The Citadel

A J Cronin

Chapter 2: Manson is shocked to hear from Denny, another junior doctor, that bad water in the town kills many people through typhoid, and that the senior doctors, apart from Page, are incompetent or only interested in money.

Chapter 3: By drinking only boiled water, some typhoid patients get better, but typhoid is spreading. Denny proposes to blow up the old sewer in order to oblige the authorities to build a new safe one. Andrew helps and the plan works.

Chapter 4: Andrew has an argument with the schoolteacher about keeping a contagious child at home.

Chapter 5: Andrew falls in love with the schoolteacher, Christine Barlow.

Chapter 6: A man who had become violent is cured by Manson's hormone treatment, while other doctors had simply wanted to send him to a mental hospital.

Chapter 7: Andrew and Christine go to a doctors' conference. An old friend, Freddie Hamson explains to him how to make much more money by only treating rich patients.

Chapter 8: Andrew managed to help a difficult birth and save a baby's life. The father gives him a cheque as a gift.

Chapter 9: Page's sister is angry that he has received a gift from Mr Morgan. Andrew gives in his notice.

Chapter 10: Andrew is selected for a post in another town, with good money and a house. He marries Christine.

Chapter 11: Andrew discovers that the head doctor expects to receive part of Andrew's salary.

Chapter 12: Andrew refuses to give sick notes to miners who are not ill, and makes himself some enemies.

Chapter 13: Andrew's honesty wins him some new patients.

Chapter 14: Andrew researches the effect of coal dust on miners' lungs. He also plans on challenging the corrupt system run by the head doctor, but the other doctors are too scared to join him.

Chapter 15: Andrew studies and gets a university degree.

Chapter 16: Because of an accident in the mine, Andrew, working underground, has to cut off a man's arm to save him.

About the author

Archibald Joseph Cronin was born on 19th July 1896 in Cardross near Glasgow on the west coast of Scotland. His mother had defied her Scottish, Protestant family by marrying an Irishman and becoming a Catholic. Cronin was very bright and won many prizes at Cardross Village School and the Dumbarton Academy, but this did not endear him to his fellow pupils, and he was a shy and lonely boy.

Cronin graduated with honours from medical school at the end of the First World War in 1919. In 1921, he married Agnes Mary Gibson, also a medical graduate. Cronin's ensuing career as a doctor gave him rich experience and a deep insight into a vast variety of characters, relationships and emotions. In the mining towns of Wales, he saw the human spirit fighting poverty and hardship. In his London practice, he encountered the spoilt, neurotic rich, happy to spend money like water.

Cronin's writing career began in 1930 when he had to give up his medical practice in London because of a duodenal ulcer. His career as an author was very successful. He had a great following in America and in 1939 moved with his wife and three sons, to New England. However, at the height of his fame, success and wealth, Cronin was deeply dissatisfied. He returned to Catholicism with a vengeance. Cronin spent his final years in Switzerland, where he died in 1981.

Summary

Chapter 1: Newly qualified, Dr Manson takes a job as assistant to Dr Page in a small mining town. On arrival, he finds to his surprise that Page is partly paralyzed and will never work again.
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Chapter 17: Andrew is now more popular in the town; Christine is expecting a baby.

Chapter 18: Christine has an accident and loses the baby. Andrew continues his research.

Chapter 19: Andrew uses animals in his research. Some of his enemies use this as an excuse to try to make him leave. His research impresses the committee, but he is offended and leaves anyway.

Chapter 20: Andrew is appointed Medical Officer to the employers’ organization.

Chapter 21: There is almost no work for Andrew to do in his new job.

Chapter 22: It becomes clear that the Board wants to occupy Andrew so that he cannot discover too much about health problems related to coal dust. He leaves, then finds that another member of the Board is taking credit for his research.

Chapter 23: Andrew sets up his practice in London, though Christine is tired of the town. It is difficult at first to make money.

Chapter 24: Andrew meets other doctors who are only interested in making money, by lying to patients if necessary. He applies for a post in a hospital.

Chapter 25: Because of his good work, Andrew gets many more patients. But he makes much more money by giving useless treatment to rich people.

Chapter 26: Working with rich patients, Andrew is gradually attracted by the more comfortable life, and buys a car.

Chapter 27: Andrew makes more money by becoming a fraudulent doctor like the others, but his wife is unhappy. He is offered a post at the hospital.

Chapter 28: Denny, back from abroad, hopes, with Christine, to lead Andrew back to the more moral approach to medicine which he had previously followed.

