GCSE
ENGLISH LITERATURE

Paper 2 Modern Texts and Poetry

Thursday 23 May 2019 Morning Time allowed: 2 hours 15 minutes

Materials

For this paper you must have:
- an AQA 16-page answer book.

Instructions
- Use black ink or black ball-point pen. Do **not** use pencil.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is 8702/2.
- Answer **one** question from **Section A**, **one** question from **Section B** and **both** questions in **Section C**.
- You must **not** use a dictionary.

Information
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 96.
- AO4 will be assessed in **Section A**. There are 4 marks available for AO4 in **Section A** in addition to 30 marks for answering the question. AO4 assesses the following skills: use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.
- There are 30 marks for **Section B** and 32 marks for **Section C**.

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Turn over for Section A

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Section A: Modern prose or drama

Answer **one** question from this section on your chosen text.

JB Priestley: *An Inspector Calls*

Either

0 1 How does Priestley present selfishness and its effects in *An Inspector Calls*?

Write about:

- examples of selfish behaviour in the play
- how Priestley presents selfishness and its effects.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

0 2 How does Priestley present Sheila as a character who learns important lessons about herself and society?

Write about:

- some of the things Sheila learns in the play
- how Priestley presents Sheila as a character who learns important lessons about herself and society.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

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Willy Russell: *Blood Brothers*

or

0 3 How does Russell present the importance of money in *Blood Brothers*?

Write about:

- the importance of money to characters in the play
- how Russell presents the importance of money.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

0 4 How far does Russell present Mrs Lyons as a lonely and unhappy character in *Blood Brothers*?

Write about:

- what Mrs Lyons says and does
- how far Russell presents Mrs Lyons as lonely and unhappy.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

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Alan Bennett: *The History Boys*

or

0 5 How far does Bennett present Irwin as an unlikeable character in *The History Boys*?

Write about:

- what Irwin says and does
- how far Bennett presents Irwin as an unlikeable character.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

0 6 How does Bennett present the importance of history in *The History Boys*?

Write about:

- what kinds of history appear in the play and why they are important
- how Bennett presents the importance of history in the play.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

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Dennis Kelly: *DNA*

or

0 7 How does Kelly use the play's settings to explore ideas about people and society?

Write about:

- the play's settings and what happens in them
- how Kelly uses the play's settings to explore ideas about people and society.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

0 8 How does Kelly present different styles of leadership in *DNA*?

Write about:

- examples of leadership in the play
- how Kelly presents different styles of leadership.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

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Simon Stephens: *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*

or

0 9 How does Stephens present Christopher's relationship with his parents in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*?

Write about:

- what happens in the play between Christopher and his parents
- how Stephens presents Christopher's relationship with his parents.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 0 How does Stephens explore the importance of secrets and truth in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*?

Write about:

- examples of secrets and truth in the play
- how Stephens presents the importance of secrets and truth.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

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Shelagh Delaney: *A Taste of Honey*

or

1 1 How far does Delaney present Helen as a victim in *A Taste of Honey*?

Write about:

- what happens to Helen in the play
- how far Delaney presents Helen as a victim.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 2 *A Taste of Honey* has been described as a play about the importance of taking care of each other.

How far do you agree with this view of the play?

Write about:

- what characters say and do in the play
- how far Delaney presents the importance of taking care of each other.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

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William Golding: *Lord of the Flies*

or

1 3 How far does Golding present Piggy as a character with useful and important ideas in *Lord of the Flies*?

Write about:

- what Piggy says and does that can be seen as useful and important
- how far Golding presents Piggy as a character with useful and important ideas.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 4 In Chapter 8 of *Lord of the Flies* Ralph asks, 'What makes things break up like they do?'

How does Golding present the reasons why society on the island breaks up?

Write about:

- what happens on the island
- how Golding presents the reasons why society on the island breaks up.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

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AQA Anthology: *Telling Tales*

or

1 5 How do writers present characters learning about themselves and others in 'My Polish Teacher's Tie' and in **one** other story from *Telling Tales*?

Write about:

- examples of what characters learn in the stories
- how the writers present characters learning about themselves and others.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 6 How do writers present difficult family relationships in 'A Family Supper' and in **one** other story from *Telling Tales*?

Write about:

- the difficult family relationships in the stories
- how the writers present these difficult family relationships.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

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George Orwell: *Animal Farm*

or

1 7 How does Orwell use Moses and Benjamin to explore attitudes to revolution in *Animal Farm*?

Write about:

- what Moses and Benjamin say and do
- how Orwell uses Moses and Benjamin to explore attitudes to revolution.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

1 8 How does Orwell present the failure of the rebellion in *Animal Farm*?

Write about:

- the ways the rebellion fails
- how Orwell presents the failure of the rebellion.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

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Kazuo Ishiguro: *Never Let Me Go*

or

1 9 How does Ishiguro present the friendship between Kathy and Ruth in *Never Let Me Go*?

Write about:

- the friendship between Kathy and Ruth
- how Ishiguro presents the friendship between Kathy and Ruth.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

2 0 'Tommy is presented as the character who suffers the most in *Never Let Me Go.*'

How far do you agree with this view?

Write about:

- what Tommy says and does, and what happens to him
- how Ishiguro presents Tommy in the novel.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

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Meera Syal: *Anita and Me*

or

2 1 How does Syal present the importance of female friendship in *Anita and Me*?

Write about:

- one or more female friendship(s) in the novel
- how Syal presents the importance of female friendship.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

2 2 How does Syal present Meena's struggle for independence in *Anita and Me*?

Write about:

- some of the ways that Meena tries to be independent
- how Syal presents Meena's struggle for independence.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

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Stephen Kelman: *Pigeon English*

or

2 3 How does Kelman present Harrison as a kind of detective who investigates a boy's murder?

Write about:

- what Harrison says and does
- how Kelman presents Harrison as a kind of detective.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

or

2 4 How does Kelman present the challenges facing young people who live on the estate?

Write about:

- the challenges young people face
- how Kelman presents the challenges facing young people.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for Section B

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There are no questions printed on this page

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Section B: Poetry

Answer **one** question from this section.

AQA Anthology: *Poems Past and Present*

Either

Love and relationships

The poems you have studied are:

Lord Byron	When We Two Parted
Percy Bysshe Shelley	Love's Philosophy
Robert Browning	Porphyria's Lover
Elizabeth Barrett Browning	Sonnet 29 – 'I think of thee!'
Thomas Hardy	Neutral Tones
Maura Dooley	Letters from Yorkshire
Charlotte Mew	The Farmer's Bride
Cecil Day-Lewis	Walking Away
Charles Causley	Eden Rock
Seamus Heaney	Follower
Simon Armitage	Mother, Any Distance
Carol Ann Duffy	Before You Were Mine
Owen Sheers	Winter Swans
Daljit Nagra	Singh Song!
Andrew Waterhouse	Climbing My Grandfather

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2 5 Compare how poets present romantic feelings in 'Winter Swans' and in **one** other poem from 'Love and relationships'.

[30 marks]

Winter Swans

The clouds had given their all –
two days of rain and then a break
in which we walked,

the waterlogged earth
gulping for breath at our feet
as we skirted the lake, silent and apart,

until the swans came and stopped us
with a show of tipping in unison.
As if rolling weights down their bodies to their heads

they halved themselves in the dark water,
icebergs of white feather, paused before returning again
like boats righting in rough weather.

'They mate for life' you said as they left,
porcelain over the stilling water. I didn't reply
but as we moved on through the afternoon light,

slow-stepping in the lake's shingle and sand,
I noticed our hands, that had, somehow,
swum the distance between us

and folded, one over the other,
like a pair of wings settling after flight.

Owen Sheers

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or

Power and conflict

The poems you have studied are:

Percy Bysshe Shelley	Ozymandias
William Blake	London
William Wordsworth	Extract from The Prelude
Robert Browning	My Last Duchess
Alfred Lord Tennyson	The Charge of the Light Brigade
Wilfred Owen	Exposure
Seamus Heaney	Storm on the Island
Ted Hughes	Bayonet Charge
Simon Armitage	Remains
Jane Weir	Poppies
Carol Ann Duffy	War Photographer
Imtiaz Dharker	Tissue
Carol Rumens	The Emigrée
John Agard	Checking Out Me History
Beatrice Garland	Kamikaze

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2 6 Compare how poets present the ways that people are affected by war in 'War Photographer' and in **one** other poem from 'Power and conflict'.

[30 marks]

War Photographer

In his darkroom he is finally alone
with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.
The only light is red and softly glows,
as though this were a church and he
a priest preparing to intone a Mass.
Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh. All flesh is grass.

He has a job to do. Solutions slop in trays
beneath his hands, which did not tremble then
though seem to now. Rural England. Home again
to ordinary pain which simple weather can dispel,
to fields which don't explode beneath the feet
of running children in a nightmare heat.

Something is happening. A stranger's features
faintly start to twist before his eyes,
a half-formed ghost. He remembers the cries
of this man's wife, how he sought approval
without words to do what someone must
and how the blood stained into foreign dust.

A hundred agonies in black-and-white
from which his editor will pick out five or six
for Sunday's supplement. The reader's eyeballs prick
with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers.
From the aeroplane he stares impassively at where
he earns his living and they do not care.

Carol Ann Duffy

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Turn over for Section C

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Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

The Richest Poor Man in the Valley

On the outside
he seemed older than he was.
His face was like a weather map
full of bad weather
while inside
his heart was fat with sun.

With his two dogs
he cleared a thin silver path
across the Black Mountain.
And when winter
kicked in
they brought his sheep
down from the top
like sulky clouds.

Harry didn't care for things
that other people prize
like money, houses, bank accounts
and lies.
He was living in a caravan
until the day he died.

But at his funeral
his friends' tears
fell like a thousand
diamonds.

Lindsay Macrae

2 7 . 1 In 'The Richest Poor Man in the Valley', how does the poet present ideas about living a happy and contented life?

[24 marks]

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Nobody

If you can't bring yourself to build
a snowman or even to clench
a snowball or two to fling
at the pine tree trunk, at least
find some reason to take you out

of yourself: scrape a patch of grass clear
for the birds maybe; prod at your shrubs
so they shake off the weight, straighten up;
or just stump about leaving prints
of your boots, your breath steaming out.

Promise. Don't let yourself in
for this moment again: the end
of the afternoon, drawing the curtains
on the glare of the garden, a whole
day of snow nobody's trodden.

Michael Laskey

2 7 . 2 In both 'Nobody' and 'The Richest Poor Man in the Valley' the poets describe ideas about how to live your life.

What are the similarities **and/or** differences between the methods the poets use to present these ideas?

[8 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

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Surname	StemUp Model Solution
Answer booklet	Write the question number in the left-hand margin at the start of each answer.

Question number

01

Priestley presents selfishness not as a private vice but as a social disease: each Birling acts to protect their own comfort, status or pleasure, and the combined effect is the destruction of Eva Smith, a girl with no power to resist. By tracing one death back through a chain of selfish choices, Priestley wants his 1945 audience to see that a society built on looking after "his own" is inherently cruel, and that the only cure is collective responsibility.

Selfishness is established before the Inspector arrives through Mr Birling, whom Priestley constructs as the archetypal capitalist. His speech to Gerald and Eric insists that "a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own", and he mocks the idea of "community and all that nonsense". The dismissive word "nonsense" reduces socialism to something childish, yet Priestley undercuts Birling at once with dramatic irony: this is the man who calls the Titanic "unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable" and who is certain there will be no war. An audience who had lived through two world wars would recognise that his confident individualism is as unreliable as his predictions. Fittingly, his creed is interrupted by the Inspector's "sharp ring" at the door, as if Priestley's own voice is breaking in to answer him.

Birling's sacking of Eva shows how economic selfishness works. He refused the strikers' request for a few shillings more and explains that if you don't "come down sharply on some of these people, they'd soon be asking for the earth". The vague, contemptuous phrase "these people" shows that he does not see his workers as individuals at all. Priestley makes the effects brutally clear, as the Inspector reminds us that Eva swallowed disinfectant that "burnt her inside out". The

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physical horror of this image confronts the audience with the human cost of a profit margin.

Selfishness is not limited to the older generation or to money. Sheila's jealousy in Milward's is petty, but Priestley shows that even small acts of vanity have consequences when the powerful commit them. She admits that because Eva was pretty and "looked as if she could take care of herself", she "couldn't be sorry for her". Her use of her family's status as customers to have a shop girl dismissed reveals how privilege allows selfish feelings to become destructive actions. Gerald's selfishness is subtler, disguised as kindness: he rescued Eva in the Palace bar, yet kept her as a mistress for his own convenience and ended the affair when it suited him. Eric's drunken exploitation of Eva, and his theft from his father's office, show selfishness as a lack of self-control, a young man taking what he wants because he has never been made to think of anyone else.

Mrs Birling's selfishness is perhaps the most chilling because it is wrapped in moral authority. As chair of a charity, she refuses Eva help partly because the girl used the name "Mrs Birling", which she found impertinent. She insists that "she had only herself to blame" and tells the Inspector to "go and look for the father of the child", not realising she is condemning her own son. Priestley structures the end of Act 2 so that the audience realises the truth before she does, and the curtain falls on her horror. Here selfishness becomes self-destruction: by protecting her pride she has helped to kill her own grandchild.

Through the Inspector, Priestley offers the antidote. His final speech moves from the individual Eva to "millions and millions" of Eva and John Smiths, and his declaration that "we are members of one body" uses a Christian image of unity to argue for socialist values. The warning of "fire and blood and anguish" would have

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resonated in 1945, when the Labour landslide reflected a public desire for a welfare state rather than a return to pre-war inequality.

