Cambridge Assessment International Education

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **0475/11**

Paper 1 Poetry and Prose **May/June 2023**

1 hour 30 minutes

6801939576

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **two** questions in total:
  - Section A: answer **one** question.
  - Section B: answer **one** question.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- All questions are worth equal marks.

This document has **28** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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SECTION A: POETRY

Answer **one** question from this section.

***SONGS OF OURSELVES VOLUME 1*: from Part 4**

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **1** Read this poem, and then answer the question that follows it:

Funeral Blues

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,

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For nothing now can ever come to any good.

(*W H Auden*)

How does Auden strikingly convey the speaker's grief in this poem?

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TURN OVER FOR QUESTION 2.

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Or **2** How does Adcock vividly portray the behaviour of the people from Universal Lotteries in *The Telephone Call*?

The Telephone Call

They asked me 'Are you sitting down?
Right? This is Universal Lotteries',
they said. 'You've won the top prize,
the Ultra-super Global Special.
What would you do with a million pounds?
Or, actually, with more than a million –
not that it makes a lot of difference
once you're a millionaire.' And they laughed.

'Are you OK?' they asked – 'Still there?
Come on, now, tell us, how does it feel?'
I said 'I just … I can't believe it!'
They said 'That's what they all say.
What else? Go on, tell us about it.'
I said 'I feel the top of my head
has floated off, out through the window,
revolving like a flying saucer.'

'That's unusual' they said. 'Go on.'
I said 'I'm finding it hard to talk.
My throat's gone dry, my nose is tingling.
I think I'm going to sneeze – or cry.'
'That's right' they said, 'don't be ashamed
of giving way to your emotions.
It isn't every day you hear
you're going to get a million pounds.

Relax, now, have a little cry;
we'll give you a moment …' 'Hang on!' I said.
'I haven't bought a lottery ticket
for years and years. And what did you say
the company's called?' They laughed again.
'Not to worry about a ticket.
We're Universal. We operate
A retrospective Chances Module.

Nearly everyone's bought a ticket
in some lottery or another,
once at least. We buy up the files,
feed the names into our computer,
and see who the lucky person is.'
'Well, that's incredible' I said.
'It's marvellous. I still can't quite …
I'll believe it when I see the cheque.'

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‘Oh,’ they said, ‘there’s no cheque.’
‘But the money?’ ‘We don’t deal in money.
Experiences are what we deal in.
You’ve had a great experience, right?
Exciting? Something you’ll remember? *45*
That’s your prize. So congratulations
from all of us at Universal.
Have a nice day!’ And the line went dead.

(*Fleur Adcock*)

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SONGS OF OURSELVES VOLUME 2: from Part 4

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **3** Read this poem, and then answer the question that follows it:

Verses Written on Her Death-bed at Bath to Her Husband in London

Thou who dost all my worldly thoughts employ,
Thou pleasing source of all my earthly joy,
Thou tenderest husband and thou dearest friend,
To thee this first, this last adieu I send.
At length the conqueror Death asserts his right,
And will for ever veil me from thy sight.
He woos me to him with a cheerful grace,
And not one terror clouds his meagre face.
He promises a lasting rest from pain,
And shows that all life's fleeting joys are vain.
The eternal scenes of Heaven he sets in view,
And tells me that no other joys are true,
But love, fond love, would yet resist his power,
Would fain awhile defer the parting hour.
He brings thy mourning image to my eyes,
And would obstruct my journey to the skies.
But say, thou dearest, thou unwearied friend,
Say, shouldst thou grieve to see my sorrows end?
Thou knowest a painful pilgrimage I've passed,
And shouldst thou grieve that rest is come at last?
Rather rejoice to see me shake off life,
And die, as I have lived, thy faithful wife.

(*Mary Monck* (*'Marinda'*))

Explore how Monck movingly conveys her thoughts about death in this poem.

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Or **4** In what ways does Wotton vividly convey how a person can become 'Lord of himself' in *The Character of a Happy Life*?

The Character of a Happy Life

How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill!

Whose passions not his masters are;
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Untied unto the world by care
Of public fame or private breath;

Who envies none that chance doth raise,
Nor vice; who never understood
How deepest wounds are given by praise;
Nor rules of state, but rules of good;

Who hath his life from rumours freed;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great;

Who God doth late and early pray
More of His grace than gifts to lend;
And entertains the harmless day
With a religious book or friend;

——This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise or fear to fall:
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath all.

(*Henry Wotton*)

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TED HUGHES: from *New Selected Poems*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **5** Read this poem, and then answer the question that follows it:

Relic

I found this jawbone at the sea's edge:

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But gripped, gripped and is now a cenotaph.

In what ways does Hughes make this such a striking poem?

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Or **6** How does Hughes create such a compelling portrait of the hawk in *Hawk Roosting*?

Hawk Roosting

I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.

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I am going to keep things like this.

SECTION B: PROSE

Answer **one** question from this section.

CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE: *Purple Hibiscus*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **7** Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

We sit on the same side of the table, not close enough to touch.

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I no longer wonder if I chose St Andrew's church in Enugu as my new church because the priest there is a Blessed Way Missionary Father as Father Amadi is; I just go.

How does Adichie movingly convey Kambili's thoughts and feelings at this moment in the novel?

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Or **8** Explore the ways in which Adichie strikingly portrays the differences between Kambili's mother and Aunty Ifeoma.

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CHARLES DICKENS: *Great Expectations*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 9 Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

I had scarcely had time to enjoy the coach and to think how like a straw-yard it was, and yet how like a rag-shop, and to wonder why the horses' nose-bags were kept inside, when I observed the coachman beginning to get down, as if we were going to stop presently. And stop we presently did, in a gloomy street, at certain offices with an open door, whereon was painted MR JAGGERS.

'How much?' I asked the coachman.

The coachman answered, 'A shilling – unless you wish to make it more.'

I naturally said I had no wish to make it more.

'Then it must be a shilling,' observed the coachman. 'I don't want to get into trouble. *I* know *him!*' He darkly closed an eye at Mr Jaggers's name, and shook his head.

When he had got his shilling, and had in course of time completed the ascent to his box, and had got away (which appeared to relieve his mind), I went into the front office with my little portmanteau in my hand and asked, Was Mr Jaggers at home?

'He is not,' returned the clerk. 'He is in Court at present. Am I addressing Mr Pip?'

I signified that he was addressing Mr Pip.

'Mr Jaggers left word would you wait in his room. He couldn't say how long he might be, having a case on. But it stands to reason, his time being valuable, that he won't be longer than he can help.'

With those words, the clerk opened a door, and ushered me into an inner chamber at the back. Here, we found a gentleman with one eye, in a velveteen suit and knee-breeches, who wiped his nose with his sleeve on being interrupted in the perusal of the newspaper.

'Go and wait outside, Mike,' said the clerk.

I began to say that I hoped I was not interrupting – when the clerk shoved this gentleman out with as little ceremony as I ever saw used, and tossing his fur cap out after him, left me alone.

Mr Jaggers's room was lighted by a skylight only, and was a most dismal place; the skylight, eccentrically patched like a broken head, and the distorted adjoining houses looking as if they had twisted themselves to peep down at me through it. There were not so many papers about, as I should have expected to see; and there were some odd objects about, that I should not have expected to see – such as an old rusty pistol, a sword in a scabbard, several strange-looking boxes and packages, and two dreadful casts on a shelf, of faces peculiarly swollen, and twitchy about the nose. Mr Jaggers's own high-backed chair was of deadly black horsehair, with rows of brass nails round it, like a coffin; and I fancied I could see how he leaned back in it, and bit his forefinger at the clients. The room was but small, and the clients seemed to have had a habit of backing up against the wall: the wall, especially opposite to Mr Jaggers's chair, being greasy with shoulders. I recalled, too, that the one-eyed gentleman had shuffled forth against the wall when I was the innocent cause of his being turned out.

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I sat down in the cliental chair placed over against Mr Jaggers's chair, and became fascinated by the dismal atmosphere of the place. I called to mind that the clerk had the same air of knowing something to everybody else's disadvantage, as his master had.

(*from* Chapter 20)

How does Dickens convey such vivid impressions of Mr Jaggers and his office at this moment in the novel?

Or **10** Explore the ways in which Dickens strikingly portrays Pip's relationship with Miss Havisham.

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DAPHNE DU MAURIER: *Rebecca*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **11** Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

We went together up the flight of steps, Frith and the footman following with the rug and my mackintosh, and I was aware of a little pain at the pit of my stomach, and a nervous contraction in my throat.

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One was the mother, blind in one eye, and soon she had enough of me, and took herself with a grunt to the fire again, but Jasper, the younger, put his nose into my hand, and laid a chin upon my knee, his eyes deep with meaning, his tail a-thump when I stroked his silken ears.

(*from* Chapter 7)

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How does du Maurier create such a disturbing atmosphere at this moment in the novel?

Or **12** Explore the ways in which du Maurier makes Maxim so intriguing.