Chapter 29: Christine tries to talk Andrew out of his excessive interest in money-making. Andrew rents a surgery in the richest part of town.

Chapter 30: An American, Mr Stillman, who is not a qualified doctor but does excellent work on chest diseases contacts Andrew in the hope of working together. After a row, Christine and Andrew separate for a while.

Chapter 31: Andrew gets involved with another woman, Frances, while Christine is away. When Christine comes back he feels guilty and Christine is suspicious.

Chapter 32: Andrew works with his money-obsessed colleague Ivory. Ivory kills a patient during an operation through obvious incompetence. Andrew is overcome with guilt.

Chapter 33: Andrew turns into an honest doctor again, to everyone’s surprise.

Chapter 34: Andrew decides he wants to work with Denny and Hope and practise medicine differently.

Chapter 35: Andrew sends one of his patients to Mr Stillman, and she is cured. He continues to clean up his business and breaks off his relationship with Frances.

Chapter 36: Andrew sells his London practice and plans a new life. Christine is killed by a bus.

Chapter 37: Andrew is heartbroken, but Denny and Hope look after him and the three of them plan to set up a surgery together.

Chapter 38: Andrew gets into trouble with the General Medical Council because Stillman is not a qualified doctor.

Chapter 39: At the inquiry, Andrew gives a long speech criticizing the medical system. The committee is impressed and decides not to disqualify him.

Background and themes

Public health: The Citadel was greeted with dismay and hostility by the medical profession, who said it overemphasized the small percentage of evil in the profession. Many people believe that The Citadel contributed to the creation in 1948 of a free National Health Service, because it exposed deeply inadequate and unfair practices.

Protest novel: The Citadel has been called a protest novel because its key themes deal with injustice and inequality in the medical system in Britain in the 1930s. Interviewed by the Daily Express, Cronin said, ‘I have written in The Citadel all I feel about the medical profession, its injustices, its hide-bound unscientific stubbornness, its humbug … The horrors and iniquities detailed in the story I have personally witnessed. This is not an attack against individuals, but against a system.’
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Through his characters, Cronin cries out for a system where doctors with different specialist knowledge, work together for the benefit of their patients. He believes that all patients, whether they are rich or poor, should be treated equally, and should pay their doctors within their means.

Integrity: Dr Manson is a good, caring doctor whose one aim in life is to cure people. However, his idealism gradually turns to cynicism because of the ignorance and prejudice of the miners, and the indifference of his superiors. Abandoning his ideals, Dr Manson becomes obsessed with accumulating wealth. Working with a network of similarly minded gold-digging doctors, he exploits his wealthy patients, and neglects the poorer ones.

‘The citadel’: The symbol of the citadel is central to the book. It symbolizes ideals – in Manson’s case medical integrity – which are enclosed in a castle on a hill. Manson fights against great odds to free himself from materialistic temptation, and climb that hill. At the end of the book we are left with the sense that, with Denny and Hope at his side, Manson will scale the walls of the citadel to realize his ideals.

The Citadel was a ‘blockbuster’. It broke all publishing records, and sold 10,000 hardback copies a week, for months on end.

Discussion activities

Before reading

1 Discuss and predict: Divide your students into groups of four. Ask them to discuss what might be in the novel. Guide them with the following questions: The Citadel is a novel which speaks of the life of a doctor in Britain in the 1930s. What do you imagine it will show us? What do you think were common illnesses in the mining towns of Britain in this period? Who paid for medical services? Were doctors well-paid or poorly paid? What was their attitude to rich patients and poorer patients, do you think?

Chapters 1–3

After reading

2 Write a poster: Andrew discovers that typhoid is the cause of the illness of many of the miners. Ask your students to write a public information poster to put up around the town telling people what they should do to avoid catching typhoid, and what they should do if they think they have caught it. They should make sure the language and the explanations are very clear.

3 Write a letter: A few days after his arrival in the town, Andrew writes a letter to an old friend, explaining his surprising discoveries in his first weeks in the town. Ask your students to write the letter.

4 Role play: Ask your students to divide into groups of three. They should imagine that Andrew and Denny are trying to persuade a third person to join in their plan to blow up the sewer. They should remember to try to get the right tone of voice for the different emotions expressed. Get some of the groups to act out the scene in front of the whole class.

5 Research and present: People in Britain today no longer suffer from typhoid like they could in the 1930s. Ask your students to find out on the Internet about other diseases (like tuberculosis, mentioned near the end of the book) which have disappeared in Britain. Ask some of them to do a short presentation explaining what these diseases were and how they were defeated.

