# Learner Resource 5.3

# Spotlight on: THEME

### Theme: Extract 11

“Ah, you may sit under them, yes. They cast a good shadow, cold as well-water; but that's the trouble, they tempt you to sleep. And you must never, for any reason, sleep beneath a cypress.' He paused, stroked his moustache, waited for me to ask why, and then went on: 'Why? Why? Because if you did you would be changed when you woke. Yes, the black cypresses, they are dangerous. While you sleep, their roots grow into your brains and steal them, and when you wake up you are mad, head as empty as a whistle.' I asked whether it was only the cypress that could do that or did it apply to other trees. 'No, only the cypress,' said the old man, peering up fiercely at the trees above me as though to see whether they were listening; 'only the cypress is the thief of intelligence. So be warned, little lord, and don't sleep here.”

*My Family and Other Animals* – Gerald Durrell

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