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HENRY JAMES: *Washington Square*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either 13 Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

Dr Sloper was, however, by no means so much in earnest as this might seem to indicate; and, indeed, he was more than anything else amused with the whole situation. He was not in the least in a state of tension or of vigilance, with regard to Catherine's prospects; he was even on his guard against the ridicule that might attach itself to the spectacle of a house thrown into agitation by its daughter and heiress receiving attentions unprecedented in its annals. More than this, he went so far as to promise himself some entertainment from the little drama – if drama it was – of which Mrs Penniman desired to represent the ingenious Mr Townsend as the hero. He had no intention, as yet, of regulating the *dénouement*. He was perfectly willing, as Elizabeth had suggested, to give the young man the benefit of every doubt. There was no great danger in it; for Catherine, at the age of twenty-two, was after all a rather mature blossom, such as could be plucked from the stem only by a vigorous jerk. The fact that Morris Townsend was poor – was not of necessity against him; the Doctor had never made up his mind that his daughter should marry a rich man. The fortune she would inherit struck him as a very sufficient provision for two reasonable persons, and if a penniless swain who could give a good account of himself should enter the lists, he should be judged quite upon his personal merits. There were other things besides. The Doctor thought it very vulgar to be precipitate in accusing people of mercenary motives, inasmuch as his door had as yet not been in the least besieged by fortune-hunters; and, lastly, he was very curious to see whether Catherine might really be loved for her moral worth. He smiled as he reflected that poor Mr Townsend had been only twice to the house, and he said to Mrs Penniman that the next time he should come she must ask him to dinner.

He came very soon again, and Mrs Penniman had of course great pleasure in executing this mission. Morris Townsend accepted her invitation with equal good grace, and the dinner took place a few days later. The Doctor had said to himself, justly enough, that they must not have the young man alone; this would partake too much of the nature of encouragement. So two or three other persons were invited; but Morris Townsend, though he was by no means the ostensible, was the real, occasion of the feast. There is every reason to suppose that he desired to make a good impression; and if he fell short of this result, it was not for want of a good deal of intelligent effort. The Doctor talked to him very little during dinner; but he observed him attentively, and after the ladies had gone out he pushed him the wine and asked him several questions. Morris was not a young man who needed to be pressed, and he found quite enough encouragement in the superior quality of the claret. The Doctor's wine was admirable, and it may be communicated to the reader that while he sipped it Morris reflected that a cellar-full of good liquor – there was evidently a cellar-full here – would be a most attractive idiosyncrasy in a father-in-law. The Doctor was struck with his appreciative guest; he saw that he was not a commonplace young man. 'He has ability,' said Catherine's father, 'decided ability; he has a very good head if he chooses to use it. And he is uncommonly well turned out; quite the sort of figure that pleases the ladies. But I don't think I like him.'

(*from* Chapter 7)

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How does James make this such a revealing and significant moment in the novel?

Or **14** 'Such a sad story.'

How far does James make you agree with this view of the novel?

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JHUMPA LAHIRI: *The Namesake*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **15** Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

‘Thanks again,’ Gogol tells his father now.

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Not even the source of his namesake.

(*from* Chapter 4)

Explore the ways in which Lahiri makes this moment in the novel so moving.

Or **16** How does Lahiri strikingly depict the changes in Gogol's relationship with Moushumi during the course of the novel?

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JOAN LINDSAY: *Picnic at Hanging Rock*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **17** Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

Nowadays the very sight of the child Sara slumped over a book in the garden was enough to send a flush of irritation crawling up the Head's neck under the boned net collar.

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You may go.’

(*from* Chapter 9)

Explore the ways in which Lindsay memorably portrays Mrs Appleyard’s attitude towards Sara at this moment in the novel.

Or **18** How does Lindsay create such striking impressions of Mike?

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YANN MARTEL: *Life of Pi*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **19** Read this passage, and then answer the question that follows it:

I spent the rest of the day worrying myself sick.

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I turned with the half-hearted, half-abandoned hope that I could jump onto the raft before he could jump onto me.

(*from* Chapter 61)

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In what ways does Martel powerfully convey Pi's thoughts and feelings at this moment in the novel?

Or **20** 'I had to tame him,' Pi says.

How does Martel memorably depict Pi's success at taming Richard Parker?

Do **not** use the passage printed in **Question 19** in answering this question.

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from *STORIES OF OURSELVES Volume 2*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **21** Read this passage from *The Widow's Might* (by Charlotte Perkins Gilman), and then answer the question that follows it:

At this moment, the door opened and a tall black figure, cloaked and veiled, came into the room.

'I'm glad to hear you say that Mr McPherson kept his faculties to the last, Mr Frankland,' said the widow. 'It's true. I didn't come down to hear that old will. It's no good now.'

They all turned in their chairs.

'Is there a later will, madam?' inquired the lawyer.

'Not that I know of. Mr McPherson had no property when he died.'

'No property! My dear lady—four years ago he certainly had some.'

'Yes, but three years and a-half ago he gave it all to me. Here are the deeds.'

There they were, in very truth—formal and correct, and quite simple and clear—for deeds, James R. McPherson, Sr, had assuredly given to his wife the whole estate.

'You remember that was the panic year,' she continued. 'There was pressure from some of Mr McPherson's creditors; he thought it would be safer so.'

'Why—yes,' remarked Mr Frankland, 'I do remember now his advising with me about it. But I thought the step unnecessary.'

James cleared his throat.

'Well, Mother, this does complicate matters a little. We were hoping that we could settle up all the business this afternoon—with Mr Frankland's help—and take you back with us.'

'We can't be spared any longer, you see, Mother,' said Ellen.

'Can't you deed it back again, Mother,' Adelaide suggested, 'to James, or to—all of us, so we can get away?'

'Why should I?'

'Now, Mother,' Ellen put in persuasively, 'we know how badly you feel, and you are nervous and tired, but I told you this morning when we came, that we expected to take you back with us. You know you've been packing—'

'Yes, I've been packing,' replied the voice behind the veil.

'I dare say it was safer—to have the property in your name—technically,' James admitted, 'but now I think it would be the simplest way for you to make it over to me in a lump, and I will see that Father's wishes are carried out to the letter.'

'Your father is dead,' remarked the voice.

'Yes, Mother, we know—we know how you feel,' Ellen ventured.

'I am alive,' said Mrs McPherson.

'Dear Mother, it's very trying to talk business to you at such a time. We all realize it,' Adelaide explained with a touch of asperity, 'But we told you we couldn't stay as soon as we got here.'

'And the business has to be settled,' James added conclusively.

'It is settled.'

'Perhaps Mr Frankland can make it clear to you,' went on James with forced patience.

'I do not doubt that your mother understands perfectly,' murmured the lawyer. 'I have always found her a woman of remarkable intelligence.'

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'Thank you, Mr Frankland. Possibly you may be able to make my children understand that this property—such as it is—is mine now.'

'Why assuredly, assuredly, Mrs McPherson. We all see that. But we assume, as a matter of course, that you will consider Mr McPherson's wishes in regard to the disposition of the estate.'

'I have considered Mr McPherson's wishes for thirty years,' she replied. 'Now, I'll consider mine. I have done my duty since the day I married him. It is eleven hundred days—to-day.' The last with sudden intensity.

'But madam, your children—'

'I have no children, Mr Frankland. I have two daughters and a son. These three grown persons here, grown up, married, having children of their own—or ought to have—were my children. I did my duty by them, and they did their duty by me—and would yet, no doubt.' The tone changed suddenly. 'But they don't have to. I'm tired of duty.'

How does Gilman make this such a memorable moment in the story?

Or **22** In what ways does O Henry make *The Furnished Room* such a disturbing story?

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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

1

Auden strikingly conveys grief as an emotion so overwhelming that it demands the whole world stop with it. The speaker's loss is expressed through a series of increasingly impossible commands, moving from the domestic to the public and finally to the cosmic, so that by the end grief seems to have emptied the universe of meaning. What makes the poem so powerful, I think, is the tension between its controlled form and the desperate, absolute feeling it contains.

The poem opens with a blunt imperative: "Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone". The speaker wants time itself to halt, as if the moment of death should be frozen, and wants all communication with the outside world severed. The commands are ordinary household actions, yet they carry symbolic weight: stopping the clocks is a traditional sign of mourning, and the telephone represents a living world that no longer matters. The detail of preventing the dog "from barking with a juicy bone" is oddly homely, and the slightly comic adjective "juicy" shows how unbearable even small signs of life and appetite have become. The request to "Silence the pianos" and bring out the coffin "with muffled drum" moves towards a solemn funeral procession, the muffled sound mirroring the speaker's numbed state.

In the second stanza the commands become public and grandiose. Aeroplanes are to circle "moaning overhead", a personification that makes the machines share the speaker's lament, and they are to write "He Is Dead" across the sky. The capitalisation turns the death into a headline, as though the whole world must be informed. Auden then imagines "crêpe bows round the white necks of the public doves" and traffic policemen in "black cotton gloves". These images are strange and almost absurd, and I think the absurdity is deliberate: the speaker's grief is so

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all-consuming that it wants civic life to dress in mourning, yet we sense the impossibility of such demands, which only deepens the pathos.

The third stanza is the emotional centre, and here the voice becomes personal. The anaphora of "my" in "He was my North, my South, my East and West" presents the dead man as the speaker's entire compass, the source of direction in every sense. The list extends through time: "My working week and my Sunday rest, / My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song". He was everything, work and leisure, day and night, speech and art. The relentless accumulation makes the loss feel total. Then comes the stark, simple admission: "I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong." The colon acts like a sudden drop, and the monosyllabic "I was wrong" is devastating in its plainness after the elaborate lists. It is a moment of bitter disillusionment as well as grief.

The final stanza escalates to the cosmic. "The stars are not wanted now: put out every one" treats the stars like lamps to be switched off, while "Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun" reduces the universe to stage scenery to be taken apart. To "Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood" continues the domestic verbs, as though nature were mess to be cleared. The effect is both grand and bleakly practical: the speaker no longer sees any beauty or purpose in creation. The closing line, "For nothing now can ever come to any good", offers the reason for everything that has gone before, and its absolute words "nothing" and "ever" leave no room for consolation or hope.