6 Write a diary: Ask your students to imagine they are Andrew. They should write an entry for his diary the day before the evening when he blows up the sewer with Denny. Andrew writes about his hopes and fears.

7 Research and present: Divide your students into three groups. Ask them to research at home different aspects of Wales. One group could find out about its history, one about its geography and one about its culture. In each case they should try to find out the difference between North Wales and South Wales. The groups should then make a short presentation in front of the class.

Chapters 4–7

After reading

8 Role play: Ask your students to form pairs. One of them is Andrew, the other is the schoolteacher. They should act out (without reading) the scene where Andrew comes to talk to Christine about the sick child whom he thinks should have been kept at home. Then they should act out the later scene where Andrew apologizes to Christine. Ask some of the pairs to act out the scenes in front of the whole class.

9 Write a summary: Ask your students to read Chapters 4–6 again. Then ask them to write a summary of the story in a maximum of 80 words.

10 Write and role play: Ask your students to work in groups of three. One of them is Freddie Hamson, the doctor who only really thinks of money; the other two are rich patients who think they are ill. Ask them to write a dialogue for a scene where Hamson examines the patients and recommends expensive solutions to their imaginary problems. They should then act the scene out in front of the class.
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11 Debate: Freddie Hamson is a doctor who mostly thinks of the money he is making. Ask your students to prepare at home, and then debate in class the idea that 'Most doctors today think more of money than health'. Alternatively, get them to prepare and debate the motion 'Most lawyers are more interested in money than justice.' Get them to find evidence for and against the motions on the Internet.

Chapters 8–10
After reading
12 Write a letter: When Joe Morgan gave Andrew a cheque to thank him, he also gave him a short letter of thanks written by the baby's mother. Ask your students to write this letter. They should try to be emotional but restrained. They should invent the details of the mother's situation.

13 Apply for a job: In a small town in the south of England, a doctor is needed to work with a tin-mining company. Ask your students to write a letter from Andrew applying for the job. They should explain why they feel qualified for the job. The letter should be written in formal English. They should begin 'Dear Sir, Further to your advertisement in the Medical Journal, I am writing to you to express my interest in the post you have available …'.

14 Role play: Divide students into groups of three or four. One student takes on the role of Andrew, the others as interviewers for the job he has applied for. The students who are interviewing take it in turns to ask Andrew questions. Encourage them to find out why Andrew is leaving Drinelly, how he feels about the medical profession, what he would do in certain situations, etc.

Chapters 11–15
After reading
15 Write an article: Aberalaw is only a small town, and the arrival of a new doctor is quite an event. Ask your students to write a short interview with the new doctor for the local newspaper. Make sure they think about how to make the article interesting for their readers.

16 Act out: Divide your students into groups of four. One person in each group is Andrew. The other three are all miners who want sick notes, but only one of them is really ill. The miners should explain why they need sick notes, and Andrew should ask them questions to find out if they are really ill or not.

17 Role play: Ask your students to work in pairs. They should prepare and act out a conversation between two miners talking about the new Dr Manson. What do they think of his actions so far?

Chapters 16–23
After reading
18 Make a radio broadcast: If possible, record a radio news broadcast. Play this to the class and have a discussion about the way the information is presented. Divide the class into small groups. Ask some groups to produce a short radio broadcast about the accident at the mine, and the other groups to report on the discovery of Andrew's experiments. They may include interviews if they wish. Each group reads their broadcast to the rest of the class. Discuss which broadcast was most successful in conveying the information, and why.

19 Write a complaint: Ask your students to imagine that they are among Andrew's enemies in the town. They should write a complaint to Andrew's employers about the animal experiments they hear he is carrying out.

20 Debate: Divide the class into three groups. Tell them they are going to debate the use of animal experiments in research. Group one is opposed to any use of animals. Group two is opposed to using animals in experiments to develop cosmetics and perfumes, but not for food testing or medical reasons. Group three thinks that it is acceptable to use animals in any kind of research. Give the groups twenty minutes to prepare their arguments, and then hold the debate.

21 Write a newspaper article: Andrew is investigated by the committee because of the use of animals in his research. Ask your students to write an article for the local newspaper about the accusations and the committee's decision. Remind them to use expressions like alleged.

22 Discuss and predict: Put your students into small groups. Guide them with the following questions: Do you think Andrew is right to give in his notice? What will happen next? How will his career as a doctor develop? How successful will his research be? Will he make a lot of money? Discuss with another student and report back to the class.

