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GRADE 9



# THE CHRYSALIS



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**OXFORD** literature for southern africa

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CHRYSLIS**

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SOUTHERN AFRICA

## Chapter 2

To the east of Cape Town's City Bowl, in an expensive house along the icy blue water of the Atlantic Seaboard, Gregoire Wulf was feeding a fire. The heavy curtains were drawn and the only light in the room came from the flickering flames that danced over Wulf's face and reflected in his cold eyes.

### Style

Look at the words *Wulf*, *fire*, *cold eyes*. Are we meant to view the new character as friend or foe?

His hair had turned grey but now he kept his scalp shaved. He was sixty-two years old but still agile<sup>1</sup> and strong: years in the military had drilled a strict routine of exercise into him. A birthmark in the shape of a fish hook curled around his left eye, starting just above his eyebrow and ending a few millimetres below his left eyelid.

Few of Wulf's neighbours had ever seen him, and none had spoken a word to him. He made his way to and from the house in a large grey car with dark windows and a grille that looked like the snarling<sup>2</sup> mouth of a wild beast.

### Style

What does this description of Gregoire Wulf's car add to his character?

The room was big but almost empty. A single chair stood in front of a desk littered with papers, books and a lamp without a light bulb. The walls of the room revealed bright squares and rectangles against the now-faded wallpaper, where paintings had hung in the past. Now they were all gone, sold by Wulf. The house itself was valuable, but he had already borrowed as much money from the bank against its value as he could. Wulf was deeply in debt.

### Plot

Why is this behaviour shocking to us?

On the floor next to him was an old photograph album missing all its photographs. Wulf had ripped them out and at that moment was feeding them to the fire. He took his time, adding a photo to the flames and watching its edges curl and the people in it melt and catch fire, and repeating this exercise over and over as the photographs were slowly reduced to ash.

The very last photo showed two smiling boys of around nine years old standing on some rocks with the sea behind them. They were identical twins and it would have been impossible to tell

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1 **agile:** athletic

2 **snarling:** growling with raised upper lip so that teeth are exposed

them apart if not for the fish hook-shaped birthmark that curled around one boy's left eye. On the back of the photo was written

*Max and Gregoire on the beach at Muizenberg.*

“What did you do with it, Max?” Wulf asked one of the boys in the photo. “Where is great-grandfather's treasure? It belongs to me too.”

Wulf knew this wasn't true. His greed and his lying and stealing had separated him from his family years ago, but he ignored that fact.

He thought back to the night three years ago, when he had last seen his brother alive. They had been driving in Max's car after Max had fetched Gregoire from the police station, where he had been held on charges of fraud and theft.

“This is the last time, Gregoire,” Max had said. “I'm done with cleaning up your messes. You've cost me a fortune and you've brought shame on our family.”

Gregoire had stared out of the window and said nothing in reply. When Max had spoken again it was in anger, something he almost never did.

“Father left me a treasure,” he had said. “Something from our great-grandfather. I've hidden it so you will never get your hands on it. There's a clue in my house, but you will never set foot in there again.”

Gregoire had stayed silent the whole time, even though he was boiling with rage. He had waited until they were rounding a corner on a quiet road and then he had swiftly unclipped Max's safety belt and yanked the steering wheel to one side. The car had crashed into a massive oak tree.

Gregoire's safety belt had saved his life and he had walked away from the accident before anyone else had arrived on the scene.

Gregoire Wulf stared at the last photo of the two young boys on the beach for a long time before he added it to the fire.

#### **Plot**

Which earlier behaviour foreshadowed this monstrous behaviour?

#### **Narrator**

We have access to both Michael and Gregoire Wulf's thoughts and feelings. Is that called omniscient or limited third person narration?