Auden's form intensifies this grief. The poem is written in regular quatrains of rhyming couplets, giving it the measured, steady beat of a funeral march or a blues lament. Yet within this order, the feeling becomes increasingly extreme. The contrast between control and despair suggests a speaker trying, and failing, to

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contain a loss that is limitless. Auden thus strikingly conveys grief as something that redefines the whole world: when the beloved dies, the speaker's universe dies with him.

2 Adcock portrays the people from Universal Lotteries as smooth, manipulative performers who play with the speaker's emotions for their own amusement. What makes their behaviour so vivid is that it is revealed almost entirely through their own voices: the poem is built from a telephone conversation, and the callers' breezy, salesman's patter gradually exposes a cruelty that the speaker, and the reader, only fully grasps in the final line.

From the opening, the callers seize control. Their first words, "Are you sitting down?", are a cliché of good news, and the clipped "Right?" hurries the speaker along before she can think. They do not give their names, only the grand corporate title "Universal Lotteries", and the absurdly inflated "Ultra-super Global Special" mocks the language of advertising. I find it telling that the prize sounds so hollow even before we know it is fake: Adcock lets the brand name do the satirical work. Their casual aside that more than a million is "not that it makes a lot of difference" is chillingly offhand, and the short sentence "And they laughed" is the first hint that the joke is on the speaker.

Throughout the middle section the callers behave like eager interviewers, constantly demanding a performance of feeling. The imperatives pile up: "Come on, now, tell us", "Go on, tell us about it", "Go on." Their repeated "Go on" suggests they are feeding on her excitement, almost as an audience at a show. Their response to her stammered "I can't believe it!" is the dismissive "That's what they all say", which reveals that she is one of many victims and that her joy is merely predictable to

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them. When she offers a wonderfully original image of her head floating off "like a flying saucer", they reply only "That's unusual", a flat, detached comment that sounds like someone noting data rather than sharing delight.

Their apparent kindness is perhaps the most unsettling feature. When the speaker says she is "going to sneeze" and may cry, they become soothing and therapeutic: "don't be ashamed / of giving way to your emotions" and "Relax, now, have a little cry". The diminutive "little" is patronising, as though she were a child, and the offer to "give you a moment" mimics the tender pauses of a counsellor. Adcock makes this false sympathy vivid precisely because we sense it is a technique for drawing out more emotion.

When the speaker grows suspicious ("Hang on!"), the callers simply laugh "again" and slide into pseudo-technical jargon. The "retrospective Chances Module" and the claim that "We buy up the files, / feed the names into our computer" are impressively vague, the sort of language designed to sound official while explaining nothing. The capital letters make it sound like a real product. Their confident "We're Universal" suggests a faceless, all-powerful organisation, and the plural "they" and "we" throughout denies them any individual humanity.

The ending turns everything round. The light "Oh," before "there's no cheque" is devastating in its casualness. Their motto, "Experiences are what we deal in", parodies modern marketing that sells feelings instead of goods, and the run of eager questions, "Exciting? Something you'll remember?", pretends the speaker has received a gift. The cheerful "Have a nice day!" is the ultimate empty phrase of customer service, and it is followed by the stark "And the line went dead." The flat, final sentence, in the speaker's own words, contrasts with all their chatter and leaves her, and us, in sudden silence.

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Adcock's conversational free verse, with its natural rhythms, broken lines and dialogue spilling across stanzas, makes the call feel real and immediate. The speaker's emotional, hesitant voice ("I still can't quite ...") is set against the callers' slick confidence, so that we feel the imbalance of power. Ultimately Adcock vividly presents them as cynical tricksters who treat a human being's hopes as entertainment, and the poem's humour leaves a bitter aftertaste: their "great experience" is really the experience of being cruelly fooled.

3 Monck movingly presents death as a welcome release which her faith tells her to embrace, yet the poem's emotional power comes from the tension between that calm acceptance and her lingering love for her husband. Writing as a dying wife, she turns her farewell into an act of comfort, trying to console the very person whose grief threatens to hold her back.

The opening is a tender, intimate address. The anaphora of "Thou" in the first three lines builds an almost prayer-like devotion, and the superlatives "tenderest husband" and "dearest friend" show that he is both lover and companion. The phrase "all my worldly thoughts" and "all my earthly joy" is significant: the adjectives "worldly" and "earthly" already hint that he belongs to the life she is leaving, preparing for the contrast with "Heaven" later. The fourth line, "this first, this last adieu", is quietly heartbreaking: this letter is the first of its kind and also the final one, so beginning and ending collapse into a single moment.

Death is then personified in a surprisingly gentle way. He begins as "the conqueror Death", asserting "his right", which suggests an inevitable, almost legal claim over her. Yet he does not behave like a conqueror. He "woos" her "with a cheerful

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grace", and the verb casts Death as a suitor, which is striking in a poem addressed to a husband. I find this unsettling as well as comforting: Death becomes a rival lover competing for her. The detail that "not one terror clouds his meagre face" removes the traditional horror of death, though "meagre" retains a hint of the skeletal figure, so Monck acknowledges what death is while refusing to fear it.

The middle of the poem shows death's attractions. He "promises a lasting rest from pain", which tells us quietly of her suffering, and teaches her "that all life's fleeting joys are vain". The contrast between "fleeting" and "eternal scenes of Heaven" sets transient earthly happiness against permanent spiritual reward. Monck's rhyming couplets, regular and measured, mirror this sense of order and calm, as if she has reasoned her way to peace.

The turn comes with "But love, fond love". The repetition, with the softening adjective "fond", makes love sound like the one force still capable of resisting. It "would yet resist his power" and "Would fain awhile defer the parting hour", and the conditional "would" suggests a longing rather than real power: love wishes to delay death but cannot. Most movingly, Death himself "brings thy mourning image to my eyes", so the vision of her husband grieving is the obstacle that "would obstruct my journey to the skies". Her greatest pain is not dying but imagining his sorrow.

The final section turns from her own thoughts to his. The questions "Say, shouldst thou grieve to see my sorrows end?" and "shouldst thou grieve that rest is come at last?" are gently persuasive, inviting him to see her death from her point of view. The metaphor of a "painful pilgrimage" presents life as a long, hard journey with heaven as its destination, so death becomes arrival rather than loss. The phrase "unwearied friend" pays tribute to his loyalty through her illness.

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The closing couplet is the emotional climax. The imperative "Rather rejoice" asks him to replace grief with joy, and the verb phrase "shake off life" makes life seem a burden or a garment she can cast away. Yet the final line returns to their marriage: she will "die, as I have lived, thy faithful wife". The balanced structure links her death to her whole life, and ending on "wife" places her identity firmly in her love. It is this last word that I find most moving, because it suggests that even while turning towards heaven her final thought is of him. Monck thus conveys death as peace and reward, but her love makes the farewell deeply poignant.

4 Wotton vividly conveys that a person becomes "Lord of himself" not by gaining power or possessions, but by freeing himself from everything that could control him: other people's will, his own passions, the desire for fame, envy, flattery and fear. The poem is essentially one long definition of the happy man, and its structure, form and paradoxes all work to persuade us that true mastery lies within.

The opening exclamation, "How happy is he born and taught", suggests that this happiness depends both on nature and on education, so it can be learned. The first quality is negative: he "serveth not another's will". From the very start, lordship over oneself is defined by independence. Wotton then uses military imagery: "Whose armour is his honest thought". The metaphor is striking because armour usually protects a soldier in battle, but here honesty itself is his defence. Similarly "simple truth" is his "utmost skill", which elevates plain truthfulness above any cunning or worldly cleverness. The happy man is strong precisely because he does not need deception.

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The second stanza turns inward. "Whose passions not his masters are" reverses the usual relationship of master and servant: he rules his emotions rather than being ruled by them. This is the heart of being "Lord of himself". The line "Whose soul is still prepared for death" suggests a calm readiness that removes fear, and he is "Untied unto the world" by care for "public fame or private breath". The image of being untied makes worldly concerns sound like ropes binding a prisoner, while "private breath" neatly suggests gossip, the whispered opinions of others.

Wotton then lists what such a man avoids. He "envies none that chance doth raise", recognising that worldly success is often mere luck. The line "How deepest wounds are given by praise" is a memorable paradox: praise, which seems kind, can wound deeply because it breeds vanity and dependence on others' approval. The neat contrast in "Nor rules of state, but rules of good" sets political scheming against morality, and the repetition of "rules" shows that he obeys a higher law. I find the idea that freedom comes from following moral rules, rather than escaping all rules, particularly persuasive.

In the fourth stanza he has "his life from rumours freed", and "conscience is his strong retreat". The metaphor of a fortress or refuge again presents his inner moral sense as a secure place no enemy can reach. The balanced line "Whose state can neither flatterers feed, / Nor ruin make oppressors great" shows his independence in both directions: he has nothing to attract flatterers and nothing that could enrich tyrants if he fell. His condition is untouchable.

Religion and simplicity complete the portrait. He prays for "grace" rather than "gifts", valuing spiritual over material blessings, and he "entertains the harmless day / With a religious book or friend". The adjective "harmless" and the modest

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pleasures of reading and friendship create a quiet, contented picture that contrasts with the ambitious world of courts and fame.

