

Hello, Cruel World!



On the fifth day of November, 1718, was I, Tristram Shandy, gentleman, brought forth into this scurvy and disastrous world of ours. I wish I had been born in the moon, or in any of the planets (except Jupiter or Saturn), because I never could bear cold weather; for it could not well have fared worse with me in any of them (though I will not answer for Venus) than it has in this vile dirty planet of ours, which of my conscience with reverence be it spoken I take to be made up of the shreds and clippings of the rest; not but the planet is well enough, provided a man could be born in it to a great title or to a great estate, or could anyhow contrive to be called up to public charges and employments of dignity and power; but that is not my case; and therefore every man will speak of the fair as his own market has gone in it; for which cause I affirm it over again to be one of the vilest worlds that ever was made; for I can truly say, that from the first hour I drew breath in it, to this—I can now scarce draw it at all, for an asthma I got in skating against the wind in Flanders—I have been the continual sport of what the world calls Fortune, and though I will not wrong her by saying she has ever made me feel the weight of any great and signal evil, yet with all the good temper in the world, I affirm it of her, that in every stage of my life, and at every turn and corner where she could get fairly at me, the ungracious duchess has pelted me with a set of as pitiful misadventures and cross accidents as ever small hero sustained.

From the novel *Tristram Shandy* by Lawrence Stern

1. What do you think the author means to say about the world by calling it *scurvy*? It is:
 - a. cruel
 - b. diseased
 - c. relentless
2. If you *fare well*, then you _____.
 - a. eat well
 - b. sleep well
 - c. do well
3. What is an antonym for *scarce* in this context?
 - a. hardly
 - b. often
 - c. really
4. If someone is *ungracious* then they are:
 - a. not graceful
 - b. not kind
 - c. not generous
5. What does *pelt* mean in this context?
 - a. attack someone by throwing things at them
 - b. beat someone
 - c. an animal skin
6. *Contrive* means:
 - a. bargain
 - b. meddle
 - c. figure out a way to do something