



# MICHAEL MARKS

Agnes refers to Michael as a 'Polish Jewish pedlar'. What impact do you think where he is from and his religion has on how she perceives him? Why?

1863  
Michael was born in Slomin, a small town that was part of the Russian Empire.

1882  
Michael emigrated to the UK speaking very little English. He settled in Leeds and may have looked for work at businesses such as Barrans; a company who were known to give jobs to Jewish immigrants, but often paid them very low wages.

1886  
Michael married Hannah Cohen, another refugee from Russia, at the synagogue on Belgrave Street, Leeds.

1889  
Michael rented an area in Leeds Kirkgate market which he called The Penny Bazaar and had the slogan 'Don't ask the Price - it's a Penny!'

1894  
The first Marks & Spencer store, as opposed to stall, was opened in Cheetham Hill, Manchester

1907  
Michael Marks died at the age of only 48 years old.

2012  
The largest M&S outside London opened in Cheshire. It is one of the first Eco stores.

1881  
The Emperor of Russia is assassinated which starts a rise in anti-Jewish feeling in the country.

1884  
Michael met Isaac Dewhirst who owned a goods warehouse. He agreed to sell Michael produce that he was able to sell in local villages from a cart. He also took a stall at Leeds open market as well as selling at market stalls in Wakefield and Castleford.

1888  
Michael and Hannah's first child is born, a son, Simon.

1894  
Michael persuaded Thomas Spencer to invest £300 (around £35,000 in today's money) and become his business partner.

1897  
Michael is granted British Citizenship.

1928  
Michael's son, Simon, introduced the 'St Michael' brand label in memory of his father.

The Penny Bazaar stores had all the merchandise out on display; people were able to pick things up and take a good look before they bought. How do you think this was different to other shops at the time?

The Marks and Spencer Penny Bazaar stores had signs above the doors saying 'Free Admission'. Why do you think they chose to do this? How do you think it encouraged people to go into their shops?

Michael had one section of his market stalls which only sold things which cost a penny. These items were so popular that he altered his business so that EVERYTHING was a penny and he stopped selling more expensive goods. Do you think this was a good business idea?

M&S now has over 790 stores in the UK, more than 1519 stores worldwide. What do you think Michael Marks would say if you could tell him how big his business had become?