Structurally, the poem builds through a chain of relative clauses beginning "Who" and "Whose", delaying the main point until the final stanza. The regular quatrains with alternate rhymes and steady iambic tetrameter create a calm, ordered tone that mirrors the balanced life described. Then the conclusion arrives: "This man is freed from servile bands / Of hope to rise or fear to fall". "Servile bands" picks up the earlier imagery of binding, and surprisingly hope is shown to enslave as much as fear does. The climax is the paradox "Lord of himself, though not of lands, / And having nothing, yet hath all." The alliteration of "Lord" and "lands" sharpens the contrast between inner and outer kingdoms, and the final antithesis of "nothing" and "all" leaves a resonant, almost proverbial truth. Wotton vividly persuades us that self-rule is the only lordship worth having, and that the person who desires nothing possesses everything.

5

Hughes makes "Relic" such a striking poem by turning a small, ordinary discovery, a jawbone found on the shore, into a stark meditation on the violence of nature, the endless cycle of eating and being eaten, and the way death leaves behind only hard remnants. The poem is striking because its language is as hard, harsh and unsentimental as the bone itself.

The opening, "I found this jawbone at the sea's edge", is quiet and conversational, almost like the start of a beachcomber's anecdote. The demonstrative "this" makes the object present and tangible, as though the speaker is holding it out to us. Yet the location is significant: the "sea's edge" is a boundary between land and the hidden world beneath, and the poem immediately carries us from the calm surface

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into the depths.

Hughes then describes the sea as a place of relentless struggle. Creatures are "broken by the breakers", where the alliteration and the near-repetition make the waves sound like destroyers, and the line that they "Continue the beginning" suggests that this violence is as old as life itself, an endless process. The short statement "The deeps are cold" is chilling in its simplicity, and the cold seems moral as well as physical. Most striking is the claim that "In that darkness camaraderie does not hold". The polysyllabic, almost human word "camaraderie" is placed in a world where it means nothing: there is no friendship, loyalty or kindness, only appetite. This is reinforced in "Nothing touches but, clutching, devours". The commas break the line into jerks, imitating the sudden grab of a predator, and the hard sounds of "clutching" and "devours" make contact itself an act of killing.

The jaws in the poem are both the instrument and the victim of this violence. Hughes describes how the jaws themselves eventually "go gnawn bare", and the harsh, unusual past participle "gnawn" and the repeated "n" sounds evoke the grinding of teeth. The idea is grimly ironic: what spent its life eating is finally eaten. The heavy repetition of "jaws" and "jawbone" throughout the poem hammers home that this cycle never ends, and that the hunter always becomes the hunted.

The list "Shells, vertebrae, claws, carapaces, skulls" is another striking moment. The asyndetic catalogue of hard, broken remains creates a kind of graveyard on the beach, and the clicking consonants make the line sound brittle. Hughes calls this "the sea's achievement", an ironic phrase, since the only "achievement" of this world is a scattering of bones.

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Hughes then personifies time: "Time in the sea eats its tail". This image of a creature devouring itself suggests a circle without progress, life feeding on life forever. The sea "casts these / Indigestibles", a blunt, almost scientific word that reduces once living creatures to waste which even the sea cannot digest. The metaphor of "the spars of purposes / That failed far from the surface" is especially powerful: "spars" are the broken timbers of a shipwreck, so each skeleton becomes the wreck of a life whose single purpose, to survive by eating, ultimately failed. The phrase "None grow rich / In the sea" bleakly dismisses any idea of gain or reward in nature.

The ending is the poem's most memorable moment. "This curved jawbone did not laugh" contrasts the human associations of a jaw, with speech, smiling and laughter, with its real function here. Instead it "gripped, gripped", and the repetition conveys a relentless, mechanical clamping that defined its whole existence. The final word, "cenotaph", is brilliantly chosen: a cenotaph is a monument to the dead whose bodies lie elsewhere, so the jawbone becomes a memorial to all the vanished creatures of the deep, and perhaps to the violence of life itself. The rhyme of "laugh" and "cenotaph" gives the close a grim finality.

Hughes's compressed, enjambed lines, his harsh consonants and his refusal to soften what he sees make "Relic" striking. A small piece of bone becomes a stark reminder that nature, for Hughes, is driven by hunger rather than harmony, and that what remains of all that struggle is only a hard, silent relic.

6 Hughes creates a compelling portrait of the hawk by letting it speak for itself. Through a dramatic monologue, the hawk reveals a mind of absolute confidence, ruthless efficiency and breathtaking arrogance, and the poem is compelling

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precisely because we are both impressed and disturbed: the hawk is magnificent in its purity of purpose, yet its voice sounds unnervingly like that of a tyrant.

The opening line, "I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed", places the hawk literally at the summit of its world. The simple, declarative sentence and the first-person "I" establish a calm, unchallenged authority; it can afford to close its eyes because nothing threatens it. Hughes stresses that there is "no falsifying dream / Between my hooked head and hooked feet". The repetition of "hooked" reduces the bird to its weapons, head and talons, and the claim that it has no "falsifying dream" suggests a creature free of illusion, imagination or doubt. Even in sleep it will "rehearse perfect kills and eat", so its only fantasy is efficient violence.

In the second stanza the hawk's egotism becomes clear. The exclamation "The convenience of the high trees!" shows it interpreting the whole natural world as designed for its benefit. The air's "buoyancy" and the "sun's ray" are "of advantage to me", and the earth's face is turned "upward for my inspection". The personification of the earth looking up, like a subject before a ruler, presents the hawk as a monarch surveying its kingdom. Its slightly formal, bureaucratic diction, "convenience", "advantage", "inspection", is unexpected in a bird and makes its arrogance sound cold and calculating.

The third stanza reaches towards the godlike. "My feet are locked upon the rough bark" conveys a grip that is total and immovable. The hawk then claims that "It took the whole of Creation / To produce my foot, my each feather", suggesting that it is the end point of evolution or divine design. The capital "C" in "Creation" gives the claim religious grandeur. The turn in "Now I hold Creation in my foot" is a striking reversal: the product of creation now possesses it. I find this the most

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compelling moment, because Hughes captures both the genuine perfection of the predator and its terrifying presumption.

The hawk's attitude to killing is stated without any moral hesitation. "I kill where I please because it is all mine" is a statement of power as ownership, and the absence of any justification is itself the point. "There is no sophistry in my body", it says, rejecting clever argument or deception, and then, with chilling euphemism, "My manners are tearing off heads". The word "manners" normally suggests politeness, so its pairing with decapitation creates a shocking irony. The violence becomes, in its eyes, simply a matter of etiquette, followed by "The allotment of death", where the administrative noun "allotment" presents killing as a duty the hawk distributes.

Hughes's imagery of direction reinforces this ruthlessness. "For the one path of my flight is direct / Through the bones of the living" makes the hawk's movement literally pass through its victims. The word "direct" suggests an unswerving, single-minded purpose. When the hawk insists that "No arguments assert my right", it means it needs no reasons: its right is simply its strength.

The final stanza is the most unsettling. "The sun is behind me" implies that even the sun serves as its backdrop or ally. The repeated insistence on stasis, "Nothing has changed since I began" and "My eye has permitted no change", shows the hawk believing it controls time itself. The closing line, "I am going to keep things like this", is chillingly calm, colloquial and absolute, and the short sentence feels like a decree. Yet perhaps there is irony here too: no creature can halt change forever, and the hawk's certainty may be its delusion.

The structure supports this portrait. Six steady quatrains, many short end-stopped

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sentences, and plain, emphatic language create a voice that is controlled and never uncertain. Hughes makes the hawk compelling because he gives it a mind as sharp and pitiless as its talons, inviting us to admire its perfection while recoiling from its self-worship.

8 Adichie strikingly portrays Kambili's mother, Beatrice, and Aunty Ifeoma as two women who respond in opposite ways to the pressures placed on them: Mama through silence, submission and hidden endurance, Ifeoma through speech, laughter and open defiance. Because both are seen through Kambili's eyes, the contrast also shapes her own growth, as she slowly learns from Ifeoma that a woman's voice can be used.

The most obvious difference lies in how they speak. Mama is associated throughout with quietness; Kambili repeatedly notes her soft, low voice and her habit of speaking in hushed tones, as if afraid of being overheard. Her conversation is mostly deference to Papa, agreeing and reassuring. Ifeoma, by contrast, is introduced as loud, quick and fearless. She laughs freely, talks fast and argues openly, even with Eugene. When she visits at Christmas and challenges her brother about allowing Papa-Nnukwu to come and see his grandchildren, Kambili is astonished that anyone could speak to Papa like that. Adichie uses this contrast of sound and silence as a central motif: the novel's opening part is built on the silence of the Achike house, while Ifeoma's flat is full of noise.

Their homes intensify the difference. Mama lives in the large, wealthy house in Enugu, yet it feels oppressive and controlled. Ifeoma's small flat in Nsukka, with its power cuts, shortages and cramped rooms, is warm and lively, filled with debate, music and the scent of cooking. Ifeoma encourages her children to

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question and to hold their own opinions at the dinner table, which is unthinkable at Papa's table. Adichie suggests that freedom, not money, creates a true home.

Their attitudes to marriage are perhaps the most striking contrast. Mama clings to her marriage despite the violence she suffers. She tells Ifeoma, in effect, that a woman without a husband has nowhere to go, asking where she could go if she left Eugene's house, and she insists on his goodness to her because he did not take another wife when she struggled to have children. Ifeoma, widowed and raising three children alone on a lecturer's salary, sees things differently: she warns that sometimes life begins only when marriage ends. Adichie gives Ifeoma the clarity that Mama cannot yet allow herself, and their conversation in Nsukka sets submission directly against independence.