Finally, Priestley shows that the deepest selfishness is the refusal to change. Once the Inspector seems to be a hoax, Mr and Mrs Birling and Gerald are relieved, caring more about scandal than about guilt, and Birling sneers at "the famous younger generation who know it all". Only Sheila and Eric accept responsibility. The final telephone call, announcing that a girl has just died and an inspector is on his way, works like the cyclical structure of a morality play: those who will not learn are made to face the consequences again. Priestley's message is clear: selfishness may feel safe, but it always costs someone, and eventually it costs us all.

02 Priestley presents Sheila as the character who travels furthest in the play, moving from a sheltered, self-absorbed daughter of privilege to a young woman who sees through her family, herself and the society that produced them. Her learning is the play's moral heart: Priestley uses her to show his 1945 audience that change is possible, and that it is the young, not the old, who offer hope for a fairer post-war Britain.

At the start, Sheila is presented as a product of her class and gender. The stage directions describe her as "very pleased with life and rather excited", and her language is girlish and dependent: she calls her mother "Mummy" and greets the ring with delight, asking "isn't it a beauty?" The ring symbolises the way Edwardian women were valued and exchanged, and the engagement itself is partly a business merger between Birling and Company and Crofts Limited. Yet even here Priestley hints at a sharper mind. Her teasing remark about Gerald staying away "all last summer" is delivered "half serious, half playful", suggesting that she

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already suspects more than she says. Priestley plants the seed of her later insight.

Her first lesson comes when she hears about Eva's dismissal from Birling's works. Before she knows of her own involvement, she protests that "these girls aren't cheap labour", insisting instead that "they're people". This is a turning point, because she instinctively rejects her father's view of workers as units of profit and sees them as human beings. However, Priestley does not let her off lightly. When she recognises the photograph, she runs out of the room, and on her return she confesses that she had Eva sacked from Milward's out of jealousy. Her admission that she was in "a furious temper" and that she "couldn't be sorry" for the girl shows her self-awareness, and her vow that she will "never, never" do it again reveals genuine remorse. Unlike the rest of her family, she accepts guilt quickly, which perhaps suggests that the young are less hardened by habit and status.

As the play continues, Sheila learns about the people closest to her. Gerald's affair forces her to see the man behind the respectable fiancé, but she responds with maturity rather than hysteria, telling him that they are not "the same people who sat down to dinner here". She even respects his honesty, and returns the ring not out of spite but because their relationship must now be rebuilt on truth. She also learns to read the Inspector. She warns her mother that he is "giving us the rope", so that they will "hang ourselves", and Priestley uses her almost as a second inspector, a voice who understands the process of questioning and urges the others to stop pretending. When Mrs Birling refuses to see her own cruelty, Sheila calls it "cruel and vile", and her honesty contrasts sharply with her mother's cold self-justification.

Her most important lesson concerns society itself. In the final act, when Gerald and her father celebrate the possibility that the Inspector was a fake, Sheila

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refuses to join in. She insists that it does not matter who the Inspector was, because what they did to Eva really happened. Her accusation that her parents "don't seem to have learnt anything" is central to Priestley's message: the moral truth remains even if the legal danger disappears. She rejects Gerald's attempt to restore the old order with the ring, and her fear of the way her parents talk shows that she now sees their complacency as dangerous. The girl who once called her mother "Mummy" now challenges her parents with adult authority.

Priestley's presentation of Sheila also has a gendered dimension. In 1912, women of her class were expected to be decorative and obedient; Mrs Birling even says that men with important work "spend nearly all their time and energy on their business" and that Sheila will have to get used to it. Sheila's growth into an independent, morally serious voice reflects the changes many women experienced through two world wars, as their work and wartime roles challenged old assumptions. For a 1945 audience, she represents the new generation who might build a better society.

Ultimately, Sheila learns that she is responsible not only for her own actions but for others, the lesson of the Inspector's "members of one body". Priestley does not present her as a saint; her change begins with guilt and shame. But by placing her beside parents who refuse to change, he shows that learning is a choice, and that the future belongs to those, like Sheila, who are willing to make it.

03 Russell presents money as the invisible force that shapes every life in Blood Brothers. The twins share the same mother, the same birthday and, it seems, the same nature, yet one grows up in a council house in Liverpool and the other in a comfortable middle-class home, and money decides their education, their work,

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their relationships and finally their deaths. Through this "nature versus nurture" experiment, Russell wants his 1980s audience to recognise that poverty is not a personal failing but a trap created by an unequal society.

From the opening, money is bound up with fate. The Narrator introduces the story of twins "As like each other as two new pins", one "kept" and one "given away", and the language of keeping and giving away makes a child sound like a possession that can be traded. Russell uses the circular structure, beginning with the twins' deaths, to make the audience watch the whole play knowing the ending, so our attention shifts from what happens to why it happens. The answer the Narrator offers at the close is pointed: he asks whether we should "blame superstition" or what "we, the English, have come to know as class". The final rhyme of "pass" with "class" lands the play's political argument with deliberate force.

Mrs Johnstone's poverty drives the central action. She is a single mother, abandoned by her husband, struggling with debts and with too many mouths to feed. In her songs she describes living "on the never never", and the repetition captures the endless cycle of hire purchase and debt that many working-class families faced. When the catalogue men repossess her furniture, Russell shows how quickly material comfort can be taken away. Crucially, it is money that makes her vulnerable to Mrs Lyons. When Mrs Lyons suggests taking one of the twins, she exploits Mrs Johnstone's fear that she cannot afford another child, and the promise that he would have everything, his own room and a good education, is impossible for a poor mother to argue against. Russell presents the deal as a kind of purchase, which is why Mrs Johnstone later angrily refuses the money Mrs Lyons offers her to move away: she will not accept payment for her son.

The contrast between the two homes is reinforced through language. Mickey's

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broad Liverpudlian speech, with its swearing and dialect, contrasts with Edward's polite, formal English, and Russell uses this to show that class is audible. When seven-year-old Edward cheerfully offers Mickey sweets, he does so because he has plenty; Mickey is amazed by this generosity. The audience laughs, but the difference is already significant. The two policemen scenes make the effect of money sharper still. When Mickey's family are caught, the Policeman threatens Mrs Johnstone, whereas with Mr Lyons he is deferential and treats the boys' behaviour as harmless. Russell suggests that wealth buys not only possessions but respect and protection from the law.

The move to Skelmersdale seems to offer a fresh start, and the song "Bright New Day" captures Mrs Johnstone's hope that a new house will transform her family's lives. Yet Russell shows that a change of address cannot overcome economic inequality. As teenagers, Edward goes away to university while Mickey works in a factory, and when the recession hits he is made redundant. Russell stages this through Mr Lyons, who sacks workers with the cold refrain "Take a letter, Miss Jones", so the very family that took one twin also takes away the other's livelihood. Unemployment leads Mickey into Sammy's robbery, prison and depression, and his dependence on pills shows how economic failure becomes personal and psychological collapse. This would have been painfully recognisable in Liverpool in 1983, where unemployment under Thatcher's government was devastating.

Even friendship is poisoned by money. When Edward returns from university and offers Mickey cash, Mickey refuses, because accepting would confirm their inequality. Edward's carefree life seems cruel to Mickey, who must worry about providing for Linda and their baby. Later, Edward as a councillor is able to find Mickey and Linda a house and a job, showing the power money and status bring,

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but this help humiliates Mickey rather than saving him.

The climax brings all of this together. When Mickey learns the truth about the twins, he cries "I could have been him!" This line is the tragic recognition at the heart of the play: the only thing that separated the brothers was the money and class of the family who raised them. Russell's purpose is clear. Money in Blood Brothers is not simply a background detail; it is destiny, and by showing its destructive power, Russell challenges his audience to question a society that lets wealth decide who flourishes and who dies.

04 To a large extent, Russell presents Mrs Lyons as lonely and unhappy: she is childless, isolated in a large house and neglected by a husband who is always working. However, Russell does not ask us simply to pity her. Her unhappiness drives her to manipulate, deceive and finally destroy, so she is both a victim of her circumstances and a cause of the tragedy. Through her, Russell suggests that money and status cannot buy contentment, and that loneliness can make people dangerous.

When we first meet Mrs Lyons, her loneliness is immediately clear. Her husband has been away on business for months, and she has only her cleaner, Mrs Johnstone, to talk to. Her large, quiet house is the opposite of the crowded Johnstone home, and Russell uses this contrast to show that she is rich in possessions but poor in company. Her longing for a child is genuine and painful. She explains that she and her husband have tried for years and that she cannot have a baby, and in a period when motherhood was seen as a woman's central purpose, her childlessness would have felt like a failure in the eyes of society. Her unhappiness, then, is partly created by the narrow role available to middle-class

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women in the 1960s.

Yet Russell quickly shows that unhappiness makes her ruthless. When Mrs Johnstone reveals that she is expecting twins, Mrs Lyons seizes the opportunity, persuading her that the baby would have a far better life with her. She is shrewd: she knows exactly what poverty has done to Mrs Johnstone and uses it against her. The swearing on the Bible is a powerful dramatic moment, because Mrs Lyons exploits Mrs Johnstone's superstitious nature to bind her to silence. Russell's stage directions and the Narrator's ominous commentary turn this into a pact with tragic consequences, and the audience senses that Mrs Lyons is building her happiness on someone else's suffering.

After the birth, her unhappiness becomes fear. She cannot bear Mrs Johnstone being near Edward, so she sacks her, and when Mrs Johnstone threatens to take her son back, Mrs Lyons invents the superstition that if either twin learns he was one of a pair, "they shall both immediately die". This is a desperate act by a woman terrified of losing the only thing that gives her life meaning, but it is also cruel. The irony is devastating: the lie she invents to protect Edward is what the play ultimately fulfils.

Russell shows that her marriage offers her no comfort. Mr Lyons is distracted and dismissive, more interested in his business than in her anxieties. When she asks to move away, he treats her fears as a sign that she is unwell and suggests she sees a doctor. Russell uses this to show a woman who is not listened to, isolated even within her own home. Her relationship with Edward is also tense; she is overprotective and possessive, and when he swears at her using language picked up from Mickey, she slaps him. Her violence suggests that her love is tangled up with panic and guilt. Interestingly, she forbids Edward to play with Mickey because she

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fears the truth, but this only reveals how alone she is: she can share her secret with no one.

In Act 2, her unhappiness turns into instability. She follows the family to Skelmersdale, and her confrontation with Mrs Johnstone, in which she attacks her with a knife, shows that her loneliness has become madness. She blames Mrs Johnstone for ruining her life, which is deeply ironic, as Mrs Lyons was the one who began the deception. Russell presents her as almost a tragic figure here, consumed by the consequences of her own choices.

However, Russell also shows that her pain fuels the final catastrophe. She shows Mickey that Linda and Edward have been seeing each other, and this sends him to the Town Hall with a gun. At this point it is difficult to sympathise fully with her; she acts out of bitterness, and Russell holds her responsible. Unlike Mrs Johnstone, whose love is warm and open, Mrs Lyons's love is fearful and controlling.

Ultimately, Russell presents Mrs Lyons as lonely and unhappy, but not merely as a victim. Her privilege could have given her a comfortable life, yet without love and companionship it brings her only fear. Russell's 1980s audience, living in a society divided by class, would see that wealth offers no protection against emotional poverty, and that Mrs Lyons's attempt to buy happiness with another woman's child could only end in tragedy.

05 Bennett presents Irwin as a character who is easy to dislike in principle but surprisingly hard to dislike in person. His cynical view of history, his willingness to sacrifice truth for effect and his later career in political spin make him an

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embodiment of everything Bennett distrusts about results-driven education and public life. Yet Bennett also gives him loneliness, insecurity and moments of genuine honesty, so that by the end the audience may feel that Irwin is less a villain than a symptom of the society that rewards him.

Bennett frames the play with Irwin at his least likeable. In the opening scene he is in a wheelchair, advising politicians on how to present an illiberal piece of legislation, and he explains that paradox "mists up the windows, which is handy". The metaphor is revealing: for Irwin, clever argument is a way of obscuring the truth rather than revealing it. Placing this scene first means that the audience meets the classroom Irwin already knowing what he will become, so every lesson is coloured by dramatic irony. For an audience in 2004, watching in the age of New Labour "spin", Irwin's slick presentation would have been uncomfortably familiar.

In the classroom, Irwin's methods seem designed to provoke. Hired by the Headmaster to give the boys an edge in their Oxbridge exams, he tells them that "History nowadays is not a matter of conviction. It's a performance. It's entertainment." The short, declarative sentences make the claim sound like a slogan, and the shift from "conviction" to "entertainment" captures his belief that what matters is how an answer looks, not whether it is true. His most notorious line, that truth is "no more at issue in an examination than thirst at a wine-tasting", is witty but cynical, and Bennett uses the elegance of the simile to show how seductive Irwin's approach is. The boys are dazzled because he is clever, and the audience may laugh even as we disapprove.

This approach becomes truly troubling when it is applied to serious subjects. Irwin encourages the boys to argue against received opinion about the First World War, suggesting that Britain was not the innocent victim and that national mourning

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helps a country avoid uncomfortable truths. In itself this could be valid historical thinking, but Irwin values the argument because it is surprising, not because he believes it. When the boys discuss the Holocaust, his preference for detachment and an unexpected angle sits awkwardly beside Posner, who is Jewish, and beside Hector's insistence that some things should not be turned into clever exam material. Bennett uses this contrast to suggest that Irwin's method, pushed too far, empties history of its moral weight.

