

## *Mary Black consultant graphologist*

### **Enid Blyton (1897 - 1968)**

Enid Blyton was born in 1897 into a tense household. Her childhood was troubled. Her father, Thomas, was a self-educated man who loved arts of all forms, particularly books. Enid adored him **(the leftward tendencies in the UZ are indicative of a positive father relationship)**, but her mother, Theresa, did not share his hankering for culture. She was unsympathetic towards Enid and her husband for their interest in “nonsense” like poetry and painting, to a point where she despised them for it. **(an upbringing with very different parents is often shown through an upright but variable slant)**. She thought a daughters place should be helping around the house, preparing to be a wife. Thomas soon got bored of his wife and, as home became marred by violent quarrels between her parents, Enid grew to hate her mother. Eventually, at the age of 13, her father left home for another woman. This scarred Enid for life. She was ordered by her mother not to tell anyone the truth, to avoid the disgrace that it could bring and so the family pretended for years that he was working away, to prevent any scandal.

As Enid progressed through her teens, her relationship with her mother continued to deteriorate. She spent most of these years away from home and finally at 19 she left altogether to train to be a teacher, eventually becoming a private governess.

Her escape was to write. Neither demonstrative nor physical, she was terrified of showing her need to be loved **(connectedness in her writing with first letter often disconnected and the long-ish end-strokes)**. When it came to expressing her feelings she was matter-of-fact and unemotional and as a result channelled her energy into her writing in order to feel appreciated by others **(LZ rightward and variable, the UZ single strokes)**. Her enjoyment in expressing herself and communicating through her writing are shown in the **pasty and distinct writing, the connections between words, the clear spacing, and Greek e's**. She began to invent stories with happy endings and where adults were excluded because they were unreliable and selfish. Unpleasant reality was eliminated from this world **(the slightly stilted writing shows that she could pigeon-hole things so that people didn't necessarily see her negative state of mind underneath)** and throughout her career her subject matter never really changed.

She hardly saw her family again. Her father died suddenly at 50 and she couldn't bear to go to his funeral - she didn't even tell the family to whom she was governess that he had died. She didn't see her mother for another 30 years. Theresa spent the last 20 years of her life in a nursing home, suffering from senile dementia. Enid contributed little to her care and never even told her own daughters that she was still alive. This pattern of lies and secretiveness was usually for self-protective reasons **(the slightly stilted rhythm and MZ double walling indicate that she rationalised things to justify her actions, to the point where she even deceived herself)** and repeated itself many times throughout her life.

At 26, Enid met a publisher in his mid-thirties. Hugh Pollock was already married but Enid, with her desperate need to be loved, wrote in her diaries: “I want him for mine”. Her determination won through and he got divorced from his estranged wife and married Enid. None of her family was invited to the wedding.

She eventually became pregnant with their first child, Gillian. Her diary entries reveal she was unemotional about the pregnancy, despite the fact she had had fertility problems due to an undeveloped uterus. She saw Gillian for only an hour a day - for the rest of the time

her daughter was looked after by nannies. Despite her professed love of children in her books, she couldn't stand them getting in the way of her work. She related outwardly to her fans, but not inwardly to her daughters or real-life children. Constantly busy, she she didn't like to be interrupted until she was ready. Her determination and drive meant that she could become so absorbed in what she was doing that other obligations were easily forgotten and she could be extremely irritable if distracted from her routine. **(shown by the strong, dark strokes, angles, irregularities in writing, connected with connectedness between words).**

Her second daughter Imogen was born in 1935 - she was late and delayed her mother's return to work. Enid spent only half an hour a day with her. She could go to extraordinary lengths to keep her children quiet when she was working, to the point where there are even stories about her locking them in a cupboard for up to 2 to 3 hours. Children that she considered a nuisance because they prevented her from working could appear in her books as part of a moral tale about naughty children. This "punishment" was handed out to everyone who upset her, including her own daughter Imogen who was cast as "Isobel the Very Rude Girl" in one story. Whilst her daughter Gillian remembers her as a very good mother ("an enormously stimulating, exciting person to be with"), her relationship with Imogen was troubled. Imogen remembers no fun and affection and felt that she was simply a bit of a nuisance to her mother. As a result, she felt unwanted and rejected. There was an inner tension between Enid's desire to give love and her desire to hold back, which she often expressed in a mentally cruel way. She liked to play cat and mouse with people by raising their expectations, giving love and warmth and then maltreating them again **(although there are some garlands in the writing, they are angular garlands and there are also angular connections at the baseline in her MZ - this suggests she was socially aggressive and didn't care really whether people liked her or not.)**