Adichie also uses symbolism to reveal Mama's suppressed suffering. After each beating, Mama polishes her ceramic ballet figurines on the étagère, a ritual that shows her quietly restoring order rather than protesting. These delicate, fragile figures mirror her own condition. When Papa throws his missal at Jaja on Palm Sunday and breaks the figurines, Mama does not replace them, and this small detail marks a change in her. Ifeoma needs no such symbolic outlet; her resistance is spoken, as when she refuses to let her brother's money or opinions control her, even though he could ease her poverty.

Yet Adichie avoids making the contrast too simple. Mama's silence hides a dangerous strength: at the climax we learn that she has been poisoning Eugene's tea. Her rebellion is secret and destructive, while Ifeoma's is open and principled. Ifeoma, despite her courage, is also worn down, losing her university post and leaving Nigeria for America, so her defiance comes at a price too. The ending emphasises the cost for Mama: in the final section she seems diminished and

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withdrawn, while Jaja carries the punishment for her act.

Through these two women, Adichie explores the ways patriarchal power and violence shape women's lives, and the different forms survival can take. Ifeoma, with her voice and laughter, offers Kambili a model of freedom, while Mama's silent endurance shows what fear can do to a person. The contrast is striking because Adichie makes us sympathise with both: we admire Ifeoma's strength, but we also understand, painfully, why Mama feels she has no choice until she chooses, terribly, for herself.

9 Dickens conveys vivid impressions of Mr Jaggers and his office by keeping the lawyer himself absent. Pip arrives in London full of expectation, but instead of meeting his guardian he meets a series of reactions to him, and then sits in a room that seems to embody his power. Through the responses of others, grotesque description and Pip's own fascinated imagination, Dickens makes Jaggers feel intimidating, slightly sinister and utterly in control before he has said a word.

The impression begins with the coachman. Asked the fare, he says "A shilling", then adds "unless you wish to make it more", a hint of hopeful greed which he immediately abandons: "I don't want to get into trouble. I know him!" The exclamation and the way he "darkly closed an eye at Mr Jaggers's name" make the lawyer sound like a dangerous figure, someone whose very name enforces honesty. The comic detail that driving away "appeared to relieve his mind" adds humour, but it also tells us that ordinary people fear Jaggers. Dickens creates suspense through this indirect characterisation.

The clerk extends this impression. His careful explanation that Jaggers is "in

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Court" and that "his time being valuable" he will not be longer "than he can help" shows how even his employees speak of him with a kind of reverent deference. The treatment of Mike, the "gentleman with one eye" in "velveteen suit and knee-breeches" who "wiped his nose with his sleeve", is both comic and revealing. He is shoved out "with as little ceremony as I ever saw used", and his fur cap tossed after him. The ironic label "gentleman", applied to such an unrefined figure, makes us smile, yet the scene suggests the kind of shady, desperate clients who depend on Jaggers, and the brusque power his office wields over them.

The description of the room is the centre of the passage. It is "lighted by a skylight only" and "a most dismal place", so it is shut off from the ordinary world. The simile of the skylight "eccentrically patched like a broken head" introduces images of violence and injury, and the personification of the neighbouring houses that had "twisted themselves to peep down at me" creates an uneasy, almost nightmarish sense of being watched. Pip's young, impressionable mind turns the whole setting into something threatening.

The objects in the room deepen the sinister atmosphere. Dickens contrasts what Pip expected, papers, with what he finds: "an old rusty pistol, a sword in a scabbard" and "strange-looking boxes". These weapons suggest crime and violence rather than calm legal work. Most disturbing are the "two dreadful casts on a shelf, of faces peculiarly swollen, and twitchy about the nose". The grotesque adjectives "swollen" and "twitchy" make the casts seem almost alive, and the mystery of whose faces they are adds to the unsettling effect. They hint at Jaggers's dealings with the criminal world and at the deaths of the condemned.

Jaggers's chair is perhaps the most vivid image of all. It is made "of deadly black horsehair, with rows of brass nails round it, like a coffin". The simile links the

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lawyer's seat of power with death, and "deadly" suggests that his clients' fates, perhaps even their lives, are decided there. Pip imagines how Jaggers "leaned back in it, and bit his forefinger at the clients", a striking gesture of intimidation that Dickens uses as a recurring sign of his character. The detail of the wall "greasy with shoulders" is brilliant: without describing a single client, Dickens conveys generations of nervous people backing away from Jaggers in fear.

The passage ends with Pip "fascinated by the dismal atmosphere", a word that captures his mix of fear and curiosity. His final observation, that the clerk shares his master's air "of knowing something to everybody else's disadvantage", sums up Jaggers: a man whose power rests on knowledge, secrets and the vulnerability of others. Through comedy, grotesque imagery and the delay of his entrance, Dickens makes Jaggers loom over the scene, and makes his office a vivid image of the dark, criminal side of the London that Pip has so innocently entered.

10 Dickens portrays Pip's relationship with Miss Havisham as one built on illusion: Pip mistakes her for the author of his fortune and the architect of his romance, while she uses him as an instrument in her private revenge on men. What makes the portrayal so striking is that both of them are deceived, and the relationship, which begins in fear and fascination, ends in a moment of mutual forgiveness that neither of them could have imagined at Satis House when Pip was a frightened village boy.

From Pip's first visit, Dickens makes the relationship strange through the eyes of the child. Miss Havisham is described through the decaying wedding dress and the stopped clocks, and the older narrator recalls that "the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress". The repetition of "withered" fuses the woman

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with her costume, so that Pip seems to meet something closer to a waxwork or a ghost than a person. Her first command, "Come nearer; let me look at you", establishes the terms at once: Pip is something to be inspected. When she places her hands on her side and asks him what she touches, answering "Broken!" with a "weird smile", Dickens makes her heartbreak theatrical and almost boastful. I find it disturbing that her imperious demand that he "play" is made to a child who has no idea what is expected, and Pip's bewildered obedience shows how completely he is in her power.

The most cruel aspect of the relationship is that Miss Havisham treats Pip as practice material for Estella. Her whispered instruction to "Beggar him" over the card game reveals that Pip is chosen precisely because he is common and vulnerable. Later she asks Estella, with obvious relish, whether Pip finds her pretty, and Dickens makes Pip's suffering part of her entertainment. Yet Pip's narration also shows his own complicity. He wants to believe that Miss Havisham is preparing him for Estella and for gentility, and he begins to despise the forge, Joe and Biddy in the light of Satis House. The relationship is therefore striking because it corrupts Pip without Miss Havisham having to say a single false word: she simply allows him to deceive himself.

When the fortune arrives, Dickens deepens the irony. Pip imagines Miss Havisham as his "fairy godmother", and the fairy tale phrase exposes the childishness of his hopes. She enjoys the role, letting Pip kneel and kiss her hand, and even uses his visits to torment her greedy relatives, the Pockets. Her passionate speech urging Pip to "love her, love her, love her!" is one of the most striking moments in the novel. The incantatory repetition turns love into a curse, and her definition of real love as "blind devotion" and "utter submission" reveals a heart so damaged that she can no longer tell love from self-destruction. Pip hears it as a romantic

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blessing; the reader hears a warning.

After Magwitch's return, the relationship changes completely. Pip confronts Miss Havisham with having led him on, and she does not deny it, asking coldly who she is to be kind. Yet Dickens does not leave her a monster. On Pip's last visit she gives him the money he needs to secure Herbert's future, and she falls on her knees before him, repeating "What have I done!" The repetition now expresses remorse rather than self-pity, and the image of the proud woman kneeling reverses the scene in which young Pip knelt to her. Her plea that he might one day write that he forgives her is answered at once, and Pip's forgiveness is a sign of how much he has grown morally.

The climax is literal as well as symbolic. When the wedding dress catches fire, Pip burns his hands smothering the flames, and the rotting bridal finery that has ruled the house for years is destroyed. It is as though Dickens purges the relationship of its old fantasy through suffering. Ultimately, Dickens strikingly portrays a relationship in which two damaged people use each other for illusions of revenge and of greatness, and only at the end, through humility on both sides, do they meet as human beings.

11 Du Maurier creates a disturbing atmosphere at this moment by turning what should be a joyful homecoming into an ordeal. The young narrator arrives at Manderley as its new mistress, yet everything in the passage makes her feel like an intruder, and the house and its servants seem to judge her before she has said a word. The disturbance comes less from anything openly threatening than from the gap between the welcome she ought to receive and the dread she actually feels.

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The passage opens with physical symptoms of anxiety. The narrator is aware of "a little pain at the pit of my stomach, and a nervous contraction in my throat", and the precise, bodily detail draws us inside her nervousness. The fact that Frith and the footman follow "with the rug and my mackintosh" is quietly telling: the shabby, practical mackintosh hardly belongs in the grandeur of Manderley, and it reminds us that she is a paid companion turned bride, uneasy among servants who are more at home here than she is.

The most disturbing feature is the gathering of the household in the hall. Instead of a private arrival, the narrator is confronted by a crowd of staff assembled to inspect her, and du Maurier presents them as a mass of watching faces rather than individuals. Her clumsiness, dropping her gloves and fumbling her words, makes the reader wince with her, because every small error seems to be noticed and silently recorded. Maxim's impatience with the formal welcome only increases her isolation: the one person who should protect her seems to wish the whole business over.

Mrs Danvers' appearance is the centre of the passage. Du Maurier describes her as tall, gaunt and dressed in black, with a "skull's face" and great "hollow eyes". The imagery of death is unmistakable, so that the housekeeper seems less a living woman than a figure from a grave, and her cold, limp handshake reinforces the impression of something lifeless. She speaks correctly and politely, yet her formality feels like hostility in disguise. What is so disturbing is that nothing she says can be faulted; the menace lies entirely in the narrator's perception of her, and du Maurier makes us share that perception. It is the first sign that Manderley belongs to someone else, and the reader senses, even before Rebecca is mentioned, that the dead first wife still rules the house through those who served her.