Irwin is also compared, unflatteringly, with Hector and Mrs Lintott. Hector believes that knowledge is valuable for its own sake, whatever its "use", and teaches poetry so that the boys will have it for life; Irwin teaches tricks for a single exam. Mrs Lintott's dry comments show that she sees through his showmanship. The boys themselves note the difference: Dakin, in particular, is excited by Irwin's subversiveness, but Scripps observes him more critically. In this way Bennett uses the other characters as a lens through which the audience judges Irwin.

However, Bennett complicates our response. Irwin is young, awkward and isolated in the staffroom, and he is visibly unsure how to deal with Dakin's flirtation. When Dakin discovers that Irwin's account of his own time at Oxford is not true, Irwin is exposed as someone who has reinvented himself, perhaps because he too felt like an outsider who needed to perform to succeed. His lie is therefore not simply dishonest; it reveals that he is a product of the very system he teaches the boys to exploit. His attraction to Dakin, which he never acts on before the accident, makes him vulnerable rather than predatory, and Bennett treats it with sympathy.

The ending also shifts our response. Irwin is on the back of Hector's motorbike when the accident happens, and his injury links him permanently to the teacher whose values he opposed. The prologue's image of Irwin in a wheelchair now takes

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on a new meaning: he survives and prospers, but he is damaged, and his success as a television historian and political adviser seems hollow beside Hector's legacy of "passing it on".

In conclusion, Bennett presents Irwin as unlikeable in what he represents: a world in which education is about results and truth is a performance. Yet as a person he is lonely, insecure and even sympathetic. Bennett's purpose is perhaps to make us dislike the system more than the man, and to warn that a society which values only results will produce many more Irwins.

06 Bennett presents history as far more than a school subject in The History Boys: it is a battleground over what knowledge is for, whose stories are told, and how the past is shaped by those in power. Through three very different teachers, and through boys who are themselves becoming part of history, Bennett asks whether history should be truth, performance or memory, and suggests that how we teach the past reveals what kind of society we want to be.

The play opens by showing how history can be manipulated. In the prologue, the older Irwin advises politicians on presenting a controversial bill, and his remark that paradox "mists up the windows" shows that the skills he once taught as history have become tools of political spin. Bennett structures the play so that the audience sees the end point of Irwin's approach before we see it in the classroom, inviting us to ask whether a version of history designed only to impress might also be used to deceive.

In the classroom, Irwin's view is that history is about originality and presentation. He tells the boys that "History nowadays is not a matter of conviction. It's a

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performance. It's entertainment." The clipped sentences make the idea sound like a modern sales pitch, and for a play set in the 1980s, when schools were increasingly judged on results, Irwin represents an education system that values winning over understanding. His argument that truth is no more at issue in an examination than "thirst at a wine-tasting" reduces history to style. Yet Bennett does not dismiss Irwin entirely: his encouragement to question accepted views of the First World War, suggesting that Britain was not simply an innocent victim, is genuinely challenging, and it shows the boys that history is an argument, not a list of facts.

Hector offers a different, more human view. He does not teach history as such, but the past fills his lessons through poetry, songs and films. His belief that "All knowledge is precious whether or not it serves the slightest human use" opposes Irwin's practical, exam-focused method. In his lesson with Posner on Hardy's "Drummer Hodge", the poem about a young soldier buried far from home in the Boer War becomes a way of feeling history rather than analysing it. Hector's idea that literature lets us share the experience of people long dead suggests that history is a form of connection between generations. This is why his final message, to "pass it on", is so important: for Hector, history is something inherited and handed down, not something performed.

The Holocaust scene shows the moral stakes of these differences. Irwin's preference for distance and an unusual angle clashes with Hector's unease at turning such suffering into clever exam material, and the presence of Posner, who is Jewish, makes the debate personal. Through serio-comic dialogue in other scenes, Bennett has made the audience laugh at Irwin's wit, but here he shows its limits. Some history, Bennett suggests, demands respect rather than originality.

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Mrs Lintott offers a third perspective, one rooted in gender. Her blunt definition, "History is women following behind with the bucket", is both funny and devastating. The image of women cleaning up after men's wars and disasters exposes how traditional history has been written by and about men, leaving women invisible. Her frustration that, after centuries of male failure, she is still overlooked in a staffroom of men connects the subject of history to her own experience. Even Rudge's blunt comic definition of history as one thing "after another" has a point: it mocks the pretensions of all the teachers and suggests that history may have no grand pattern at all.

Finally, Bennett makes the boys themselves part of history. The title is ambiguous: they are boys who study history, but they are also boys who become history as the play ends. In the closing scene, Mrs Lintott narrates their futures, revealing that their lives turned out very differently from their dreams, and that Hector died in the motorbike accident. This retrospective structure turns the play into a kind of history lesson about the characters, reminding the audience that today's present is tomorrow's past.

Ultimately, Bennett presents history as important because it shapes how people think, remember and live. Irwin's history wins exams but risks becoming spin; Mrs Lintott's history exposes injustice; Hector's history keeps humanity alive. Bennett seems to side with Hector, suggesting that the past matters most when it is not used for advantage, but passed on with love.

07 Kelly uses the three recurring settings of DNA, the Street, the Field and the Wood, to map the moral landscape of his characters. Each place represents a different side of human behaviour: the Street is the world of gossip and passive followers,

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the Field is a space for conscience and reflection, and the Wood is a dark, primitive place where the group commits and covers up its crimes. By moving between them in a repeating pattern, Kelly explores how people behave when adult society is absent, and suggests that, without moral boundaries, ordinary teenagers are capable of terrible things.

The structure itself is significant. The acts return again and again to the same sequence of locations, and this repetition creates a sense of entrapment: the characters cannot escape their situation, just as they cannot escape what they have done to Adam. It also allows Kelly to show change against a fixed background. Each time the audience returns to a setting, it is darker, emptier or more disturbed than before, so the settings measure the moral decline of the group.

The Street is where Jan and Mark appear at the start of each act. Their clipped exchanges, such as the opening "Dead?" and the echoing "Dead dead", work almost like a Greek chorus, reporting events that have happened offstage. The Street is a public, transitional space, and it suits characters who are always passing through, never taking responsibility. They gossip, observe and relay news, but they never act to stop anything. Through them, Kelly suggests how ordinary people become complicit simply by watching and saying nothing.

The Field belongs largely to Leah and Phil, and it is the play's space for thought. Leah fills the silence with long, rambling monologues about human nature, bonobos and her fears, while Phil eats and says almost nothing. The openness of the Field contrasts with the claustrophobic Wood, and perhaps suggests the possibility of escape or moral clarity. Leah's speeches reveal a conscience struggling to make sense of what the group has done, and her search for meaning is a counterpoint to

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Phil's cold detachment. However, the Field is also where Leah's hope is gradually crushed. By the final act she has gone, and the Field holds only Phil, motionless and isolated, with Richard pleading with him to return. The emptiness of the setting mirrors the emptiness of Phil's moral life.

The Wood is the most powerful setting, and it is where the group gathers to deal with the crisis. Woods in literature have long symbolised danger and the loss of civilisation, a tradition that also shapes Golding's Lord of the Flies. Here John Tate first tries to control the group through threats, and later Phil takes over by calmly outlining a plan to frame an invented suspect. The Wood is where the boundaries of normal behaviour collapse: lies are constructed, Brian is pressured into identifying a stranger, and the group's response becomes increasingly ruthless. Most chillingly, when Adam is found alive in the Wood, dishevelled and confused after living rough, the setting becomes the site of his final destruction. Phil coolly instructs Cathy and Brian to deal with him, and the natural, hidden space of the Wood allows the group to commit murder away from the eyes of the world. Kelly suggests that, outside social structures, the group becomes primitive and amoral.

Crucially, no adults ever appear in any of the settings. Teachers, parents and police exist only offstage, and the settings are spaces adults do not enter. Kelly wrote DNA for the National Theatre's Connections programme, to be performed by young people, and this absence of authority allows him to explore how teenagers construct their own social order. The settings could be anywhere, which universalises the story: Kelly suggests that what happens here could happen in any community, at a time when concerns about gang culture and youth violence were common in Britain.

The settings also connect to the play's title. DNA implies that human behaviour is

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inherited and natural, yet the settings suggest that environment and group pressure shape how people act. In the Wood, the teenagers behave like animals, and Leah's comparisons with apes reinforce this idea. Kelly perhaps implies that people are not simply born good or evil; they are shaped by the spaces they inhabit and the groups they belong to.

Ultimately, Kelly uses the settings to explore the fragile line between civilisation and savagery. The Street shows passive complicity, the Field shows conscience and its defeat, and the Wood shows the violence that groups can commit when they are hidden from society. By returning again and again to these places, Kelly leaves his audience disturbed by how quickly ordinary young people can lose their humanity.

08 Kelly presents leadership in DNA as a struggle for power in a group that has lost its moral compass. John Tate rules through fear, Phil through cold logic and silence, and Cathy through an appetite for cruelty, while Leah and Richard offer weaker, more humane alternatives that the group ignores. By showing how quickly authority passes to whoever is most ruthless, Kelly explores what happens to young people when they are left to build their own social order, and warns that the most effective leaders are not always the most moral.

At the start of the play, John Tate is the group's leader, and his style is based on intimidation. In the first Wood scene, he struggles to control the panic after Adam's apparent death, and he relies on threats of violence to keep everyone in line, especially Richard, whom he menaces when he answers back. His language is repetitive and aggressive, and he tries to control not just what the others do but what they say, as if forbidding words could make the crime disappear. Kelly

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presents this as a fragile form of power. John Tate needs everyone to be afraid of him because he is himself afraid, and his authority is exposed as hollow when he cannot actually solve the problem. His leadership is all noise and no plan.

Phil's style is the opposite, and it is far more chilling. For much of the play he is silent, and Kelly's stage directions repeatedly show him eating while others talk. In the Field scenes, Leah pours out her thoughts while Phil barely responds, and his silence gives him an air of detached control. When the group is in crisis, however, he suddenly speaks at length, laying out a precise plan: they will invent a suspect, plant evidence and have Brian identify the man to the police. The contrast between his usual silence and this sudden, fluent monologue is dramatically striking, and it is the moment when power shifts from John Tate to Phil. The others obey because he offers certainty. Kelly suggests that frightened people follow whoever seems calm, even if the logic is monstrous.

Phil's leadership reaches its darkest point when Adam is found alive in the Wood. Rather than seeing Adam's survival as a relief, Phil sees it as a threat to the plan, and he coolly tells Cathy and Brian to deal with him, which leads to Adam's death. His leadership is utilitarian: the group's safety matters more than an individual life. His lack of emotion makes him resemble a dictator, perhaps reflecting how ordinary groups can be led into atrocities by a calm, persuasive figure. Ironically, their invented suspect leads to the arrest of a real, innocent man whose DNA is on the planted evidence, showing how Phil's apparently rational leadership spreads harm beyond the group.

Cathy represents a different kind of leadership, one that grows out of the chaos. At first she seems to be a follower, but she relishes the power the cover-up gives her. She enjoys the violence and carries out Phil's instructions with enthusiasm. By

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the final act, Richard's report suggests that Cathy has risen to a position of power and is doing well. Kelly implies that in a world without moral boundaries, cruelty becomes an advantage.

Leah offers a form of moral leadership, but it is ignored. Her long speeches to Phil question human nature, comparing people with apes and bonobos, and asking what kind of people they have become. She challenges Phil's decision and tries to protect Adam, but she has no real influence because the group values results over conscience. Her eventual departure from the school suggests that moral voices are pushed out of groups like this. Richard, too, tries at the end to take on a leadership role, pleading with Phil to come back to the group, but he cannot persuade him.

The final scene is a powerful comment on leadership. Phil sits alone in the Field, refusing to rejoin the group he once controlled, while Richard tells him how everyone has changed. Kelly presents Phil's power as having destroyed even himself: he has the authority to lead, but no sense of purpose or humanity to give it meaning. DNA was written for the National Theatre's Connections programme for young performers, and Kelly seems to ask young audiences to consider why groups follow the leaders they do.

Ultimately, Kelly presents leadership as something that can be seized by fear, by calculation or by cruelty, and shows that each style damages the group. The title, DNA, suggests that the urge to dominate may be part of human nature, but the play also implies that we have a choice about whom we follow, and Leah's silenced conscience reminds the audience of the leadership the group needed but rejected.

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09

Stephens presents Christopher's relationship with his parents as one built on love but damaged by dishonesty and exhaustion. Ed and Judy both care deeply for their son, yet both fail him because they try to manage his world rather than understand it. By staging the story through Christopher's own literal, truthful perspective, Stephens invites the audience to see what Christopher cannot: two flawed, frightened adults. The play ultimately suggests that a relationship with a child like Christopher can only be rebuilt through patience, honesty and small, practical acts of trust.

At the start of the play Ed appears to be the dependable parent. He collects Christopher from the police station after the death of Wellington, and Stephens shows their tenderness through a ritual rather than words: Ed holds up his hand with his fingers spread in a fan and Christopher touches it with his own. Because Christopher dislikes being touched, this gesture becomes a quiet, private language of love, and the stage direction allows the audience to see how much both of them depend on it. However, Ed's love is also controlling. He orders Christopher to stop investigating the dog's death and makes him promise to do so. Dramatic irony begins to build here, because the audience may sense that Ed's anger is out of proportion and that he has something to hide.

