Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **0475/11**

Paper 1 Poetry and Prose **October/November 2020**

1 hour 30 minutes

5822048587

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. Blank pages are indicated.

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SECTION A: POETRY

Answer **one** question from this section.

SONGS OF OURSELVES VOLUME 1: from Part 3

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

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

Little Boy Crying

Your mouth contorting in brief spite and
Hurt, your laughter metamorphosed into howls,
Your frame so recently relaxed now tight
With three-year-old frustration, your bright eyes
Swimming tears, splashing your bare feet,
You stand there angling for a moment's hint
Of guilt or sorrow for the quick slap struck.

The ogre towers above you, that grim giant,
Empty of feeling, a colossal cruel,
Soon victim of the tale's conclusion, dead
At last. You hate him, you imagine
Chopping clean the tree he's scrambling down
Or plotting deeper pits to trap him in.

You cannot understand, not yet,
The hurt your easy tears can scald him with,
Nor guess the wavering hidden behind that mask.
This fierce man longs to lift you, curb your sadness
With piggy-back or bull-fight, anything,
But dare not ruin the lessons you should learn.

You must not make a plaything of the rain.

(*Mervyn Morris*)

In what ways does Morris powerfully capture the feelings of the boy and his father in this poem?

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Or **2** How does Millay make *Sonnet 29* such a moving poem?

Sonnet 29

Pity me not because the light of day
At close of day no longer walks the sky;
Pity me not for beauties passed away
From field to thicket as the year goes by;
Pity me not the waning of the moon,
Nor that the ebbing tide goes out to sea,
Nor that a man's desire is hushed so soon,
And you no longer look with love on me.
This have I known always: Love is no more
Than the wide blossom which the wind assails,
Than the great tide that treads the shifting shore,
Strewing fresh wreckage gathered in the gales:
Pity me that the heart is slow to learn
When the swift mind beholds at every turn.

(*Edna St Vincent Millay*)

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SONGS OF OURSELVES VOLUME 2: from Part 2

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

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

In Praise of Creation

That one bird, one star,
The one flash of the tiger's eye
Purely assert what they are,
Without ceremony testify.

Testify to order, to rule –
How the birds mate at one time only,
How the sky is, for a certain time, full
Of birds, the moon sometimes cut thinly.

And the tiger trapped in the cage of his skin,
Watchful over creation, rests
For the blood to pound, the drums to begin,
Till the tigress' shadow casts

A darkness over him, a passion, a scent,
The world goes turning, turning, the season
Sieves earth to its one sure element
And the blood beats beyond reason.

Then quiet, and birds folding their wings,
The new moon waiting for years to be stared at here,
The season sinks to satisfied things –
Man with his mind ajar.

(*Elizabeth Jennings*)

Explore the ways in which Jennings uses words and images to powerful effect in this poem.

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Or **4** How does Constantine convey a memorable experience in *Watching for Dolphins*?

Watching for Dolphins

In the summer months on every crossing to Piraeus
One noticed that certain passengers soon rose
From seats in the packed saloon and with serious
Looks and no acknowledgement of a common purpose
Passed forward through the small door into the bows
To watch for dolphins. One saw them lose

Every other wish. Even the lovers
Turned their desires on the sea, and a fat man
Hung with equipment to photograph the occasion
Stared like a saint, through sad bi-focals; others,
Hopeless themselves, looked to the children for they
Would see dolphins if anyone would. Day after day

Or on their last opportunity all gazed
Undecided whether a flat calm were favourable
Or a sea the sun and the wind between them raised
To a likeness of dolphins. Were gulls a sign, that fell
Screeching from the sky or over an unremarkable place
Sat in a silent school? Every face

After its character implored the sea.
All, unaccustomed, wanted epiphany,
Praying the sky would clang and the abused Aegean
Reverberate with cymbal, gong and drum.
We could not imagine more prayer, and had they then
On the waves, on the climax of our longing come

Smiling, snub-nosed, domed like satyrs, oh
We should have laughed and lifted the children up
Stranger to stranger, pointing how with a leap
They left their element, three or four times, centred
On grace, and heavily and warm re-entered,
Looping the keel. We should have felt them go

Further and further into the deep parts. But soon
We were among the great tankers, under their chains
In black water. We had not seen the dolphins
But woke, blinking. Eyes cast down
With no admission of disappointment the company
Dispersed and prepared to land in the city.

(*David Constantine*)

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CAROL ANN DUFFY: 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:

Head of English

Today we have a poet in the class.
A real live poet with a published book.
Notice the inkstained fingers, girls. Perhaps
we're going to witness verse hot from the press.
Who knows. Please show your appreciation
by clapping. Not too loud. Now

sit up straight and listen. Remember
the lesson on assonance, for not all poems,
sadly, rhyme these days. Still. Never mind.
Whispering's, as always, out of bounds –
but do feel free to raise some questions.
After all, we're paying forty pounds.