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Du Maurier also uses the setting to unsettle us. The vast hall and the formality of the occasion dwarf the narrator, and when she is finally left with tea and the dogs, the relief is only partial. The old dog, "blind in one eye", soon has "enough of me" and goes back to the fire "with a grunt". Even the animal's indifference feels like a judgement, as though the whole household has weighed her and found her wanting. The younger dog, Jasper, offers the only warmth in the passage: he lays "a chin upon my knee, his eyes deep with meaning", and his "tail a-thump" brings a moment of affection. Yet the contrast is itself unsettling. That the narrator's only welcome comes from a dog shows how lonely she already is in her own home.

The first person narration intensifies everything. Because the older narrator is looking back, we sense that her fears were justified, and the gap between her innocent, eager younger self and the cold reception she meets creates dramatic tension. Du Maurier makes this moment so disturbing by combining the narrator's acute self-consciousness with images of death, scrutiny and indifference, so that Manderley feels, from the very threshold, like a place where she will never truly belong.

12 Du Maurier makes Maxim de Winter intriguing because he is seen almost entirely through the eyes of a narrator who adores him but does not understand him. His silences, sudden moods and unexplained outbursts invite her, and us, to construct a story about him, and the novel's great twist is that the story we have built is wrong. Maxim remains intriguing to the end because du Maurier never allows us to be fully comfortable with what we finally learn.

From the first meeting in Monte Carlo, Maxim is surrounded by mystery. Mrs Van

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Hopper gossips about the tragedy of his wife's drowning, so that he arrives in the narrative already defined by loss. The narrator imagines him as a figure from an old portrait, a man belonging to another century, and this romantic idealisation makes him seem remote and slightly unreal. His behaviour is unpredictable: he is courteous and amused one moment and abruptly withdrawn the next, as when a chance remark about Manderley makes him fall silent. His proposal is strikingly unromantic, delivered over breakfast as he tells her that he is asking her to marry him, and his blunt manner leaves both narrator and reader unsure whether he loves her at all.

At Manderley the intrigue deepens. The narrator constantly reads his moods as evidence of grief for Rebecca. When she innocently tries to please him, he flares up in anger, and du Maurier lets us see these outbursts only from the outside, so that their causes stay hidden. The fancy dress ball is the most powerful example. When the narrator descends the stairs in the costume copied from the portrait, unknowingly dressed exactly as Rebecca once was, Maxim's face is drained of colour and he orders her to change. The reader, like the narrator, assumes that he is overwhelmed by memories of a beloved wife. Du Maurier exploits this assumption brilliantly, because it is the foundation for the shock to come.

Maxim's confession transforms him. When the wreck is found and Rebecca's body is discovered in the cabin of her boat, Maxim reveals that he hated her and that he shot her in the cottage by the cove. His account of Rebecca as cruel, deceitful and corrupt reverses everything the narrator believed, and his violence makes him newly intriguing in a darker sense. What unsettles me most is the narrator's response: she feels relief, even happiness, because he never loved Rebecca. Du Maurier makes us complicit in her reaction, so that we are pulled into sympathising with a murderer. Maxim becomes intriguing not as a romantic hero

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but as a morally ambiguous figure whom the reader cannot easily judge.

In the final chapters the intrigue shifts to whether he will escape. The inquest, Favell's blackmail and the visit to Dr Baker turn the novel into a kind of detective story, and Maxim's tense composure during the investigation keeps us uncertain about how much he deserves to be saved. The revelation that Rebecca was seriously ill gives him a motive for her provocation and seems to rescue him from the law, yet it hardly settles the moral question. When the couple drive back and see the glow of Manderley burning, his freedom comes at the price of the house he loved, and du Maurier denies us a simple ending.

The opening chapters, set after these events, also make Maxim intriguing in retrospect. The narrator describes their quiet, exiled life abroad, where she protects him from boredom and memory, and he appears diminished and dependent. Reading the novel a second time, we realise that the commanding, mysterious man of Monte Carlo has been reduced to someone who must be shielded from the past. Du Maurier makes Maxim so intriguing because she controls what we know about him, encourages us to misread him, and then refuses to let the truth make him simple.

13 James makes this moment revealing because it exposes the Doctor's mind with ironic precision, and significant because it sets in motion the conflict that will shape Catherine's whole life. The dinner looks like a minor social occasion, but beneath its politeness James shows us a father treating his daughter's happiness as an experiment, and a suitor quietly valuing the contents of her father's cellar.

The passage begins by revealing that Dr Sloper is "more than anything else

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amused with the whole situation". The word "amused" is chilling in its detachment. He is not anxious for Catherine but entertained, and the narrator's phrase "the little drama" shows him viewing his daughter's first romance as a performance staged for his benefit. The narrator's aside, "if drama it was", catches the Doctor's scepticism, while the theatrical vocabulary of "hero" and "dénouement" suggests that he already expects to control the ending, even though he has "no intention, as yet" of doing so. The small phrase "as yet" is ominous: it hints at the interference to come.

The most revealing image is the description of Catherine as "a rather mature blossom, such as could be plucked from the stem only by a vigorous jerk". Although it is presented as the Doctor's reasoning, its comic coarseness exposes his low opinion of his daughter. She is reduced to a plant past its prime, and the "vigorous jerk" implies that only an unusually determined man would bother. It is a cruel joke, and the fact that her father makes it, even privately, tells us a great deal about why Catherine lacks confidence.

James also shows the Doctor's reasoning to be fair on the surface. He has "never made up his mind" that Catherine should marry a rich man, and he thinks it "very vulgar" to suspect people of mercenary motives too quickly. Yet the final reason undercuts this apparent fairness: he is "very curious to see whether Catherine might really be loved for her moral worth". The word "curious" again places him in the role of a scientist observing a case, and the doubt within the sentence betrays his belief that she probably cannot be. His smile at the thought of "poor Mr Townsend" suggests a man who enjoys feeling cleverer than everyone around him.

The second paragraph shifts to the dinner and to Morris. James's narrator notes that Morris was "by no means the ostensible" but "the real, occasion of the feast",

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which exposes the pretence of the social occasion. The most significant moment is the narrator's direct address: "it may be communicated to the reader" that Morris reflects that a "cellar-full of good liquor" would be "a most attractive idiosyncrasy in a father-in-law". The ironic, almost confiding tone lets the reader share a secret the characters do not know. Morris's thoughts are less about Catherine than about her father's wealth, and the light humour of "idiosyncrasy" makes his calculation sound charming rather than sinister, which is exactly how he operates.

The ending is the turning point. The Doctor praises Morris generously, admitting he has "decided ability" and is "uncommonly well turned out", before concluding: "But I don't think I like him." The short, flat sentence after the list of compliments is a masterly piece of anticlimax, and it is significant because it is the first open sign of the opposition that will drive the plot. The Doctor's instinct about Morris proves correct, yet his coldness towards Catherine is already plain. James makes this moment so revealing because both men are judging and calculating, while Catherine, the person whose life is at stake, is entirely absent from their thoughts.

14 I largely agree that James makes Washington Square "such a sad story". It traces how a gentle, loving young woman is let down by every person who claims to care for her, and it ends with her sitting alone, settled into a narrow life. Yet I do not think sadness is the whole effect. James tells the story with a cool, ironic wit that often makes us smile, and he gives Catherine a quiet dignity at the end that turns her defeat into a kind of moral victory.

The sadness begins with Catherine's position in her own family. Her mother dies soon after her birth, and Dr Sloper, having lost a brilliant wife and a promising son, finds his plain, slow and honest daughter a disappointment. The narrator

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makes clear that he is never cruel in obvious ways; he is simply ironic, and his irony is a weapon Catherine cannot even recognise. That she adores a father who quietly despises her is perhaps the saddest element of the novel, because her love is never returned in the way she needs.

Morris Townsend's courtship should be the happy part of the story, and James makes it painful precisely because Catherine is so happy in it. She falls in love with complete sincerity, while the reader is given increasing evidence that Morris is idle and mercenary. The visit to his sister, Mrs Montgomery, is especially affecting: she depends on Morris and knows his selfishness, and she ends by warning the Doctor against the marriage. The gap between what we know and what Catherine believes creates a slow, aching sense of dread.

The year in Europe intensifies the sadness. The Doctor hopes that travel will make Catherine forget Morris, but she remains faithful. In the Alps, as evening falls in a lonely valley, he turns on her and speaks of himself as a hard and passionate man. The wild, desolate setting makes Catherine feel, for the first time, almost afraid of her father, and James shows that the love between them has turned into a contest of wills.

The jilting is the emotional climax. Once Morris understands that the Doctor will really disinherit her, he withdraws, inventing a journey on business and leaving Catherine to discover the truth slowly. Her suffering is presented with restraint rather than melodrama: she does not rage, but she understands, and the understanding is permanent. James suggests that her capacity to trust has been destroyed, which is a quieter but deeper sadness than a broken engagement.

However, James undercuts pure tragedy with comedy. Mrs Penniman, who sees

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herself as the heroine of a romantic novel, meets Morris secretly in an oyster saloon and enjoys the intrigue far more than Catherine does. Her absurdity is genuinely funny, and the narrator's dry commentary on the Doctor's cleverness and Morris's charm keeps the reader at an amused distance. The story is sad, but it is told by someone who sees the folly of everyone involved.