The central crisis of the relationship is the discovery of the letters. Ed has told Christopher that his mother died in hospital, but at the end of Part One Christopher finds her letters hidden in a box in his father's bedroom, addressed to him and dated after her supposed death. Stephens structures the play so that this revelation lands just before the interval, so the audience share Christopher's shock. His physical reaction, being sick and curling up on the floor, is far more powerful than any speech, since Christopher has no language for betrayal on this scale. When Ed then confesses that he killed Wellington after an argument with Mrs

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Shears, the relationship collapses entirely. Christopher reasons that a man who could kill a dog could kill him, and his logic, though literal, is devastatingly clear. Perhaps Stephens wants us to recognise that Ed's lies, intended to protect his son, are the very thing that make Christopher feel unsafe.

Judy is presented through a different method: her voice reaches the stage through the letters, which are read aloud while Christopher reads them. This creates a gap between mother and son, as she exists for most of Part One as a remembered and written figure rather than a present one. In her letters she admits that she found caring for Christopher overwhelming, that she lost her temper and that she believed he would be better off with his father. Stephens makes her honest in a way Ed was not, yet her honesty is also painful, revealing that she left. The audience might feel sympathy for a mother struggling without support, while still seeing that Christopher was the one left behind.

When Christopher travels alone to London, Stephens uses physical theatre and the overwhelming soundscape of the station to show the cost of this broken family: a frightened boy must cross a terrifying world to reach his mother. Their reunion in Willesden is affectionate but unstable. Judy tries hard, but her life with Mr Shears cannot absorb Christopher, and her decision to leave Roger and return to Swindon shows that she is finally prepared to put her son first. Ironically, it is Christopher's insistence on sitting his A level Maths that drives the plot here, reminding us that his needs, not his parents' feelings, have to come first.

The ending rebuilds the father and son relationship slowly. Ed buys Christopher a puppy and proposes a project of spending time together so that his son can learn to trust him again. This is significant: Stephens does not offer a sentimental reconciliation but a gradual, practical one, suited to how Christopher experiences

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the world. His closing question, "Does that mean I can do anything", is hopeful, yet it is addressed to Siobhan rather than to either parent, which may suggest that the most consistent understanding he receives comes from outside his family.

Stephens never names Christopher's condition, and this choice keeps the focus on how others respond to him. Written for a 2012 audience increasingly aware of neurodiversity, the play suggests that loving someone is not enough; parents and society must also listen and adapt. Christopher's relationship with his parents becomes a lesson in what genuine understanding requires.

10 Stephens presents secrets as the hidden engine of the play and truth as something both necessary and painful. Christopher, who refuses to lie and distrusts metaphors because they say one thing is another, enters a world where almost every adult conceals something. By shaping the play as a detective story told from Christopher's point of view, Stephens explores how secrets kept "for his own good" can damage the people they are meant to protect, and suggests that honesty, however uncomfortable, is the only basis for trust.

The play opens with a mystery: the body of Wellington, Mrs Shears's dog, with a garden fork through it. Stephens borrows the form of the classic detective story, and the title itself echoes a line from Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes story 'Silver Blaze'. Christopher sees himself as a detective in the mould of Holmes, a figure who trusts logic and evidence over feelings. This generic frame is important because it turns truth into a goal that drives the plot, but Stephens subverts the genre: the solution to the mystery is not a stranger's crime but a secret at the heart of Christopher's own home.

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From early on, the audience is placed in a position of dramatic irony. When Ed angrily forbids Christopher from investigating and makes him promise to stop, the strength of his reaction hints that he has something to hide. Christopher, however, takes the promise literally and finds ways around it, continuing to ask questions without technically breaking his word. Stephens uses this to show how Christopher's condition shapes his search for truth: he is honest to the letter, yet his literal mind also makes him unusually persistent. Meanwhile, Mrs Alexander reveals the first major secret, that Christopher's mother had an affair with Mr Shears. Christopher receives this information calmly, as a fact, while the audience understands its emotional weight, and this gap between his response and ours is one of Stephens's most effective methods.

The greatest secret is the letters. Ed has told Christopher that his mother died of a heart attack, yet Christopher discovers her letters hidden in his father's room, written after the date of her supposed death. Stephens places this discovery at the climax of Part One, so the whole first half is retrospectively revealed as built on a lie. The letters are read aloud by Judy, so the truth literally gains a voice on stage. Christopher's response is physical rather than verbal: he is sick and curls up on the floor, suggesting that the discovery of deception is a bodily shock for someone who lives by literal truth. When Ed then admits that he killed Wellington, the two secrets merge, and the detective story is solved in the worst possible way.

Stephens is careful not to present Ed simply as a villain. His lies come from hurt pride, anger at Judy and a genuine wish to protect his son from rejection. Arguably, the play asks the audience to understand why people keep secrets even while showing their cost. Ed's lie means that Christopher no longer feels safe with him, and it propels the dangerous journey to London. The theme of truth here broadens into a social point: adults often assume that a young person like

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Christopher cannot cope with the truth, and Stephens suggests that this assumption, rather than the truth itself, does the real harm.

Even Christopher's own narrative raises questions about truth. Siobhan reads his book aloud and encourages him to turn it into a play, which creates a play-within-a-play structure. This metatheatrical device reminds the audience that every story is shaped by its teller, yet Christopher's version is valuable precisely because he refuses to embellish or disguise. His honesty can seem blunt or even rude to others, but Stephens implies that society's comfortable white lies may be less admirable than his directness.

By the end, truth becomes the means of repair. Ed accepts that trust must be earned and proposes a project of small tasks done together, beginning with the gift of a puppy. Christopher's success in his A level Maths, a subject governed entirely by provable truths, is a fitting resolution: in mathematics, answers can be checked and relied upon. First staged in 2012, the play challenges its audience to treat people with conditions like Christopher's with honesty rather than protective deception, suggesting that secrets, however kindly meant, isolate and harm, while truth makes understanding possible.

11

Delaney presents Helen as a victim to a significant extent: a working-class woman in 1950s Salford with no money, no security and few choices beyond attaching herself to men. Yet Delaney refuses to let her become a simple object of pity. Helen is selfish, witty and often careless of her daughter, and she makes many of her own misfortunes. The play therefore presents her as both a victim of her society and a woman who passes that damage on to Jo, so the most accurate judgement is that she is a victim who also creates victims.

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From the opening scene, Delaney shows Helen's vulnerability through her circumstances. She and Jo arrive at a cold, shabby flat, having moved again, and Helen is nursing a heavy cold and a bottle of whisky. The constant moving suggests a life lived on the edge of poverty, dependent on cheap lodgings and avoiding debts. Her drinking may be read as a symptom of this insecurity: she numbs a life she cannot change. In the late 1950s, when the play was first staged by Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop in 1958, a single mother without a husband had very limited means of earning respectably, and Delaney's kitchen-sink realism exposes conditions that West End drawing-room plays usually ignored.

Helen's history also presents her as a victim of the men in her life. She tells Jo that she was married to a cold, puritanical husband and that Jo's father was a man she met during an affair, someone she describes as simple-minded. Delaney presents these revelations casually, almost as jokes, which is typical of Helen's voice. The comedy, however, creates pathos: Helen's flippancy suggests she has learned to laugh about rejection because there is nothing else she can do. The audience might see that her search for love has been repeatedly met with indifference or contempt.

Peter Smith is the clearest example of Helen being exploited. Younger than her, flashy and dismissive, he openly mocks her age and her looks, and he is rude and aggressive towards Jo. Helen's decision to marry him and leave Jo at Christmas seems selfish, yet it is also understandable. For a woman of her age and class, marriage to a man with money offers comfort and status, and Delaney implies that society gives Helen few other routes to security. When Peter later throws her out and takes up with another woman, the pattern of her life is confirmed: she is valued only while she is attractive and convenient.

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However, Delaney balances this victimhood with Helen's failures as a mother. She repeatedly neglects Jo, mocks her, and gives contradictory advice, telling her to make her own way in life while showing no interest in helping her do so. When Helen leaves to marry Peter, Jo is abandoned, and her brief relationship with Jimmie, which leaves her pregnant, could be seen as a repetition of her mother's history. In this sense Helen is not only a victim but a cause of Jo's suffering. Delaney's structure, which mirrors Helen's past in Jo's present, suggests that neglect is passed down when women are left alone without support.

Helen's return in Act 2 further complicates our sympathy. She arrives with money and things for the baby, which suggests genuine maternal feeling, but she also drives Geof away, the one person who has cared for Jo consistently. At the end, when she learns that the baby may be Black, she goes out for a drink, leaving Jo alone and uncertain whether she will return. This ending is deliberately unresolved: Helen is again running from difficulty, yet her reaction also reflects the racial prejudice of 1950s Britain, and the shame she fears from her neighbours and from Peter.

Delaney's use of music-hall techniques, with Helen often speaking directly to the audience, is important to how far we see her as a victim. These asides give her a confident, knowing voice, and they make her seem in control of her own story rather than crushed by it. The audience laughs with her as well as at her. Perhaps Delaney wants us to recognise Helen's resilience: she survives through humour and energy where a conventional victim would collapse.

Overall, Delaney presents Helen as a victim of poverty, of exploitative men and of a society that judged working-class single mothers harshly. Yet she also holds

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Helen responsible for the neglect she inflicts on Jo. By refusing to make her either a villain or a martyr, Delaney creates a realistic, contradictory woman, and suggests that the real victim of these social conditions is the next generation.

12 I largely agree that A Taste of Honey is a play about the importance of taking care of each other, although Delaney makes this point mostly through absence. The characters who should care, Helen as a mother, Peter as a husband and Jimmie as a father, repeatedly fail to do so, while the most loving care comes from Geof, an outsider whom society of the time rejected. By showing care where it is least expected and neglect where it should be most natural, Delaney challenges her 1958 audience's assumptions about family, gender and respectability.

The play opens by establishing a lack of care. Helen and Jo arrive at a bleak Salford flat, and Helen, preoccupied with her cold and her drink, shows little interest in her daughter's needs. Their dialogue is quick and combative, full of insults and jokes, and Delaney uses this comic sparring to show a relationship in which affection is expressed, if at all, through mockery. Jo's practical concerns about the flat contrast with Helen's carelessness, so from the start the daughter seems to parent the mother. This role reversal suggests that care in this family has broken down.

Helen's relationship with Peter shows care replaced by self-interest. Peter is cruel and dismissive towards both women, and Helen's decision to marry him and leave Jo alone at Christmas is the clearest act of neglect in the play. Delaney places Helen's departure at the end of Act I, so that the audience feels the full weight of Jo's abandonment. However, it could be argued that Helen herself has never been cared for. Her history of unhappy relationships suggests that a woman in her

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position, without money or a husband, learns to look after herself first. Delaney therefore presents a lack of care as partly an understandable response to harsh social conditions.

Jimmie, the young Black sailor, offers Jo brief affection and a ring, and promises to return. Their scenes are tender and playful, but his departure leaves Jo pregnant and alone, and he never comes back. Delaney does not present Jimmie as a villain, yet his absence reinforces the pattern of people promising care and then disappearing.

It is Geof who most clearly embodies the importance of caring. A gay art student who has lost his lodgings, he moves in with Jo and takes on the domestic and emotional work that no one else will do. He cleans, cooks, worries about her health and prepares for the baby, even bringing home a doll so that she can practise. Jo's mocking and sometimes cruel treatment of him, including questions about his sexuality, shows how hard she finds it to accept care after a lifetime without it. Delaney's presentation of Geof was radical: homosexuality was illegal in Britain in 1958, yet the play gives its most nurturing role to a gay man, and he takes on the traditionally female role of homemaker. In doing so, Delaney questions the idea that caring belongs to mothers or to women, and suggests that kindness matters more than conventional roles.

The structure of Act 2 tests this idea. When Helen returns, she brings money and baby things, which suggests that some maternal care remains. Yet she resents Geof and eventually drives him away. Geof's quiet decision to leave so that mother and daughter can be together is itself an act of care, putting Jo's needs before his own. The irony is painful: the person who has looked after Jo best is the one who has to go, while Helen, who has looked after her least, is left in charge.

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The ending leaves the question of care unresolved. When Helen discovers that the baby may be Black, she goes out to the pub, and the audience cannot be sure she will return. Jo is left alone on stage, singing a nursery rhyme, a moment that combines childlike innocence with loneliness. The mood shifts from comedy to quiet pathos, and the bareness of the final image suggests how fragile care is in this world.

To a large extent, then, Delaney presents the importance of taking care of each other, but she does so by dramatising what happens when that care is missing. Her working-class characters live in poverty and insecurity, and the play suggests that society's prejudices about race, sexuality and single mothers make caring harder. Yet through Geof she shows that genuine care can come from unexpected places, and that it is care, rather than blood or marriage, that truly makes a family.

13 Golding presents Piggy as the voice of reason, science and adult civilisation on the island, and many of his ideas are both useful and vital to the boys' survival. However, Golding also shows the limits of Piggy's rationalism: he lacks the authority to make others listen, and his faith in logic blinds him to the darkness within human nature. Piggy's ideas are important, then, but Golding suggests that reason alone cannot save a society from savagery.

From his first appearance, Piggy is practical and forward-thinking. He is the one who recognises the value of the conch and tells Ralph, "We can use this to call the others. Have a meeting." In this moment Piggy effectively invents the island's democracy, and the conch becomes a symbol of order, free speech and law. He

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also asks for names and tries to organise the littluns, behaving like a responsible adult. Yet Golding immediately undermines his status. He is described through his physical weakness, his "ass-mar", his glasses and his weight, and his nickname, which he begged Ralph not to reveal, is broadcast to everyone. Golding presents a boy whose ideas are sound but whose body and voice give him no power among other boys.