23 Write a job offer: Andrew receives a letter from the Coal and Mines Board offering him a job. Show your students an example of such a formal letter, and ask them to write the letter from the Coal and Mines Board to Andrew, offering the position and proposing a date to begin. They should remember to be formal and polite.

24 Write a report: Once Andrew is employed at the Coal and Mines Board, they ask him to write a (useless) report about the width of bandages. Ask your students to write this report.

25 Discuss: Ask your students to work in pairs. They should try to think of jobs where people are paid to do nothing of use. Then the class should discuss whether it is true or not that these people exist.
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Chapters 24–31

After reading

26 Write a letter: Christine is unhappy with the way Andrew is changing. He doesn’t seem to be the same man as the man she married. She writes a letter to an old friend telling her about her situation. Ask your students to write this letter. They should begin like this: ‘Dear Sarah, I am very worried about how Andrew is behaving these days. I have to tell you what he said the other day …’.

27 Role play: Put your students into pairs. One is Andrew and the other is Denny. Ask them to act out the scene when Denny comes to see Andrew after coming back from abroad. They should think about intonation and emotion. Ask some of the pairs to act out the scene in front of the whole class.

28 Discuss and predict: Put your students into groups of three. They should discuss what they think might happen next in the story, then present their idea to the class. Guide them with these questions: Will Andrew get rich? Will he lose his friends? Will he lose touch with his ideals? How will his wife react? Will anything horrible happen?

Chapters 32–35

After reading

29 Act out: Divide your students into groups of three. One is Dr Ivory, one is Harry Vidler’s wife, and one is Andrew. They should act out first the scene where Ivory announces to the woman that her husband has died on the operating table, then the scene where Andrew gets angry with Ivory for his incompetence, and Ivory tries to defend himself.

30 Write in Andrew’s diary: After the failed operation, Andrew writes in his diary. Ask your students to write the entry. He talks about his emotions, and about what he intends to do.

31 Write an advertisement: Andrew has decided to sell his medical practice. Ask your students to imagine they are to write the advertisement to appear in a medical journal. If possible show them examples of advertisements, perhaps from an estate agents’ magazine. They should begin in this way: ‘For sale, well-established medical practice …’.

Chapters 36–39

After reading

32 Role play: Divide the students into groups of five. They are to role play the inquiry. One is Andrew, and one his defence lawyer; one is the prosecution; the other two ask questions about the situation and listen to the arguments and justifications. Then they decide whether Andrew should be forbidden to practise medicine in the future, or not.

33 Write and deliver a speech: At the inquiry Andrew makes an angry but polite speech about the defects of the medical system. Ask your students to prepare at home, and give in front of the rest of the class a polite but angry speech about something which they disagree with. Ask them to think about the tone of voice and vocabulary appropriate for polite anger.

34 Write a letter to the newspaper: Ask your students in pairs to imagine they are friends of Andrew’s. Ask them to write an angry letter to the newspaper denouncing the defects of the medical system, which Andrew has explained to them.

Extra activities

35 Discuss: Divide the class into small groups. Groups write down three major events that take place in one section of the book. Write these in chronological order on the board. Ask each group to talk about a specific event and discuss what could have happened if the main character had acted differently at this point. Each group reports back to the rest of the class.

36 Role play: Put students into pairs. Ask them to choose the scene in the book they find the most dramatic and to act it out. Tell them to try and imagine that they are really these characters. When students have finished, the whole class votes for the most convincing pair.

37 Write a letter: Five years after Christine’s death, Andrew writes a letter to a good friend of his abroad. He explains what has happened to him in those five years. Ask your students to write this letter. Guide them with the following questions: How did Andrew, Denny and Hope set up their new medical practice, and where? How well did it work? Did they manage to serve as an example for other doctors? How much money did they make? How does Andrew feel in his new career?

38 Write a cinema trailer: Explain to students how cinema trailers are often written (a few short dramatic extracts of dialogue and a dramatic voiceover). If possible show them an example. Get students to write, in pairs, a cinema trailer for the film The Citadel and to act it out in front of the other students.

39 Pyramid discussion: Divide your students into pairs. Each pair should write down four qualities (for example: patience, courage, kindness, tolerance, integrity, energy, cheerfulness, punctuality, thoroughness …) which they think are important for a doctor. Then the pair should join into groups of four and discuss the qualities until they agree on the three most important ones. Finally, the whole class should discuss and vote to find the two most important qualities of a doctor.

Vocabulary activities

For the Word List and vocabulary activities, go to www.penguinreaders.com.