The ending also complicates the claim. Catherine grows into a calm, respected woman. She refuses two later proposals, and when her dying father demands a promise that she will never marry Morris, she declines to give it, even though she has no intention of doing so. This is her first real act of independence, and it costs her much of her inheritance. When Morris returns years later, middle aged and still hoping, she sends him away with composure. There is strength here, not just sadness.

Yet James's final image is undeniably melancholy. After Morris leaves, Catherine returns to her fancy work and sits down with it again, "for life, as it were". The phrase is quietly devastating, suggesting that she has chosen a life of solitude and routine because the alternative has been spoiled for ever. Overall, I agree that this is a sad story, but its sadness is made more powerful by its irony and by Catherine's dignity. James shows not a woman destroyed but a woman who has survived disappointment by refusing to be deceived again.

15 Lahiri makes this moment so moving because it is built on a conversation that never quite happens. Ashoke stands on the edge of telling his son the story behind his name, the train crash and the book that saved his life, and chooses silence instead. The reader, who already knows the secret, watches father and son politely thanking each other while the most important truth between them stays

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unspoken.

The plain opening line, "'Thanks again,' Gogol tells his father now", sets the tone. The present tense, used throughout the novel, gives the moment an immediacy, as though we are standing in the room with them. Yet the word "again" suggests a dutiful, slightly awkward repetition. Gogol is fourteen and thanks his father as a well brought up boy should, but there is no warmth of recognition, because he has no idea what the gift of a book by Nikolai Gogol means to the man who gave it. The courtesy itself becomes poignant: it measures the distance between them.

Lahiri's handling of point of view is central to the emotion. We move into Ashoke's thoughts as he considers telling his son, and his memories of the night of the accident return. His hesitation is moving because it comes from love rather than coldness. He decides that the story would mean little to a teenager, or would burden him, and he wants to protect him from the darkness of that night. The reader understands what Gogol cannot: that his name is not an embarrassing accident but a memorial to his father's survival. Ashoke's restraint is typical of his quiet, undemonstrative tenderness, and Lahiri makes us feel both the dignity and the cost of it.

The moment is also moving because of what Gogol does with the gift. For him, the book is simply another reminder of the name he has come to resent, a name that marks him as odd among his American friends. His indifference is natural for an adolescent, and Lahiri does not condemn it, yet it is painful to see a gift so heavy with meaning treated as an unwanted present. The closing words, "Not even the source of his namesake", are bleak in their brevity. The fragment stands alone, emphasising Gogol's refusal to engage, and the repetition of the title's key word reminds us that the name is a link to his father that he is rejecting.

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Lahiri's style intensifies the effect. She writes in restrained, unshowy prose, without dramatic speeches, and the emotion is carried by small gestures and by the gap between what is said and what is meant. The ordinary domestic setting of a birthday makes the missed connection feel all the more human: this is not a family in crisis, simply one in which love is expressed through practical acts rather than words. The dramatic irony is especially strong because the reader knows that Gogol will only learn the truth years later, and that by then he will have rejected the name entirely.

What I find most moving is the sense of time running out unseen. Later in the novel Ashoke dies suddenly, and Gogol is left to read the book and understand its meaning without him. Looking back from the ending, this birthday becomes one of the chances that was lost. Lahiri makes this moment so moving because it captures, in a few quiet sentences, the tender misunderstanding between a father who loves too silently and a son who is too young to ask.

16 Lahiri strikingly depicts Gogol's relationship with Moushumi as a marriage founded on a shared past that both of them are trying to escape. What first draws them together, their understanding of what it means to grow up Bengali in America, is exactly what eventually drives them apart, and Lahiri traces the change from indifference, to intimacy, to quiet estrangement with a restraint that makes its failure all the more painful.

At first there is no relationship at all. As children, Gogol and Moushumi meet only at the Bengali gatherings their parents attend, and she is a remote, bookish girl who ignores him. Lahiri's early glimpses of her are deliberately unremarkable, which

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makes the later romance feel unexpected. Their worlds overlap only because their mothers are part of the same community, and neither child shows any interest in the other.

The relationship begins only after Ashoke's death, when Ashima suggests that Gogol contact Moushumi. He agrees reluctantly, almost as a duty to his grieving mother, and Lahiri makes their first meeting in New York awkward and self-conscious. Yet it quickly becomes intimate. What is striking is that they bond over their shared resistance to their parents' expectations. They joke about the Bengali parties of their childhood and about the arranged pairing they are both supposed to resent. With Moushumi, Gogol, who now calls himself Nikhil, does not have to explain himself, and Lahiri suggests that this ease feels like love, especially to a man still grieving his father. After the cultural distance he felt with Maxine, whose family he admired but never truly belonged to, Moushumi offers recognition.

Lahiri gives Moushumi her own history, which deepens the relationship and also foreshadows its end. She had been engaged to an American, Graham, and was humiliated when he mocked her family's culture to friends and the engagement collapsed. She has made a life in Paris and in French, a third culture that belongs to neither her parents nor America. The detail is striking because it shows that she has always defined herself by escape, and Gogol represents, in a sense, a return to the world she fled.

The wedding marks a turning point. It is a large Bengali ceremony arranged largely by their families, and Lahiri shows that neither Gogol nor Moushumi has really chosen its form. Married life soon reveals small strains. Moushumi insists on keeping her own surname, and Gogol senses that she sometimes regrets the safe,

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familiar choice he represents. At dinner parties with her sophisticated friends, he feels like an outsider in his own marriage, and her impatience with him grows. Lahiri conveys this not through dramatic arguments but through ordinary moments of irritation and distance, which is far more convincing.

The decline becomes betrayal when Moushumi begins an affair with Dimitri, a man she had been infatuated with years before. Lahiri lets us see her side of it, so that she is not simply a villain: she feels trapped, and the affair is a way of reclaiming the independent self she believes marriage has cost her. When Gogol finally realises the truth, the discovery is quietly devastating, and the marriage ends without a scene. The restraint matches the whole relationship: it is depicted as a series of small failures rather than a single explosion.

By the end of the novel, Moushumi has gone, and Gogol is left to see that he had been part of her attempt first to return to her past and then to escape it again. I find this depiction striking because Lahiri refuses to assign blame. The marriage fails not because either character is wicked but because they were drawn together by a nostalgia for something both of them wanted to leave behind. Their relationship becomes one of the novel's most powerful explorations of how difficult it is to build an identity from a shared sense of not belonging.

18 Lindsay creates striking impressions of Michael Fitzhubert as a young man caught between two worlds: the stiff English upper class he has been born into, and the strange, overwhelming Australian landscape that seems to claim him after the picnic. He is shy, romantic and oddly passive, yet he is also the one character who acts with real courage in the search for the missing girls. What makes him so striking is that his devotion is directed at a girl he has only glimpsed for a

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moment.

Our first impression of Mike is of an awkward outsider. He is the nephew of Colonel and Mrs Fitzhubert, recently arrived from England, and Lindsay presents him as gentle, reserved and ill at ease in the formal world his aunt and uncle inhabit. His friendship with Albert Crundall, the Fitzhuberts' coachman, is striking from the start. Their relaxed conversation cuts across the class divisions that the Colonel and Mrs Fitzhubert take for granted, and Albert's blunt, colloquial speech contrasts with Mike's hesitant politeness. Lindsay suggests that Mike is happier with Albert than with his own family, and this hints at his desire to break away from the life planned for him.

The most important moment for Mike is when he sees the schoolgirls crossing the creek on their way up the Rock. He watches Miranda in particular, and the image of her pale, graceful figure stays with him. Lindsay makes this glimpse striking because it is so brief and yet so consuming. Mike barely knows that the girls exist before they disappear, but afterwards he cannot stop thinking about Miranda, and she comes to him in the image of a white swan. The swan is a beautiful but ambiguous symbol: it suggests purity and grace, but also something wild and unreachable that can only be glimpsed before it flies away.

Mike's obsession drives the most dramatic part of his story, his return to the Rock. He persuades Albert to help him search, and when Albert goes back, Mike insists on staying alone overnight. Lindsay presents his ordeal on the Rock as almost hallucinatory. He becomes disorientated, exhausted and injured, as though the Rock itself is drawing him in as it drew in the girls. When Albert finds him, Mike is barely conscious, yet he has found Irma, who is rescued alive. This is the strongest impression of Mike: a quiet young man who seems ineffectual in society proves

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capable of extraordinary, almost reckless devotion.

Yet Lindsay denies him any reward. His discovery solves nothing, because Irma remembers nothing of what happened. Irma herself becomes attracted to Mike, but he cannot return her feelings, and their meeting is painfully awkward. Lindsay makes this striking because it shows how completely Mike is fixed on Miranda, a girl who has vanished, rather than the living girl in front of him. His passivity here seems almost tragic: he is haunted by something he can never possess.

Mike's sense of being trapped is also important. His aunt and uncle expect him to behave as a young English gentleman should, and his determination to stay in Australia, and eventually to set off north with no clear plan, suggests a rejection of that inherited role. Lindsay presents him as someone whose life has been altered by a single afternoon at the Rock, just as the lives of the girls, their teachers and the whole school are altered.

Overall, Lindsay creates striking impressions of Mike by combining his gentle, awkward manner with an unexpected intensity of feeling. Through the swan imagery, his friendship with Albert and his solitary ordeal on the Rock, she makes him a figure of romantic longing and quiet bravery. He is striking above all because he embodies the novel's central mystery: the Rock changes him, and like the reader, he can never discover what it means.

20 Martel makes Pi's success at taming Richard Parker memorable because it is never presented as a simple victory of a boy over a beast. It is a slow, comic and sometimes terrifying process, narrated with the precision of a zookeeper's manual, and by the end the reader suspects that the taming has worked in both directions:

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Pi controls the tiger, but the tiger also keeps Pi alive, sane and human.