Piggy's working-class speech is central to this. His non-standard grammar and references to his "auntie" and her sweet shop mark him out as socially different from the public-school boys, especially Jack and the choir. Golding, writing in 1954 when the British class system was still rigid, suggests that good ideas are ignored when they come from the wrong person. Ralph's early mockery, and Jack's contempt, show that the boys judge Piggy by class and appearance rather than by sense.

Piggy's most practical contribution is his spectacles, which are used to light the fire. Golding makes the glasses a symbol of science, insight and the possibility of rescue. Piggy repeatedly insists on the importance of the signal fire and shelters, scolding the boys for acting like children rather than putting first things first. When the fire goes out as a ship passes in Chapter 4, Piggy's criticism of Jack is completely justified, yet his reward is to be struck, and one lens is broken. This is a turning point: Golding shows that when reason confronts violent power, reason is literally damaged. Later, Jack's raid in Chapter 10 steals the glasses entirely, leaving Piggy half-blind and the tribe in control of fire. The loss of the spectacles mirrors the loss of rational thought on the island.

Golding also explores the limits of Piggy's ideas. In Chapter 5 he insists that there is no beast because life "is scientific", and he dismisses fear as something that

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can be explained away. Here Piggy is both right and wrong: there is no physical beast, yet Simon understands that the beast is "only us", the evil inside human beings. Piggy's rationalism cannot recognise this. Similarly, after the murder of Simon, Piggy desperately calls it an accident, refusing to accept that he and Ralph took part. Golding suggests that Piggy's faith in reason makes him avoid uncomfortable moral truths. His question at the assembly, "What are we? Humans? Or animals? Or savages?", is important, but Piggy cannot answer it honestly himself.

Piggy's final speech at Castle Rock shows his ideas at their most powerful. Holding the conch, he challenges the tribe with a series of questions, asking them which is better: "to have rules and agree, or to hunt and kill?" These rhetorical questions summarise the central conflict of the novel, and he speaks with a courage he has rarely shown. Yet Roger releases the rock, and Golding's description is brutally objective: Piggy falls forty feet, "the conch exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist". The simultaneous destruction of Piggy and the conch suggests that reason and democracy die together. Golding, who had served in the Royal Navy during the Second World War, had witnessed how fascist movements crushed rational opposition, and Piggy's death recalls the persecution of the weak by those who seize power through force.

At the end, Ralph weeps for "the true, wise friend called Piggy". This late recognition confirms that Piggy's ideas were useful and important all along, but it comes too late. Golding presents Piggy as a tragic figure: his ideas represent the best of civilised thinking, yet his lack of authority and his blindness to human evil mean they are never fully heeded. The novel warns that a society which ignores reason, or values it only once it is lost, will destroy itself.

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14

Ralph's despairing question in Chapter 8 lies at the heart of the novel, and Golding's answer is uncomfortable: society on the island breaks up not because of bad luck or a lack of adults, but because of the savagery that exists inside every human being. External factors such as fear, weak leadership and the lure of power accelerate the collapse, yet Golding presents them as symptoms of a deeper flaw. Writing in 1954, after the horrors of the Second World War, he uses the boys as a microcosm of adult society to show how fragile civilisation really is.

At the beginning, Golding shows the boys attempting to recreate the world they have left. The conch, assemblies and Ralph's election suggest a democratic order, and Jack declares that they must have rules because "We're English, and the English are best at everything." The irony is heavy. Golding exposes the complacent belief of post-war Britain that its people were naturally civilised, and the rest of the novel dismantles this confidence. Even in Chapter 1 there are hints of what is to come: the crash has left a "scar" across the island, an image of damage done by human beings to an Eden-like paradise, and Jack's frustration at failing to kill the piglet shows that the desire for violence is already present.

One reason for the breakdown is the boys' failure to prioritise what matters. Ralph's emphasis on shelters and the signal fire represents responsibility and the hope of rescue, but the other boys drift towards swimming, eating and hunting. In Chapter 4 the fire goes out just as a ship passes, because Jack has taken the fire-keepers hunting. The chant "Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Spill her blood." shows how hunting has become a collective ritual, and its rhythmic, repetitive structure suggests that the group identity of the hunters is replacing individual conscience. At the same time, Golding shows Roger throwing stones near Henry but deliberately missing, because his arm "was conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins". This is a crucial explanation of why

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society breaks up: the restraints on behaviour come from outside, from parents, school and law, and once they are gone, nothing internal holds the boys back.

Fear is another powerful force. The rumours of the beast grow from a littlun's nightmare into a terror that dominates the assemblies. Jack exploits this fear, presenting himself as the hunter who can protect the boys, while Ralph struggles to answer it with reason. Jack's rejection of the conch, "Bollocks to the rules!", shows the collapse of democratic order, and when he leaves to form his own tribe, he offers the boys meat, painted faces and excitement rather than responsibility. Golding presents Jack as a dictator-like figure, and the face paint, which leaves him "liberated from shame and self-consciousness", suggests how anonymity in a crowd allows atrocity. Readers in the 1950s would have recognised the echoes of fascist movements that had used fear and spectacle to gain power.

Simon's encounter with the Lord of the Flies in Chapter 8 provides Golding's clearest answer to Ralph's question. The pig's head mocks him: "Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill!" It then asks, "You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you?" The beast is not a creature on the island but the evil within the boys themselves. Golding, who later described this as a fable about the defects of human nature, uses Simon as a Christ-like figure who understands this truth. Tragically, when Simon tries to share it, he is murdered by the boys in a frenzied dance during a storm, proving his point in the most brutal way.

From this moment the breakdown is rapid. Jack's tribe steal Piggy's glasses, symbolising the loss of reason and insight. At Castle Rock, Roger releases the boulder that kills Piggy and shatters the conch, destroying both rational thought and democratic order at once. Finally, Jack sets the island on fire to hunt Ralph, and the paradise of Chapter 1 becomes a burning wasteland.

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The ending reinforces Golding's message through bitter irony. The naval officer who rescues the boys is himself engaged in war, and his disappointment that British boys could not "put up a better show" reveals his blindness to the parallel. Ralph weeps for "the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart". Golding's answer to Ralph's question is therefore clear: things break up because human beings carry the capacity for savagery within them, and civilisation is only a thin and easily broken layer.

15 In both 'My Polish Teacher's Tie' and 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', learning about oneself and others is presented as a moment of painful but transforming clarity. Dunmore's Carla learns that she has undervalued herself because others have undervalued her, and that a genuine human connection can cut through social hierarchy. Lawrence's Elizabeth Bates learns, too late, that she never truly knew her husband, and that her own judgements helped to keep them apart. Both writers use these discoveries to criticise the social structures, class in particular, that stop people from seeing one another clearly, though Dunmore's ending is hopeful while Lawrence's is tragic.

Dunmore uses first-person narration to give us direct access to Carla's lack of confidence. As a part-time worker in the school canteen, she is aware of where she stands in the school's hierarchy, and her narrative voice is wry and self-deprecating. The teachers barely notice her, and Dunmore's dialogue for Valerie Kenward and the Head reveals a polite but patronising attitude, as though catering staff exist only to serve. Through Carla's observations, Dunmore exposes the quiet social stratification of English institutions, where status is attached to job titles rather than to people. Lawrence also begins with a sense of division, but he uses a

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third-person narrator who can move between the external world and Elizabeth's thoughts. The opening description of the mining landscape, with the engine and the pit-bank looming over the cottages, presents a community dominated by industry. Elizabeth is introduced as "a tall woman of imperious mien", a phrase which suggests pride and a sense of superiority. As she waits for Walter, her bitterness about his drinking grows, and Lawrence shows her judging him harshly, certain that he is in the pub. Like the teachers in Dunmore's story, Elizabeth sees another person only through a fixed label, in her case a drunken husband who has failed her.

Both writers build towards their characters' discoveries through gradual revelation. Dunmore slowly uncovers Carla's background: her Polish mother, the language she grew up with, and the part of herself she has stopped using. When Carla volunteers to write to a Polish teacher, Stefan, she does not reveal that she is not a teacher, and this decision becomes the story's central tension. The letters let her become someone else, perhaps the person she might have been, and the reader senses both her pleasure and her fear of exposure. Dunmore suggests that Carla's Polish heritage, half-hidden in an English school where it is barely valued, is part of what has made her feel invisible.

In Lawrence's story the revelation is far darker. Walter has been killed in a fall at the pit, suffocated rather than crushed, and his body is brought home. Lawrence structures the climax around the women washing the corpse, a ritual of intimacy that forces Elizabeth to look at her husband properly for the first time. She realises that they had lived as "two isolated beings", and that she had refused to accept him as he was. The tone becomes almost religious as she confronts what Lawrence calls death, "her ultimate master". Her learning is about herself as much as Walter: she recognises her own share in the failure of their marriage.

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The meeting between Carla and Stefan is presented quite differently. When the Polish teachers visit, Carla fears that the truth will humiliate her, yet when Stefan finds her, the revelation that she works in the canteen does not matter to him. Their connection, built through their letters and their shared link with Poland, survives the exposure of her status. Dunmore presents this as a quiet moment of empowerment: Carla learns that she can be valued for who she is, and that others' snobbery says more about them than about her. The ordinary detail of the title, a tie, suggests that small human particulars matter more than social rank.

The contrast in endings is telling. Carla's discovery opens her life up; Elizabeth's closes hers down. Writing in 1911 about a Nottinghamshire mining community, Lawrence presents a world in which poverty, exhausting work and rigid ideas of respectability prevent people from understanding each other until death makes it impossible. Dunmore, writing about a modern English school, suggests that the barriers of class and nationality can be crossed if people are prepared to be honest and to look past labels.

Ultimately, both writers present learning about oneself and others as a matter of truly seeing another person. For Carla this vision comes in time to change her life; for Elizabeth it comes as a shock that leaves her submitting to life while fearing the death that has shown her the truth. Together, the stories suggest that the greatest obstacle to understanding is not other people but the assumptions we carry about them.

16 In 'A Family Supper' and 'Odour of Chrysanthemums', Ishiguro and Lawrence present families in which love exists but cannot be spoken. In both stories difficult

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relationships grow out of silence, pride and unresolved resentment, and both writers use death to expose what the living have failed to say to each other. Ishiguro's restrained, ambiguous narrative suggests a family haunted by tradition and by a death that may not have been an accident, while Lawrence's story reveals a marriage in which husband and wife have become strangers. Both writers suggest that the gulf between family members is shaped by wider social pressures, whether Japanese codes of honour or the brutal conditions of a mining community.

Ishiguro opens with a shocking fact delivered in a flat, unemotional tone: the narrator's mother has died after eating fugu, the poisonous fish. This understatement sets the mood for the whole story. The narrator has returned to Japan from California, and we learn that his departure had caused conflict with his father. Their reunion is formal and awkward, conducted through short, careful exchanges. Ishiguro relies heavily on dialogue rather than exposition, so the reader must read between the lines, and what is left unsaid becomes more important than what is said. The father never directly mentions their earlier quarrel, yet the tension is palpable.

Lawrence also introduces a family strained by resentment. Elizabeth Bates is waiting for her husband Walter to return from the pit, and as the evening darkens her anger hardens into certainty that he is drinking in the pub. Lawrence presents her as "a tall woman of imperious mien", a description that suggests pride and coldness, and her sharpness with her son John shows how bitterness spills over into the rest of the family. The chrysanthemums become a symbol of their marriage. She tells Annie that it was "chrysanthemums when I married him", and also when he was first brought home drunk. The flowers, associated with both celebration and decay, suggest how love has been mixed with disappointment.

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In Ishiguro's story, the father's values create a deeper unease. He speaks with admiration of his former business partner Watanabe, who, after their firm collapsed, killed his wife and daughters before killing himself. To the father, this was an act of principle and honour. Ishiguro draws on traditional Japanese codes, in which suicide could be seen as a way of preserving honour after failure, but he presents them through the eyes of a son who has lived in the West and may find them disturbing. The reader begins to wonder whether the mother's death was really an accident, and whether the father intends something similar for his family. This ambiguity makes the family relationship feel threatening as well as distant.

The ghost in Ishiguro's story adds to this sense of a haunted family. The narrator remembers seeing a woman in a white kimono in the garden as a child, and when he walks there with his sister Kikuko, the memory returns. Kikuko suggests the ghost may have been their mother. This supernatural element allows Ishiguro to explore how the mother remains present in the family's silences. Kikuko's own secret smoking and her independent life at university in Osaka show the younger generation quietly escaping parental control, another strain in the household.

The climax of each story centres on a meal or a body, both rituals of family life. Ishiguro builds tension around the supper itself: the father cooks fish, and the reader, remembering the fugu, fears it may be poisonous. Yet nothing happens, and the story ends with the father hoping his son will stay. The unresolved ending leaves the relationship suspended between reconciliation and threat. Lawrence's climax is the arrival of Walter's body, killed in a fall at the pit. As Elizabeth and her mother-in-law wash the corpse, Elizabeth realises they had been "two isolated beings", and that she had never truly known him. The ritual intimacy of washing the body exposes the emotional distance of their life together.

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Both writers use these endings to criticise the forces that keep families apart. Lawrence, writing about a Nottinghamshire mining community at the beginning of the twentieth century, shows how dangerous work, poverty and rigid gender roles leave little space for tenderness. Ishiguro, writing in 1982 about post-war Japan, explores the clash between older ideas of honour and a younger generation drawn to Western freedom. In both stories loyalty and duty survive, but intimacy does not.

