

Blunt

“At six o'clock Wheeler knocked at Simon's door. He was county sheriff as well as postmaster. “Did you see Jim Dickie this afternoon?” he asked bluntly.”

Saying or expressing something in a very direct way that may upset some people.

Bride

“In ten years he had paid for his farm, and now had his house in readiness for a bride.”

A woman who is about to get married or just got married.

Cavity

“Simon had looped the reins about his wrist before he fired... then he swung them around to where the limp body was pitched, face down, half into the cavity.”

A hole or an empty space between two surfaces.

Clue

“Hank had never seemed the same, but perhaps the sheriff's complete failure to find a clue to Dickie's murderer accounted for that.”

Something that helps a person to find something or to solve a mystery.

Content

“Three months had passed since Jim Dickie vanished. Simon went to his hoeing contentedly.”

Pleased and satisfied.

Disc Harrow

“It was raining a little at noon, but Simon Lasher drove out to his corner lot with the disc harrow.”

A farming tool used for breaking up the surface of the soil to prepare the soil for planting.

Enlighten

“Handcuffs were snapped on Simon's wrists before he could take in what had been said. Hank enlightened him.”

Give (someone) greater knowledge and understanding about a subject or situation.

Flivver

“When the old flivver came in sight, Simon was seated on his harrow and had just crossed the spaded earth.”

A cheap car or aircraft, especially one in bad condition.

Fuss

“Everything had gone better than he expected. There hadn’t been much fuss over Dickie’s disappearance, not as much as he had dreaded.”

A display of unnecessary or excessive excitement, activity, or interest.

Ghastly

“You—you—found—” Simon’s face whitened, became ghastly. He seemed to wilt.”

Like a ghost.

Grim

“We did,” said Hank grimly. “All I been doin’ was watch that field of yours. I knowed they’d sprout if they was near the surface.”

Very serious, gloomy, or depressing.

Grit

“Simon gritted his teeth as he drove. Jim Dickie had asked for trouble. He had come into the settlement and bought the farm that Simon was on the point of buying.”

To cause (one's teeth) to grind or grate.

Harrow

“Did you see Jim Dickie this afternoon?” he asked bluntly. “Yes, I did,” said Simon. “He passed when I was harrowin’. Why?”

To drag a harrow over land to break the earth into small pieces ready for planting.

Hoe

“Three months had passed since Jim Dickie vanished. Simon went to his hoeing contentedly.”

A long-handled tool with a thin metal blade, used mainly for weeding and breaking up soil.

Hollow

“At the corner of the field he stopped his horses. The ground dipped slightly, forming a small hollow, and he dug in the centre of it, scooping a short, shallow trench.”

Having a hole or empty space inside.

Intercept

“He had seen Dickie go up the back road and he meant to intercept him as he returned; he had cleaned and oiled his old army rifle, and he meant to use it.”

To take, seize, or stop before reaching an intended destination.

Jeer

“Paid-up member!” Simon had jeered. “What good’s that to him? Will it help him farm?”

Make rude and mocking remarks, typically in a loud voice.

Legion

“He comes regular,” Hank had reported. “He gets soldier magazines and Legion papers. He’s a paid-up member if he does live out here.”

A national association of ex-servicemen.

Limp

“Simon had looped the reins about his wrist before he fired... then he swung them around to where the limp body was pitched, face down, half into the cavity.”

Not firm or stiff.

Outsider

“True, he and Hank Wheeler had disagreed on the price, but what right had an outsider to come in and pay more than the land was worth?”

A person who does not belong to a particular group.

Pale

“Dickie turned, his pale face friendly. “Yes, I got something I been expecting, something special for returned men ...”

(Of a person's face or complexion) having less colour than usual, typically because of illness or fear.

Plod

“Jim Dickie was plodding past, his head down to the fine rain. Simon sneered. No one but Dickie would go in a rain to Hank Wheeler’s post office.”

To walk heavily or slowly.