In her autobiography however, she saw things very differently, talking about how important the role of the mother was and how much time she had for her children. It was important to her to be seen as a good mother and she desperately needed to believe her family was happy. She pigeon-holed things by constructing routine and order into her life, learning to hide how she felt so that people didn't necessarily see her negative state of mind, putting a lot of energy into maintaining a semblance of being friendly, caring and well-balanced **(slightly stilted, large full stops, squeezed ovals, angular garlands)**. She did have a talent to relate and form relationships, but she expressed this through her writing rather than in her own personal life **(strong dark firm strokes, connected with angular garlands, right margin narrow)**. In real life she only pretended to be sociable and actually found it very difficult to be at ease with people. She didn't want people prying into her private life and so adopted a forceful and determined approach to prevent people getting close to her **(wide word spacing, letter spacing irregular, UZ and MZ variable)**. She could adopt a softer approach and make concessions or reconciliations, but it was often for selfish reasons and in reality she preferred not to let people in, or to compromise **(angles with garlands, upright, connected, fluctuating width, baseline slant horizontal then rises, signature underlined more than once, long t bars)**.

Not everyone was fooled however. Those closer to her often painted a different story, describing her as demanding, self-centred and prone to peevish temper tantrums. Deep down her self-esteem and inner confidence varied, making her ambivalent, sensitive and touchy. Her reactions to a situation depended upon her mood at that particular moment and in turn made her volatile and unable to exercise control over sudden outbursts of emotion **(fluctuating width, MZ fluctuates greater than dominant, upright but variable)**

**slant, LZ sometimes rightward and ending in MZ).** This made her difficult to get on with and hard to understand and often led to problematic relationships (**some stiltedness, angles, end-strokes rightward and flourished, potlids**) According to her servants, Enid was subject to mood swings and a violent temper which led her to dismiss staff on a whim. She wrote in her diary: "Deep down in me I have an arrogant spirit that makes me scornful of other people if I think they are stupid or unable to think for themselves. I have at times been horrid and contemptuous". When her gardener was ill, she sent him bananas, and then deducted the cost of them from his weekly wage. She wrote about her dog Bobs as if she adored him, but in reality he was locked away for hours on end and when he died she refused to face up to his illness and suffering beforehand. During the war, with an 8 bed-roomed house, she was asked by her closest friend if she would put up 5 relatives who had been bombed out of their home. They left after 2 days, because Enid had been so rude to them.

Enid started to tire of Hugh. She wanted him to be the rock on whom she could depend, but she started to see a side of him that she hadn't seen before. He couldn't cope with Enid's success and became depressed, beginning to drink and spend long periods away from home. He started to need her rather than other way round and she disliked this weakness in him. In the 2nd World War they parted.

She began an affair with a married man called Kenneth Darrell-Walters and eventually divorced Hugh, never allowing him to see their children again. She said if he made any attempt to, she would cut the children out of her will. She then set up a campaign against him and blackened his name, systematically trying to ruin him, despite the fact that he had helped Enid to advance her career. These feelings of resentment, due to the deep influence from things that had happened to her in her past, meant that she was often stubborn or hostile, contesting things by seeking out points of opposition and difference, rather than forgetting and letting go (**angular garlands, UZ with leftward tendencies, some MZ angular connections at the baseline**).

She married Kenneth - again, a man who tolerated her demanding behaviour. However, despite all the turbulence in her private life, there was no stopping her as a writer. Ambitious and determined, she had the capacity for hard work and was a good planner who organised her time and resources well (**connected, well arranged layout and clear spacing, legible, medium size, upright, wide word spacing, narrow left margin, angles**). Her ability to concentrate and not be distracted by stray thoughts or feelings meant that her work output was huge. She was an obsessive workaholic with an extraordinarily prolific output, driven by an impatience to see things through to their conclusion (**connected with connectedness between words, distinct writing, angles with garlands, no starting strokes**). The books simply gushed out - she churned out 700 in her lifetime. A 40,000-word Famous Five book took her only a week to complete on her type-writer. She wrote an entire children's magazine every month for 26 years and contributed to columns elsewhere. At her peak she was earning £100,000 a year - £2 million in today's terms.

Just as her success was at its peak, the first dissenting voices were heard. Libraries began to ban her work, complaining that characters were cruel and that working-class people and foreigners were portrayed as dirty and lacking in moral fibre. It was said that her stories were not stretching enough and there were cries of racism because she had chosen golliwogs as villains. Rumours spread that she didn't do all the work herself (although it is not hard to see why, in view of her productivity). Although she anticipated huge criticism from others, she was determined to stand out and win the praise and recognition she thought she deserved. She therefore had a tendency to listen selectively and only hear what she wanted to hear. (**connected writing with connections between words, personal**

**pronoun barred with curved stem, underlined signature**). And so she buried her head in the sand, saying “I don’t take any notice of any critic over the age of twelve”.

In old age she admitted she wrote to forget: “If I don’t work, the dark shadows of the past will close in on me”. In the early 60s she started suffering from senile dementia. She began to feel troubled about the way she had treated her parents, asking for them both, not realising they were dead. She also lost the hostility she had towards her daughter Imogen, whom she had once so rejected. Enid Blyton died in 1968 at the age of 71. Kenneth burnt nearly all her diaries “to tidy things up”.