Ultimately, both stories present difficult family relationships as tragedies of silence. Elizabeth's recognition comes too late, while Ishiguro's family remain locked in unspoken grief and suspicion. Both writers suggest that the hardest thing for families is not conflict itself but the inability to speak honestly before it is too late.

17 Orwell uses Moses and Benjamin as two quiet but revealing outsiders to the revolution: one offers the animals an escape from it into fantasy, the other refuses to believe in it at all. Neither takes part in the struggle that Old Major inspires, and through them Orwell explores two dangerous responses to political change, religious consolation and cynical apathy, both of which, he suggests, allow tyranny to grow unchallenged.

From the beginning, Moses is presented as an ally of the old order. Orwell introduces him as Mr Jones's "especial pet", and the possessive relationship immediately aligns him with the exploiting class rather than the workers. He is "a spy and a tale-bearer, but he was also a clever talker", and the balanced syntax hints at the double nature of organised religion as Orwell saw it: persuasive and

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comforting, yet serving those in power. His story of Sugarcandy Mountain, where it is "Sunday seven days a week" and "lump sugar and linseed cake grew on the hedges", is a parody of heaven, made absurd by its childish, animal-sized luxuries. The pigs, Orwell tells us, have a harder struggle against Moses's "lies" than against the stupidity of the other animals, because his promise of a better life after death rivals their promise of a better life on earth. This echoes the Marxist view of religion as the "opium of the people", a drug that makes the oppressed accept suffering.

Orwell's choice of name is significant. The biblical Moses led the Israelites towards a promised land, and Orwell's raven points to a promised land that does not exist. As a raven, a black bird often linked with ill omen, he flies above the farm rather than working on it, so he is physically and morally detached from the animals' labour. When the Rebellion succeeds he flaps off after Mrs Jones, just as the Russian Orthodox Church was associated with the Tsarist regime that the Bolsheviks overthrew.

Structurally, however, Moses's return in Chapter 9 is one of the most bitter ironies in the novella. He reappears after years away, entirely unchanged, still pointing up to heaven "just on the other side of that dark cloud". Now the pigs, who once denounced his stories, allow him to remain on the farm without working and give him "a gill of beer a day". Orwell's satire is sharp here: Stalin, having persecuted the Church, later tolerated and used it during the Second World War. The animals are now so hungry and overworked that they half believe Moses, reasoning that their lives are miserable, so a better world must exist somewhere. Religion, Orwell implies, becomes most useful to rulers when the revolution has failed to deliver on its promises.

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Benjamin represents a very different attitude. He is "the oldest animal on the farm, and the worst tempered", and his famously cryptic remark, "Donkeys live a long time. None of you has ever seen a dead donkey", suggests a creature who has outlived many regimes and expects nothing from any of them. He can read "as well as any pig" but refuses to use his ability, and when asked about the windmill he insists that life will go on as it always has, "that is, badly". Orwell gives him consistency: while every other character changes, Benjamin alone remains much the same as ever, only a little greyer. In one sense this makes him the wisest animal, since his cynicism is entirely justified by the pigs' corruption. Some readers see in him a reflection of Orwell himself, the clear-sighted observer of Soviet propaganda who trusted no regime.

Yet Orwell does not let Benjamin off lightly. His knowledge is useless because he keeps it to himself, and the novella shows the cost of that silence. Only when Boxer is taken away does he break his pattern, galloping and braying, and the repeated cry "Fools! Fools!" is heartbreaking because it comes too late. He reads the words "Horse Slaughterer" on the van, and his literacy, wasted for years, finally exposes the truth at the moment when nothing can be done. In the final chapter it is again Benjamin who reads the single commandment, "ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS", but he reads it only for Clover. He sees everything and changes nothing.

Taken together, Moses and Benjamin suggest that revolutions are betrayed not only by power-hungry leaders like Napoleon but by those who look away. Moses distracts the animals with a heaven that excuses earthly suffering, while Benjamin's intelligent apathy leaves them without the one voice that could have warned them. Writing in 1945, Orwell perhaps wanted his readers to recognise that cynicism and blind faith are equally convenient for tyrants, and that understanding

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the truth is worthless unless it is shared and acted upon.

18 Orwell presents the failure of the rebellion as a slow, almost invisible betrayal: the animals' ideals are not defeated by an outside enemy but corrupted from within, as the pigs exploit the ignorance and trust of the other animals until the farm is as oppressive as it was under Jones. Through this allegory of the Russian Revolution, Orwell warns that any revolution which concentrates power in the hands of a few will end by recreating the tyranny it set out to destroy.

The tragedy is sharpened by how promising the rebellion first appears. Old Major's dream speech describes the animals' lives as "miserable, laborious, and short", and the plain, rhythmic triplet makes his argument feel undeniable. The Seven Commandments, culminating in "All animals are equal", are simple enough for every animal to understand, and the first harvest is described as "an even bigger success than they had hoped". Orwell deliberately makes the early chapters joyful, so that the reader shares the animals' hope and feels its loss more keenly. The subtitle, "A Fairy Story", adds to this irony: the book borrows the simple form of a children's tale, only to deny its readers a happy ending.

Yet the seeds of failure are planted almost immediately. At the end of Chapter 2 the milk mysteriously disappears, and in Chapter 3 the pigs claim the milk and windfall apples. Squealer justifies this with pseudo-scientific language and the repeated threat that otherwise "Jones would come back". Orwell shows how propaganda works through fear: the animals' memories of suffering are turned into a weapon to keep them obedient. The pigs' privilege is presented not as a sudden seizure but as a series of small, reasonable-sounding steps, which is perhaps why it is so effective.

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Power then becomes violent. Napoleon's expulsion of Snowball with the nine dogs he has secretly raised mirrors Stalin's removal of Trotsky, and from this point debate is replaced by force. The most horrifying moment comes in Chapter 7, when animals confess to invented crimes and are slaughtered until there is "a pile of corpses" before Napoleon's feet. Orwell shifts here to Clover's perspective as she looks down at the farm and reflects that these scenes of terror were not what the animals had hoped for on the night of Major's speech. The narrative voice, normally detached and simple, becomes quietly elegiac, and the contrast between her memory of the dream and the bloody present shows how completely the rebellion has failed. This echoes Stalin's show trials of the 1930s, which Orwell, as a democratic socialist, saw as a betrayal of the very socialist ideals he believed in.

Language itself is corrupted. Orwell traces the gradual rewriting of the commandments: "No animal shall sleep in a bed" gains the words "with sheets", and "No animal shall kill any other animal" gains "without cause". The additions are tiny, but they reverse the meaning, and because the animals cannot read well or remember clearly, they assume they are mistaken. The sheep's chant of "Four legs good, two legs bad", used to drown out debate, becomes "Four legs good, two legs better", showing how slogans replace thought. Boxer's maxims, "I will work harder" and "Napoleon is always right", are especially painful: the strongest animal, who could have resisted, gives all his loyalty to the regime, and is rewarded by being sold to the knacker. Orwell presents the working class, symbolised by Boxer, as both the backbone of the revolution and its greatest victim.

The final chapter completes the circle. The pigs walk on two legs and carry whips, and every commandment is reduced to "ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS". The paradox of "more equal"

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exposes the absurdity of the pigs' logic, a perfect example of Orwell's satire. In the last scene, the animals watch through the window as the pigs and men quarrel over cards, and they look "from pig to man, and from man to pig", unable to tell the difference. The cyclical structure, ending as it began with animals oppressed by those who live in the farmhouse, suggests that nothing has truly changed except the masters.

Orwell said that Animal Farm was his first attempt to fuse "political purpose and artistic purpose into one whole", and its failure of the rebellion is both specific and universal. It is a satire of the Soviet Union, but it is also a warning to any society about the corruption of idealism, the exploitation of the weak and the danger of trusting leaders without question. Perhaps Orwell's final message is that the rebellion fails not only because the pigs are greedy, but because the other animals, ignorant, loyal or afraid, let them be.

19 Ishiguro presents the friendship between Kathy and Ruth as intense, competitive and deeply loving, a relationship shaped as much by jealousy and betrayal as by loyalty. Because the students of Hailsham have so little power over their futures, their friendship becomes the one area of life where they can exert control, and Ishiguro uses it to explore how human, flawed and precious the clones' inner lives are in a society that treats them as organs waiting to be harvested.

Ishiguro filters the whole friendship through Kathy's retrospective narration. She introduces herself as a carer of "over eleven years", looking back from adulthood after Ruth's death, so every memory of Ruth is coloured by loss. Her tone is measured and forgiving, but the reader often senses more pain than she admits. Her frequent admissions of uncertainty and her habit of correcting earlier

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memories make her a slightly unreliable narrator, and this hesitation suggests how hard it is for her to judge Ruth fairly, someone she both loved and resented.

From their earliest days at Hailsham, Ishiguro sets up a contrast in personality. Ruth is a natural leader who invents games such as the "secret guard" protecting Miss Geraldine, while Kathy is observant and quietly perceptive. The episode of the pencil case is revealing: Ruth implies it was a gift from Miss Geraldine, and Kathy gently exposes the lie, then feels guilty for humiliating her. Ishiguro shows that their friendship is based on an unspoken bargain. Ruth needs to feel special, and Kathy, who sees through her, chooses to protect her. Even when Kathy loses her treasured tape of "Never Let Me Go", it is Ruth who later gives her a replacement, a kind, clumsy gesture which shows that Ruth's love is real, even if it is often expressed through possession and display.

At the Cottages the friendship becomes more strained. Away from the protective world of Hailsham, Ruth anxiously copies the veteran couples, even adopting a gesture that Kathy realises comes from a television programme. When Kathy points this out, Ruth retaliates by turning Kathy's private confessions against her. Ishiguro uses these small cruelties to show that the clones learn their social behaviour by imitation, like children, and that their insecurity about who they are drives them to hurt each other. The Norfolk trip deepens this. When Ruth's supposed "possible" in the open-plan office turns out to look nothing like her, she lashes out bitterly that they are "modelled from trash". Her anger at her origins spills over into her treatment of Kathy, suggesting that the cruelty in the friendship is partly a symptom of their shared, unspeakable situation.

The central betrayal is Ruth's relationship with Tommy. Ruth claims Tommy, and she encourages Kathy to believe he would never see her as a girlfriend, even

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though she knows Kathy and Tommy belong together. Ishiguro makes the reader feel the waste of this deeply, as the characters have so little time. Yet he resists making Ruth a simple villain. Her possessiveness can be read as fear: if the clones cannot have futures, families or careers, perhaps a relationship is the only thing she can own.

The structure of the novel moves the friendship towards reconciliation. Years after they part, Kathy becomes Ruth's carer, and the reversal of roles is moving: the strong leader is now weak and dependent on the friend she once dominated. On the trip to the stranded boat, a powerful symbol of lives run aground and abandoned, Ruth confesses that she kept Kathy and Tommy apart and gives them Madame's address, saying "It should have been you two". This act of atonement reveals Ruth's capacity for remorse and love. When she completes after her second donation, Kathy is with her, and the quiet, understated description of her death makes it all the more painful.

Ultimately, Ishiguro presents the friendship as a measure of the clones' humanity. Ruth and Kathy feel jealousy, loyalty, guilt and forgiveness, exactly as any friends do. Writing in 2005, at a time of growing public anxiety about cloning after Dolly the sheep, Ishiguro invites readers to ask what it would mean to deny the dignity of beings who love like this. At the end, Kathy holds on to memory as the one thing that cannot be taken from her, and the friendship with Ruth, painful as it was, becomes part of who she is.

20 To a large extent I agree that Tommy is presented as the character whose suffering is most visible and most physical. He is mocked as a child, manipulated as a young man and finally broken by the truth and by his donations. However,

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Ishiguro suggests that suffering in the novel is not a competition: every clone is denied a future, and arguably Kathy, who must survive everyone she loves and narrate their losses, suffers the most lasting pain.

From the start, Tommy is presented as an outsider. In Kathy's early memories of Hailsham, he is deliberately left out when the boys pick football teams, and his response is a furious tantrum in the field, shouting and flailing while the others laugh. Ishiguro uses Kathy's retrospective narration to frame the scene with sympathy: she notices details, such as his favourite polo shirt being spoiled with mud, which make his humiliation feel painfully real. His tantrums are presented as the only way he can express feelings that the other students have learned to hide. The irony is that Tommy, the boy everyone thinks is foolish, reacts most honestly to the injustice around him.

Tommy's suffering at Hailsham is closely linked to creativity. Because he is seen as uncreative, he is excluded from the system of value that the guardians have built around the Exchanges and the Gallery. Miss Lucy tells him it does not matter, then later tells him she was wrong, and this reversal leaves him more confused than before. She also tells the students that they have been "told and not told" about their futures, a phrase which captures the vagueness that surrounds Tommy's life. Ishiguro deliberately withholds information about what the students are for, so the reader, like Tommy, slowly pieces together the horror. In this sense the novel's mystery structure intensifies his pain: he senses the truth before he can name it.

At the Cottages, Tommy's suffering becomes more private. He draws imaginary animals in secret, intricate creatures that suggest a rich inner life, but Ruth mocks them in front of others. Despite being in a relationship with him, Ruth often

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treats Tommy as a possession and an object of amusement. Ishiguro presents Tommy as gentle and trusting, which makes him an easy target for her manipulation. His love for Kathy is denied for years, partly because he is too loyal to challenge Ruth.