Poppy

“Poppies,” snapped Wheeler as they led Simon to his car. “Poor Jim got an envelope full of seed that day—a special good kind the Legion sent to paid-up members.”

A plant with a hairy stem and showy usually red, yellow, or white flowers.

Postmaster

“At six o’clock Wheeler knocked at Simon’s door. He was county sheriff as well as postmaster. “Did you see Jim Dickie this afternoon?” he asked bluntly.”

A person in charge of a post office.

Quarrel

“Mary and he had quarrelled when he criticized the poem, and Mary had refused him her company.”

An angry argument or disagreement.

Recite

“He hated soldier stuff as he hated this man who had won Mary Hawkins from him, and the solemn way in which Dickie could recite “In Flanders Fields.” Such rot!”

To repeat from memory.

Reins

“Simon had looped the reins about his wrist before he fired... then he swung them around to where the limp body was pitched, face down, half into the cavity.”

Straps fastened to a bit by which a rider or driver controls an animal —usually used in plural.

Rot

“He hated soldier stuff as he hated this man who had won Mary Hawkins from him, and the solemn way in which Dickie could recite “In Flanders Fields.” Such rot!”

Nonsense.

Settlement

“Simon gritted his teeth as he drove. Jim Dickie had asked for trouble. He had come into the settlement and bought the farm that Simon was on the point of buying.”

A small village.

Shallow

“At the corner of the field he stopped his horses. The ground dipped slightly, forming a small hollow, and he dug in the centre of it, scooping a short, shallow trench.”

Having little depth.

Sheriff

“At six o'clock Wheeler knocked at Simon's door. He was county sheriff as well as postmaster. “Did you see Jim Dickie this afternoon?” he asked bluntly.”

The officer of a county who is in charge of enforcing the law.

Shimmer

“Simon had often looked at the corner lot, now a shimmering green, inches deep. Who would guess its secret?”

To shine with a wavering light.

Simulate

“That’s strange.” Simon simulated surprise. “Maybe he’s at one of the neighbour’s.”

Pretend to have or feel (an emotion).

Sneer

“Jim Dickie was plodding past, his head down to the fine rain. Simon sneered. No one but Dickie would go in a rain to Hank Wheeler’s post office.”

To smile or laugh while making a face that shows disrespect.

Solemn

“He hated soldier stuff as he hated this man who had won Mary Hawkins from him, and the solemn way in which Dickie could recite “In Flanders Fields.” Such rot!”

Very serious or formal in manner, behavior, or expression.

Spade

“When the old flivver came in sight, Simon was seated on his harrow and had just crossed the spaded earth.”

A tool used for digging especially soil or sand, with a long handle and a flat blade.

Sprout

“We did,” said Hank grimly. “All I been doin’ was watch that field of yours. I knowed they’d sprout if they was near the surface.”

A young stem of a plant especially when coming directly from a seed or root.

Standstill

“Simon had looped the reins about his wrist before he fired, and for a moment he was busy jerking the horses to a standstill...”

A situation or condition in which there is no movement or activity at all.

Sullen

“Crack! The sullen report of a rifle.”

Gloomy.

Tinker

“He pretended to be tinkering with the disc harrow. The rifle was on the ground behind the discs.”

To repair or adjust something in an unskilled or experimental manner.

Trench

“At the corner of the field he stopped his horses. The ground dipped slightly, forming a small hollow, and he dug in the centre of it, scooping a short, shallow trench.”

A long and narrow ditch.

Vanish

“Three months had passed since Jim Dickie vanished. Simon went to his hoeing contentedly.”

Disappear suddenly and completely.

Vim

“He pulled weeds with a vim. Everything had gone better than he expected. There hadn't been much fuss over Dickie's disappearance, not as much as he had dreaded”

Great energy and enthusiasm.

Wilt

“You—you—found—” Simon's face whitened, became ghastly. He seemed to wilt.”

To lose strength.