The decision itself is framed as a moment of sudden clarity. When Pi announces "I had to tame him", the short, emphatic sentence marks a turning point in the novel, since until now he has been planning to outlast or even kill the tiger. Pi insists that it was not a question of "him or me, but of him and me", and the shift from "or" to "and" is quietly brilliant: survival becomes a partnership rather than a contest. Martel makes the moment more powerful by grounding it in Pi's childhood at the Pondicherry zoo. Pi draws on everything his father taught him about the danger of wild animals and on his knowledge of circus trainers, who survive in the ring not through strength but by convincing the animal that they are socially dominant. The memory of the zoo, once a place of safety, becomes the instruction manual for life on the lifeboat.

What makes the taming so vivid is its practical, almost scientific detail. Pi divides the boat into territories, claiming his own and marking it with his urine, a detail that is both absurd and logical, since this is the language a tiger understands. He uses the shrill whistle from the survival kit as a signal, and, most memorably, he rocks the boat until Richard Parker is violently seasick while blowing the whistle, so that the tiger learns to associate the sound with misery and retreats whenever he hears it. Martel writes these scenes with a dry humour that relieves the tension, yet the danger is never forgotten: Pi uses a turtle shell as a shield and admits how close he comes to being killed. The reader is held between laughter and fear, which is exactly Pi's state of mind.

Equally important is the way Pi becomes the provider. By hauling in fish, catching turtles and collecting rainwater, he makes the tiger dependent on him. Martel shows that power on the lifeboat is not won by force but by usefulness: Richard

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Parker tolerates Pi because Pi feeds him. The friendly, puffing sound Richard Parker makes towards Pi, which the narrator describes earlier in the voyage, becomes a sign that the relationship has moved from terror towards something like trust, and Pi's growing affection, even his calling the tiger by name with tenderness, makes the reader feel the strangeness of this bond.

Yet Martel ensures that the success is never complete, and this is what makes it so haunting. Pi is clear that Richard Parker remains a wild animal, as the brutal killing of the blind Frenchman later demonstrates. Pi also admits that the tiger saved him as much as he saved himself: having to care for Richard Parker gave him routine, purpose and a reason not to despair. The final parting on the Mexican beach, where the tiger walks into the jungle without looking back, is devastating precisely because it reveals the limits of the taming. Pi has controlled him, but he has never truly owned him, and the lack of a farewell wounds him more than any claw.

Finally, the second, human version of the story told to the Japanese investigators casts the taming in a new light. If Richard Parker represents Pi's own savage instinct, then taming the tiger becomes Pi's struggle to master the violence within himself so that he can survive without losing his humanity. Martel thus depicts Pi's success memorably by making it physical, funny and frightening on the surface, while suggesting beneath it a deeper and more unsettling victory over the self.

21

Gilman makes this a memorable moment because it is a reversal staged almost like a scene from a play: the silent, grieving widow whom her children have discussed as a burden suddenly enters, takes control of the conversation and

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overturns every assumption in the room. The power of the passage lies in the contrast between the children's smooth, managing voices and Mrs McPherson's short, devastating replies.

Her entrance is deliberately theatrical. She appears as "a tall black figure, cloaked and veiled", an image of conventional mourning which suggests anonymity and passivity, and the fact that she arrives just as the lawyer is speaking of her husband's sound mind gives her timing an almost comic precision. Her first words seize the subject: she does not need to hear "that old will" because "It's no good now." The simple statement that "They all turned in their chairs" lets the reader picture the shock without any comment from the narrator. Gilman also keeps her veiled for much of the exchange, so that she is referred to as "the voice behind the veil" and simply "the voice". This is striking: we cannot see her face, so all her power is concentrated in what she says, and the veil itself, a symbol of the self-effacing widow, becomes ironic.

The revelation about the deeds is handled with dry humour. The narrator's comment that they were "formal and correct, and quite simple and clear" mimics legal language, while the qualification "for deeds" gently mocks the law's usual obscurity. The children, who expected to divide the estate in an afternoon, suddenly find there is nothing to divide. James's understatement that this "does complicate matters a little" is comic, and the reader enjoys watching his authority wobble.

Gilman makes the children's selfishness obvious through their language and the narrative verbs attached to it. Ellen speaks "persuasively", Adelaide with "a touch of asperity", James "conclusively" and "with forced patience". These adverbs expose the effort behind their politeness. Adelaide's suggestion that their mother should

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"deed it back again" so that they can "get away", and James's wish that she would "make it over to me in a lump", reveal that their real concern is their own convenience and money. James's promise to carry out his father's wishes "to the letter" sounds dutiful, but it is a way of putting himself in charge. Their repeated soothing phrases, "we know how you feel", are patronising, treating her as "nervous and tired" rather than as a person with a will of her own.

Against this, Mrs McPherson's replies are brief and blunt. "Why should I?" is a question no one in the room has expected her to ask. When James mentions his father's wishes she answers "Your father is dead," and when Ellen murmurs sympathy she replies "I am alive." The parallel structure of these two short sentences is perhaps the heart of the passage: Gilman sets the dead man's authority against the living woman's right to her own life. "It is settled" closes down James's insistence that business must be "settled", turning his own word against him. Even her agreement that she has "been packing" is ambiguous, and the reader may sense that she is packing for a destination very different from her children's homes.

The lawyer acts as an ally. His remark that she is "a woman of remarkable intelligence" contradicts the children's view of her as helpless, and her ironic reply, that he might make her children understand, places them in the position of the slow learners.

The climax comes in her longest speech. "I have considered Mr McPherson's wishes for thirty years" is followed by the crisp "Now, I'll consider mine," and the balance between her husband's wishes and "mine" marks her liberation. The precise count of "eleven hundred days" spoken "with sudden intensity" suggests that she has been counting every day of a duty she endured, and the reader glimpses years of

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suppressed feeling. Her distinction between "children" and "two daughters and a son", who are "grown persons", is both cool and liberating: the duty of motherhood is finished. The final "I'm tired of duty" is shocking in its honesty, and the sudden change of tone just before it makes it feel like a long-held breath released.

The moment is memorable, then, because Gilman lets a woman who has been spoken about finally speak, and because her quiet, clipped words defeat her children's long-winded self-interest. The reader is left delighted and slightly startled, sharing the children's surprise but not their dismay.

22 O Henry makes The Furnished Room a disturbing story by combining a bleak vision of city life, in which people pass through rooms without leaving a trace, with a cruel twist that the reader learns only after it is too late to matter. The story disturbs not through violence but through loneliness, anonymity and the casual heartlessness of those who profit from it.

From the opening, the setting is unsettling. The inhabitants of the lower West Side are described as "restless, shifting, fugacious as time itself", and the unusual word "fugacious", meaning fleeting, sets the tone: this is a world without permanence, where people drift from room to room and are forgotten. The young man who arrives looking for lodgings is never named, which makes him seem as anonymous as the hundreds of transients who came before him. His only identity is his search: for months he has been hunting through the theatres and lodging houses of the city for Eloise Vashner, the girl he loves, who has vanished. His quest seems hopeless from the start, and the reader senses a man reaching the end of his strength.

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The housekeeper, Mrs Purdy, is one of the most disturbing figures in the story. O Henry compares her to an "unwholesome, surfeited worm" that has hollowed out its nut, an image of greed and decay which suggests that she feeds on the house and its tenants. When the young man describes Eloise and asks whether such a girl has stayed there, she denies it. At this point the reader has no reason to doubt her, which makes the later revelation all the more shocking.

The room itself is described with a sense of oppressive, almost ghostly history. O Henry fills it with the shabby furniture and small damage left by previous lodgers: worn carpet, battered objects and names and marks left behind by strangers. The personification of the room as something that "received" its guest makes it feel alive and faintly sinister, as if it absorbs the people who pass through it. Each trace of a former tenant reminds us that hundreds of lives have been lived here and erased, and the young man's own life seems destined to vanish in the same way.

The most haunting moment is the sudden scent of mignonette, the flower Eloise loved. O Henry describes it so vividly that it seems almost a living presence, and the young man calls out as though someone has spoken to him. His frantic search of the room, turning out drawers and finding only meaningless scraps left by other women, is painful to read because the reader shares his conviction that she has been there, yet sees him find nothing. The sense of being so close and yet unable to reach her is deeply distressing. When he returns to ask the housekeeper again and she repeats her denial, his hope collapses. His suicide is described with chilling calm: he carefully blocks every crack in the room, turns on the gas and lies down on the bed. The quiet, methodical detail is more disturbing than any dramatic description of despair.

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The final section shifts abruptly to the basement, where Mrs Purdy gossips over drinks with her friend Mrs McCool. In a casual, chatty tone she reveals that she has just rented the third floor back, and that only a week earlier a young girl killed herself in that very room with gas. The girl was Eloise Vashner, who had been performing under a stage name. Mrs Purdy lied because news of a suicide is bad for business. The structure here is brilliantly cruel: the dramatic irony arrives only after the young man is dead, so the reader alone knows that the lovers died in the same room, perhaps on the same bed, within a week of each other. The comfortable, gossiping voices make the horror worse, because the two women treat the death as an inconvenience to be hidden rather than a tragedy.

O Henry therefore makes the story disturbing by refusing the reader any consolation. The twist does not resolve the tragedy but deepens it, revealing a city in which love, grief and even death are swallowed up by indifference and the need to let the room again. We are left with the image of the furnished room waiting for its next guest, as unchanged and uncaring as before.