The climax of his suffering comes after the visit to Madame and Miss Emily, when the couple learn that deferrals never existed. Miss Emily explains that the art was collected "to prove you had souls at all", a chilling admission that the clones' humanity was ever in doubt. On the drive back, Tommy asks Kathy to stop the car and runs into the dark field, raging and screaming exactly as he did as a child. Ishiguro's cyclical structure is devastating here: the tantrum returns, but now Kathy understands that he was perhaps always reacting to something he could sense but not articulate. Soon afterwards, facing his fourth donation, he asks for a different carer, sending Kathy away to protect her, or perhaps himself. He suffers emotionally and physically, and the euphemism "complete" for his death only emphasises how coldly his society erases him.

However, it is possible to argue that others suffer just as much. Ruth's suffering is less obvious but real: she longs to find a "possible" who might give her a dream future, and when she sees the woman in the office she bitterly concludes they are "modelled from trash". She dies with guilt about keeping Kathy and Tommy apart. Above all, Kathy's suffering is quieter but longer. As narrator, she must live through every loss and then relive it in memory. Her calm, controlled voice can be read as a sign of how deeply she has repressed her grief. In the final scene she stands at a fence in Norfolk, covered in rubbish, imagining Tommy appearing, before she turns away to drive off "to wherever it was I was supposed to be". Her acceptance is perhaps more tragic than Tommy's rage, because she never protests at all.

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Ultimately, Ishiguro presents Tommy as the character whose suffering is most openly expressed, and in that sense the view is convincing. Yet his anger is also a kind of resistance, while Kathy's resignation suggests the deeper damage caused by a society that teaches its victims to accept their fate. Through all three characters, Ishiguro raises troubling questions about cloning and medical science, asking his readers whether a society that benefits from such suffering is any less guilty for choosing not to look.

21

Syal presents female friendship as central to Meena's growing up: it is the place where she tests who she wants to be. Her friendship with Anita Rutter is thrilling but damaging, offering belonging at the price of honesty, while her bond with Nanima, and in a quieter way with Mama, gives her a sense of security and identity. Through this contrast, Syal suggests that the friendships that matter most are not the most glamorous, but the ones that allow a girl to be herself.

Syal tells the story through an adult Meena looking back on her childhood in the 1970s Black Country village of Tollington. This dual perspective is important. The younger Meena is dazzled by Anita, while the older narrator can see the friendship more clearly, so the reader is invited to share both Meena's excitement and her later understanding. From the opening, where Meena admits that her memories of her parents' arrival are invented, Syal establishes her as a girl who reshapes the truth to fit in, and her friendship with Anita becomes the main stage for this performance.

Anita is presented as the leader of Tollington's girls, older, bolder and outspoken. She commands Sherrie and Fat Sally, and Syal shows her stirring up rivalries

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between them in order to keep power. Meena is fascinated by this confidence, and her decision to follow Anita feels like a conscious act of rebellion against the polite, obedient Indian girl that the Aunties and Uncles expect. Friendship here is presented as a kind of transgression: Meena enjoys Anita precisely because her parents disapprove. When Meena repeats one of Anita's vulgar phrases at the family party, the comic shock of the moment shows how far Anita's influence has reached into Meena's home life.

However, Syal structures the novel so that Anita's unkindness is gradually revealed. At the Diwali fair Anita ignores Meena in front of a group of boys, and Meena is humiliated when one boy seems relieved not to be paired with her. Later, Anita leads the younger children in humiliating her own sister Tracey, and urges Meena to steal a charity tin. These episodes suggest that Anita's friendship always comes with a cost, and that Meena's need to belong pushes her to betray her own values. The climax comes when Meena overhears Anita boasting about taking part in a violent attack on an innocent Indian man alongside Sam Lowbridge. Meena's horrified flight on the horse and her broken leg are symbolic: her fall marks the moment the friendship is literally and emotionally broken.

Syal does not present Anita simply as cruel, though. When Meena discovers that Anita's mother, Deirdre, has abandoned the family, she briefly pities her, and the bruises Meena notices on Tracey hint at a home life of neglect and perhaps abuse. Syal invites the reader to see Anita's toughness as a defence, shaped by poverty and a lack of care. In this sense the friendship reflects ideas about social class: Anita has few prospects in Tollington, while Meena, through the eleven-plus, has a way out.

In contrast, Meena's friendship with Nanima is presented as nurturing and freeing.

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Nanima arrives when Mama is exhausted and depressed, and although she speaks only Punjabi, she understands Meena better than Anita ever does. Crucially, Nanima appreciates Meena's wild side rather than trying to tame it, so with her Meena does not need to pretend. Through Nanima's stories, Meena grows proud of her Punjabi heritage, and Syal suggests that this intergenerational female friendship roots her identity in a way Anita's never could. Meena's relationship with Mama also develops: in hospital she resolves to focus on her family, and Mama's quiet strength becomes a model of a different kind of womanhood.

The ending confirms these values. After months in hospital, and after losing both her friend Robert and Nanima, who returns to India, Meena realises that her grief for them is far deeper than anything she felt for Anita. Her farewell note to Anita receives no reply, and the silence is telling. Writing in 1996, partly drawing on her own childhood near Wolverhampton, Syal presents female friendship as both dangerous and essential. Meena's journey away from Anita is not a rejection of friendship, but a recognition that true friendship should strengthen identity rather than ask her to give it up.

22 Syal presents Meena's struggle for independence as a struggle to work out who she is, caught between the protective, aspirational world of her Punjabi family and the rough, exciting world of working-class Tollington. At first Meena equates independence with rebellion: lying, stealing and following Anita. By the end of the novel, Syal suggests that real independence comes not from escaping her family but from making her own moral choices and accepting both sides of her identity.

Syal establishes Meena's restlessness from the opening, where the narrator admits that her early memories of her parents' life are invented, and that people like her

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sometimes need to turn to stories in order to feel they belong. This frank confession makes Meena a reliable narrator about her own unreliability. The adult voice looking back is honest about her faults, so the reader trusts her even as the younger Meena lies to everyone around her. Her lies are presented as a first, clumsy form of independence: by inventing versions of herself, she claims a space that her parents cannot control.

Meena's desire to escape her family's expectations is closely linked to Anita. The Aunties and Uncles expect a polite, well-behaved Indian daughter, and Meena's parents work hard to keep her safe in a village where they stand out as the only Indian family. Anita, older and outspoken, represents everything they fear, and that is exactly her attraction. Meena adopts the local dialect and Anita's vulgar language, and when she repeats one of Anita's phrases at a family gathering, Syal uses the comic shock to show the gap between the two worlds Meena moves between. Her code-switching suggests that independence, for a second-generation immigrant child, involves constant performance: she must sound like Tollington to belong outside the house.

The struggle soon becomes reckless. On the night of Diwali, Meena wears Mama's diamond necklace, sneaks back out to the fair and is dared by Anita into the mysterious Big House, where she loses the necklace. Later, urged by Anita, she steals a charity tin from Mr Ormerod's shop and blames her cousin Baby. Syal's tone here is tragicomic: the episodes are lively and funny, but Meena's guilt afterwards shows that this kind of freedom leaves her feeling worse, not stronger. Independence that depends on Anita's approval is not really independence at all.

Syal also shows that Meena's independence is shaped by racism. A stranger shouts "bloody wogs" at the family during a car journey, and at the village fete Sam

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Lowbridge's angry speech attacks immigrants, drawing approval from some villagers. Meena realises that the community she longs to belong to does not fully accept her. When she insults Sam in return, and later points out that his racism hurts her too, she begins to find her own voice. Syal suggests that true independence means being able to stand apart from the crowd, even from friends, when they are wrong.

The turning point is the broken leg. After overhearing Anita boast about a violent attack on an innocent Indian man, Meena tries to flee on Sherrie's horse, loses control and falls. The fall is symbolic: her attempt to break free in one reckless gesture ends in injury. During the long months in hospital, however, she is forced into stillness and reflection. She resolves to focus on her family and the eleven-plus, and her friendship with Robert, a seriously ill boy, teaches her about loss and compassion. Ironically, it is when she is most physically dependent that Meena becomes most mature and self-reliant.

Nanima's visit is also crucial. She appreciates Meena's wild spirit rather than trying to tame it, and through her stories Meena learns pride in her Punjabi heritage. Syal implies that independence does not require rejecting her culture; rather, understanding it gives her the confidence to be herself.

The ending shows how far Meena has come. When Tracey falls into the pond and the police question her, Meena tells the truth, refusing to protect Sam and Anita with another lie. She passes the eleven-plus and leaves Tollington, and her goodbye note to Anita receives no reply. Set in the 1970s but published in 1996, the novel reflects the experience of many British Asian children growing up between cultures. Through Meena, Syal presents independence as hard won: not freedom from family or community, but the freedom to choose honestly who she wants to

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be.

23 Kelman presents Harrison as a detective who is brave, determined and endearingly naive: an eleven-year-old who borrows the methods of television crime shows to try to solve a real murder on his London estate. Through Harri's investigation, Kelman explores the gap between a child's belief that the world can be put right and the brutal reality of a community where the adults have failed to protect its young people, so that Harri's detective game becomes both comic and deeply tragic.

From the opening, Harri is presented as an observer. The novel begins with the dead boy's blood outside Chicken Joe's, and Harri's response, "You could see the blood", places him immediately at the scene like a witness. His tone is curious rather than traumatised, and this sets up the central irony of the novel: Harri approaches the murder as a mystery to be solved, while the reader recognises the danger he cannot fully see. Harri was "half friends" with the victim, and his decision to find the killer seems motivated partly by loyalty and partly by a child's sense that someone must do something when nobody else does.

Kelman makes Harri's methods comic in their imitation of conventional police work. Together with his friend Dean, he collects fingerprints using sellotape, spies on suspects through binoculars and draws up lists of the signs that someone is guilty. Dean, whose knowledge comes largely from television, insists on procedures he has seen on crime dramas, and the boys treat their investigation with complete seriousness. The humour lies in the mismatch between their earnestness and their resources: they have no forensic science, only playground tricks. Yet Kelman also suggests that these boys are filling a vacuum. The real police appear to make little

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progress, and the community is too frightened to speak, so the child detectives are, in a sense, more committed to justice than the adults.

Harri's narrative voice is central to this presentation. His Ghanaian English and estate slang, such as "asweh" when he insists something is true, "hutious" for frightening and "advise yourself" as a warning, give him a vivid and distinctive voice. This language reflects the multicultural world of the estate, and it also reveals his innocence: his enthusiasm and exaggeration make him likeable, while his limited understanding of the threats around him creates dramatic irony. When Harri focuses his suspicions on Killa, partly because he believes he shows signs of guilt, the reader senses how thin his evidence is, but also how close he may be to a dangerous truth.

The investigation also brings Harri into conflict with the Dell Farm Crew. Their leader, X-Fire, tries to draw Harri into the gang and later threatens him not to tell anyone what he has seen. Kelman shows that the detective role is not a game on an estate like this: knowledge is dangerous, and silence is enforced by fear. When the boys find a wallet containing a photograph of the dead boy, and the gang later corner them and X-Fire burns the photo, Kelman presents the destruction of evidence as a symbol of how violence wipes out the truth. Lydia's decision to film the confrontation and shout for help saves them, suggesting that courage and family loyalty can sometimes protect where the law does not.

Kelman also uses the pigeon as a kind of commentator. Its italic sections speak to Harri with a calm, almost spiritual voice, offering perspective that Harri lacks. This magical realist element suggests that someone, or something, is watching over him, but it also hints at the fate he cannot see coming.

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The ending is devastating. On the last day of school, Harri is happy, kisses Poppy and runs home, only to be stabbed. The detective who set out to solve a boy's murder becomes the next victim, and the circular structure forces the reader to recognise that the cycle of violence has not been broken. As he dies, the pigeon tells him he will be "going home soon", a phrase that links his death to his dream of being reunited with his family in Ghana. The novel was inspired in part by the killing of Damilola Taylor in London in 2000, and Kelman uses Harri's detective story to challenge the idea that a heroic individual can solve society's problems. The detective figure in fiction usually restores order, but Harri cannot. Instead, Kelman leaves the reader with a sense of loss and a demand that adults, not children, take responsibility for keeping young people safe.

24 Kelman presents the estate as a place where young people face constant pressure: the threat of violence, the pull of gangs, the confusion of growing up and the absence of adults who can protect them. Through the innocent, optimistic voice of eleven-year-old Harri, Kelman makes these challenges all the more disturbing, because the reader sees dangers that Harri himself only half understands, and his death at the end suggests that, for children like him, innocence alone is not enough to survive.

The most immediate challenge is violence, and Kelman places it at the very start of the novel. The murder of a boy outside Chicken Joe's opens the story, and Harri's flat, matter-of-fact observation, "You could see the blood", shows how normal such sights have become for children on the estate. Harri was "half friends" with the victim, and the casual way the children discuss the killing suggests a community that has been desensitised by repeated violence. Kelman establishes from the beginning that death is not a distant possibility for these

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young people, but part of the landscape in which they grow up.

Closely linked to this is the pressure of gang culture. The Dell Farm Crew, led by X-Fire, dominate the estate, and Kelman shows how they recruit younger boys through dares and tests. X-Fire tells Harri to set off the school fire alarm as a test of loyalty, and Harri's failure leaves him both relieved and exposed. Later, the gang plan to rob Mr Frimpong, an elderly churchgoer, showing how quickly youthful bravado turns into crime. Another boy, Jordan, encourages Harri to carry a knife, and Kelman presents this as a terrible kind of logic: on an estate where everyone fears being attacked, arming yourself seems like protection. Arguably, the gang members are themselves acting tougher than they are, their threats a performance designed to hide their own fear. Kelman suggests that the real challenge is a culture in which looking hard is the only way to stay safe.

