John a beheading?
6. John and Lorna have fallen in love, despite the fact that she tells John she is the Doone "Queen, ... heir to the realm of violence." Against her will Lorna is engaged to marry Carver, who vows to marry her the day after Sir Ensor dies. Although Lorna loves John, she will not leave her grandfather's side. Why?
7. On his deathbed Sir Ensor gives Lorna her mother's necklace. He speaks cryptically saying, "you don't know who you are," and demands her forgiveness. How does this scene add to the film?
8. True to his word, Lord Jeffreys sends in a militia to battle the Doones. Unfortunately, the militia are but a handful of men. Why don't the authorities in Devon or Somerset give men to the militia?
9. Sarah welcomes Lorna into her home, but Lizzie is not so kind to Lorna. She accuses John of being a fool, saying that Lorna only pretends to love him. What does she mean?

VIEWING QUESTIONS

PART TWO

1. Carver tells his men to “Kill every man and child, and burn the house,” and then searches for John. John is about to kill Carver when Lorna stops him. Why does she stop him?
2. Carver returns to the Ridd home and threatens Lorna that if he cannot have her “no man will.” Why doesn’t he kill her?
3. By having her necklace appraised, Tom discovers that Lorna is not a Doone but the long-lost daughter of Countess of Dougall and Lord Lorne. Years earlier, in a land dispute with his cousin Lord Lorne, Sir Ensor led a band of men to gain revenge against his cousin. Why didn’t Ensor kill Lorna?
4. After learning of Lorna’s real identity, Captain Stickles insists that Lorna is a ward of the King and must return with him to London. John is heartbroken. Explain these notions of class, of stations in life.
5. Baron de Whichelas and his son visit the Doones and inform them that Jeffreys now considers the Doones rebels, traitors to the King. The Baron advises them to join Monmouth’s Rebellion. Why does Carver attack the Baron?
6. John urges his fellow Protestant churchgoers not to join Monmouth’s army, but to follow the rightful king, James II, despite the fact that he was a Roman Catholic. Why?
7. John is sentenced to die as a traitor, but Captain Stickles convinces Jeffreys that John can help the Crown. How?
8. Why did Lorna’s maid withhold John’s letters from her?
9. Lord Jeffreys and the King are very pleased with John’s bravery and the Doones’ defeat. John is pardoned, and he receives a knighthood. Why?
10. As Carver sinks in the quicksand, John tries to save him. Why?
11. Why does Carver bat John’s hand away?
12. The film ends as we watch Lorna, John, and the extended Ridd family walk through the golden wheat fields. What effect does this technique achieve?

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

1. Locate the following places on a map: the British Isles (England, Scotland, Wales); London, England; Exmoor, Devonshire; the West Country (Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire counties in England); Sedgemoor, Somersetshire, England. Calculate how many miles it is from Exmoor to London.
2. Research the geography of Devon and Somerset counties. Is farmland still abundant in this region of England? What is the topography?
3. Trace the genealogy of the Kings and Queens of England from William the Conqueror until the present day. Note the descendants of King Charles II. Who is the British monarch today? What is her current role in government? Who is the future monarch?
4. To gain religious freedom many British people sailed to North America during the 17th century. Research this migration.