Kelman also presents the ordinary challenges of growing up, which become harder in this setting. Harri's attempts to understand girls, his excitement about Poppy Morgan and his pride in being the fastest runner in his year are presented with warmth and humour. His Ghanaian English and estate slang, such as "asweh" and "hutious", create a lively, distinctive voice that captures his energy and his desire to belong in his new country. Yet the school is also a place of conflict, such as the fight between Miquita and Chanelle, and Harri's innocence is constantly brushed against adult forms of aggression. The contrast between Harri's playful voice and the menace around him is one of Kelman's most powerful methods: the comedy makes the reader love him, and the danger makes the reader fear for him.

Family is presented as both a comfort and a source of vulnerability. Harri's mother works hard and tries to keep her children safe, and his older sister Lydia, though often irritable with him, protects him when it matters, filming the gang's attack

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and shouting so that Harri and Dean can escape. These moments suggest the stabilising influence of family. However, Harri's father and baby sister Agnes remain in Ghana, and the absence of a father figure leaves him looking for role models elsewhere, perhaps among older boys like X-Fire. Kelman also shows the darker side of adult relationships through Auntie Sonia, who is abused by her boyfriend Julius. Young people on the estate, Kelman implies, learn from what they see, and much of what they see is violence.

The pigeon offers a different perspective. Its italic sections speak to Harri calmly, as if from above the estate, and this magical realist device suggests a wider, almost spiritual view of the boy's life. The pigeon sees what adults fail to see: a child in danger.

The ending brings all of these challenges together. On the last day of school, happy after kissing Poppy, Harri runs home and is stabbed. The pigeon's promise that he will be "going home soon" turns his longing for Ghana into an image of death. The novel was inspired in part by the death of Damilola Taylor in London in 2000, and Kelman's purpose seems clear. By presenting the estate through the eyes of a hopeful, curious child, he forces readers to confront how society abandons young people to gang violence, and to recognise that the challenges facing them are not their fault, but the responsibility of everyone around them.

25 Both Owen Sheers in "Winter Swans" and Thomas Hardy in "Neutral Tones" place a couple beside water on a bleak winter day, and both use the natural world to mirror the state of their romantic feelings. However, the poems move in opposite directions. Sheers presents romantic love as something that can survive a period of distance and silence, quietly repairing itself almost without the lovers noticing,

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whereas Hardy presents a love that has already died, and suggests that its failure has poisoned the speaker's view of love for ever.

Both poets open with a landscape that reflects emotional exhaustion. Sheers begins with "the clouds had given their all", a personification which implies that a storm, perhaps an argument, has just blown itself out. The "waterlogged earth / gulping for breath" suggests that the relationship, like the ground, is saturated and struggling, and the couple are described as "silent and apart", the plain adjectives showing a coldness between them. Hardy's setting is even more lifeless. The sun is "white, as though chidden of God", drained of warmth as if it has been punished, and the leaves lie on "the starving sod". Whereas Sheers's earth is overwhelmed but still alive and "gulping", Hardy's is starving, which arguably signals that his love has no source of nourishment left. Both poets use pathetic fallacy, but Sheers hints at a break in the weather ("and then a break"), while Hardy offers no such hope.

The turning point of "Winter Swans" comes from nature itself. The swans "came and stopped us", interrupting the couple's drift apart, and their "show of tipping in unison" presents the harmony the lovers have lost. The simile "As if rolling weights down their bodies to their heads" suggests effort and burden, implying that staying together requires work, and the image of the swans that "halved themselves in the dark water" may reflect the couple, who are currently only half of a whole. Yet the swans are "like boats righting in rough weather", an image of recovery after instability. The line "They mate for life" is significant because it is the only direct speech in the poem, spoken by the partner as a tentative invitation, and the speaker's response, "I didn't reply", shows his feelings are still guarded. Hardy also focuses on the lovers' faces, but there is no such moment of renewal. The beloved's "eyes on me were as eyes that rove / Over tedious riddles of

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years ago", a simile which makes the speaker feel like a boring puzzle that has long since been solved. Her smile is "the deadest thing / Alive enough to have strength to die", an oxymoron showing that even the last flicker of affection is only strong enough to end. Where Sheers's natural image of a bird suggests faithfulness, Hardy's "ominous bird a-wing" is a symbol of foreboding.

Structure is perhaps where the poems differ most. "Winter Swans" is written mainly in unrhymed tercets, which could suggest a relationship that is uneven or incomplete, but it ends on a single isolated couplet: "like a pair of wings settling after flight". Sheers finally creates a pair on the page, so the form enacts the couple coming back together. The hands that "had, somehow, / swum the distance between us" suggest that love works instinctively, beneath conscious decision, and the commas around "somehow" make the reconciliation feel gentle and surprising. Hardy, by contrast, uses a cyclical structure: the final stanza returns to "the God-curst sun, and a tree, / And a pond edged with grayish leaves". The memory has hardened, the sun is no longer merely "chidden" but "God-curst", and the circular form traps the speaker inside the moment of loss. His conclusion, that "love deceives, / And wrings with wrong", turns one failed relationship into a bitter general lesson.

These differences may reflect the poets' contexts. Hardy's poem, written in 1867, reflects a Victorian pessimism and a sense of a world in which God seems absent or hostile, and Hardy's own experience of difficult relationships perhaps lies behind its bitterness. Sheers, writing in the twenty-first century, presents a more modern view of love as fragile but resilient, something sustained through small, unspoken gestures rather than grand declarations.

Ultimately, both poets suggest that romantic feelings are inseparable from the

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natural world around the lovers, and that a single moment can define a relationship. For Sheers, that moment is redemptive: nature teaches the couple how to fold "one over the other" again. For Hardy, the moment is a wound that never heals, leaving the speaker with only "grayish" memories. The contrast between the two poems shows how love can be imagined either as an enduring partnership, like the swans, or as a deception that leaves nothing behind.

26 Both Carol Ann Duffy in "War Photographer" and Simon Armitage in "Remains" present war as something that does not end when a person leaves the conflict zone: its effects follow them home and live on in their minds. Yet the poems explore very different kinds of damage. Duffy's photographer is a witness, haunted by what he has seen and by the indifference of those who consume his images, while Armitage's soldier is a perpetrator, tormented by guilt for a killing he cannot forget. Together they suggest that war wounds people psychologically long after the physical violence is over, and both poets criticise a society that prefers not to look.

Both poems open with characters apparently in control. Duffy's photographer is "finally alone / with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows". The adverb "finally" implies relief at escaping the chaos, and "ordered rows" suggests that he copes by imposing structure on horror, although the image also evokes rows of war graves. The religious metaphor, "as though this were a church and he / a priest preparing to intone a Mass", presents his work as a sacred duty to honour the dead, and "All flesh is grass", from the Bible, reminds the reader of human fragility. Armitage's soldier, in contrast, begins with a casual, conversational voice: "On another occasion, we get sent out". The phrase "another occasion" makes killing sound routine, and the collective "we" spreads responsibility across the

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patrol. This colloquial tone perhaps reflects how soldiers are trained to distance themselves, but it also creates an unsettling gap between the ordinary language and the violent event.

In both poems, however, that control breaks down. Duffy's photographer's hands "did not tremble then / though seem to now", and the contrast between "then" and "now" shows that the emotional impact of war arrives later, in safety. The caesura in "Rural England. Home again" emphasises the jarring shift from the war zone to peace, and the image of "fields which don't explode beneath the feet / of running children" forces the reader to picture what is normal elsewhere. As the image develops, "a half-formed ghost" appears, so the photograph seems to haunt him. Armitage presents an even more violent intrusion of memory. The killing itself is described brutally, the man's "guts" thrown back, and the soldier claims "End of story, except not really." The short sentence followed by the self-correction marks the volta of the poem: from this point the narrative shifts from the battlefield to his mind. "His blood-shadow stays on the street", and back home "he bursts again through the doors of the bank", the present tense showing that the memory replays endlessly. While Duffy's photographer is disturbed by the cries of a grieving wife, Armitage's soldier carries direct responsibility, summed up in "his bloody life in my bloody hands". The repetition of "bloody" works both as an expletive of frustration and a literal image, alluding perhaps to Lady Macbeth, whose guilt also cannot be washed away.

Both poets also explore how war affects, or fails to affect, those at home. Duffy's ending is bitterly ironic: "A hundred agonies in black-and-white" are reduced to "five or six / for Sunday's supplement". The reader's eyes "prick / with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers", the internal rhyme making the sympathy sound trivial and fleeting. Finally, the photographer stares "impassively" from the

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aeroplane at a world where "they do not care", the ambiguous pronoun perhaps referring to the British public, or even suggesting that he too has become numb. Armitage's soldier, meanwhile, is isolated: "the drink and the drugs won't flush him out", suggesting he self-medicates because no support reaches him. The final image of the dead man "dug in behind enemy lines" inverts military language, so that the soldier's own mind has become occupied territory.

Context deepens these effects. Duffy was inspired by her friendship with war photographers, and the list of "Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh." moves from a British conflict to distant ones, challenging readers who think of suffering as something that happens far away. "Remains" comes from Armitage's collection "The Not Dead", based on the testimony of soldiers, and reflects growing awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder among troops returning from Iraq. The title itself is double-edged: the remains of the body, and the memory that remains.

Overall, both poems present war as a force that changes people permanently. Duffy's photographer is affected by the burden of bearing witness to an uncaring audience, while Armitage's soldier is destroyed from within by guilt. Both use the move from war zone to home to show that peace is no escape, but Armitage's ending is perhaps darker, as his speaker cannot even find the distance that Duffy's photographer, "impassively", appears to reach.

27.1 In "The Richest Poor Man in the Valley", Lindsay Macrae suggests that a happy and contented life comes not from wealth or possessions but from inner warmth, meaningful work, closeness to nature and the love of others. The paradox in the title sets up the poem's central idea: Harry is "poor" by society's standards, yet "richest" in everything that truly matters, and the poem gradually redefines what

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richness means.

The opening stanza establishes a contrast between outward appearance and inner life. Harry "seemed older than he was", and the simile "His face was like a weather map / full of bad weather" suggests a face lined and weathered by years of outdoor work. However, the conjunction "while" turns the stanza, revealing that "inside / his heart was fat with sun". The word "fat" is unexpected and joyful: it suggests abundance and generosity, a heart so full of warmth that it is almost overflowing. Contentment, the poet implies, is an internal state, invisible to those who judge by surfaces.

The second stanza presents happiness as rooted in work, companionship and the natural world. Harry works "With his two dogs", so although he lives alone, he is never really lonely, and the image of the "thin silver path / across the Black Mountain" makes his everyday labour seem almost magical. The colour "silver" hints at value, quietly anticipating the poem's later imagery of wealth, while the contrast with the "Black Mountain" suggests that he brings light into a harsh landscape. The simile of the sheep "like sulky clouds" is gently humorous, personifying the animals and showing the affectionate eye through which Harry, and the poet, sees the world. The clouds link back to the weather imagery, suggesting harmony with his surroundings.

In the third stanza, the poet states her values most directly. Harry "didn't care for things / that other people prize / like money, houses, bank accounts". The list builds a picture of material ambition, but the final item, "and lies", is placed alone on its own line and comes as a surprise. By grouping "lies" with money and property, Macrae suggests that materialism and dishonesty go together, and that Harry's contentment comes from living simply and truthfully. This is also the first

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time we learn his name: delaying "Harry" until the middle of the poem creates a sense of intimacy, as if the speaker knew him personally, and makes him feel like a real individual rather than a type. His "caravan" confirms his rejection of conventional success.

The final stanza turns to his death, but it is far from bleak. The conjunction "But" contrasts his modest home with the richness of his friendships. The simile "his friends' tears / fell like a thousand / diamonds" is the poem's climax: the precious stones he never owned in life appear at his funeral as the love of the people around him. The enjambment isolates "diamonds" as the final line, giving it great emphasis. The poet therefore resolves the paradox of the title: Harry's true wealth was measured in love, and it is only revealed when he is gone.

The short, irregular free-verse lines and simple vocabulary mirror the simplicity of Harry's life. Ultimately, the poem presents happiness as something built from a warm heart, honest work and companionship.

27.2 Both poets use nature to present how to live, but they use different perspectives and tones. Macrae uses the third person to describe Harry's life reflectively, as an example to admire, whereas Laskey uses second-person direct address and imperatives, such as "scrape a patch of grass clear" and "Promise.", to instruct the reader urgently. The single-word sentence "Promise." sounds almost like a plea, suggesting that the speaker may be addressing himself as much as us.

Both poems also use winter imagery, but to different effect. In Macrae's poem, Harry works with winter, clearing a "thin silver path" and bringing sheep down "like sulky clouds", so nature becomes a source of contentment and companionship. In

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"Nobody", the untouched snow symbolises a wasted opportunity: the final line, "a whole / day of snow nobody's trodden", uses enjambment to stretch out the "whole" day that has been lost, making the regret more painful.

Structurally, the poems end very differently. Macrae ends on the triumphant single word "diamonds", which celebrates a life well lived. Laskey, however, ends with the image of "drawing the curtains", a moment of closing off, so his poem acts as a warning about what happens if you fail to engage with life, while Macrae's offers a positive model of how to live it.