Those of you with English Second Language,
see me after break. We're fortunate
to have this person in our midst.
Season of mists and so on and so forth.
I've written quite a bit of poetry myself,
am doing Kipling with the Lower Fourth.

Right. That's enough from me. On with the Muse.
Open a window at the back. We don't
want winds of change about the place.
Take notes, but don't write reams. Just an essay
on the poet's themes. Fine. Off we go.
Convince us that there's something we don't know.

Well. Really. Run along now, girls. I'm sure
that gave an insight to an outside view.
Applause will do. Thank you
very much for coming here today. Lunch
in the hall? Do hang about. Unfortunately,
I have to dash. Tracey will show you out.

How does Duffy create vivid impressions of the speaker (the Head of English) in this poem?

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Or **6** Explore the ways in which Duffy movingly conveys how relationships change over time in *The 'Darling' Letters*.

The 'Darling' Letters

Some keep them in shoeboxes away from the light,
sore memories blinking out as the lid lifts,
their own recklessness written all over them. *My own* …
Private jokes, no longer comprehended, pull their punchlines,
fall flat in the sad gaps between endearments. *What*
are you wearing?

Don't ever change.
They start with *Darling*; end in recriminations,
absence, sense of loss. Even now, the fist's bud flowers
into trembling, the fingers trace each line and see
the future then. *Always* … Nobody burns them,
the *Darling* letters, stiff in their cardboard coffins.

Babykins … We all had strange names
which make us blush, as though we'd murdered
someone, under an alias, long ago. *I'll die*
without you. Die. Once in a while, alone,
we take them out to read again, the heart thudding
like a spade on buried bones.

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SECTION B: PROSE

Answer **one** question from this section.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË: *Jane Eyre*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

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

A singular notion dawned upon me. I doubted not – never doubted – that if Mr Reed had been alive he would have treated me kindly; and now, as I sat looking at the white bed and overshadowed walls – occasionally also turning a fascinated eye towards the dimly gleaming mirror – I began to recall what I had heard of dead men, troubled in their graves by the violation of their last wishes, revisiting the earth to punish the perjured and avenge the oppressed: and I thought Mr Reed's spirit, harassed by the wrongs of his sister's child, might quit its abode – whether in the church vault or in the unknown world of the departed – and rise before me in this chamber. I wiped my tears and hushed my sobs, fearful lest any sign of violent grief might waken a preternatural voice to comfort me, or elicit from the gloom some haloed face, bending over me with strange pity. This idea, consolatory in theory, I felt would be terrible if realised: with all my might I endeavoured to stifle it – I endeavoured to be firm. Shaking my hair from my eyes, I lifted my head and tried to look boldly round the dark room: at this moment a light gleamed on the wall. Was it, I asked myself, a ray from the moon penetrating some aperture in the blind? No; moonlight was still, and this stirred; while I gazed, it glided up to the ceiling and quivered over my head. I can now conjecture readily that this streak of light was, in all likelihood, a gleam from a lantern, carried by someone across the lawn: but then, prepared as my mind was for horror, shaken as my nerves were by agitation, I thought the swift-darting beam was a herald of some coming vision from another world. My heart beat thick, my head grew hot; a sound filled my ears, which I deemed the rushing of wings: something seemed near me; I was oppressed, suffocated: endurance broke down; I uttered a wild, involuntary cry; I rushed to the door and shook the lock in desperate effort. Steps came running along the outer passage; the key turned, Bessie and Abbot entered.

'Miss Eyre, are you ill?' said Bessie.

'What a dreadful noise! It went quite through me!' exclaimed Abbot.

'Take me out! Let me go into the nursery!' was my cry.

'What for? Are you hurt? Have you seen something?' again demanded Bessie.

'Oh! I saw a light, and I thought a ghost would come.' I had now got hold of Bessie's hand, and she did not snatch it from me.

'She has screamed out on purpose,' declared Abbot, in some disgust. 'And what a scream! If she had been in great pain one would have excused it, but she only wanted to bring us all here: I know her naughty tricks.'

'What is all this?' demanded another voice peremptorily; and Mrs Reed came along the corridor, her cap flying wide, her gown rustling stormily. 'Abbot and Bessie, I believe I gave orders that Jane Eyre should be left in the red-room till I came to her myself.'

'Miss Jane screamed so loud, ma'am,' pleaded Bessie.

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'Let her go,' was the only answer. 'Loose Bessie's hands, child: you cannot succeed in getting out by these means, be assured. I abhor artifice, particularly in children; it is my duty to show you that tricks will not answer: you will now stay here an hour longer, and it is only on condition of perfect submission and stillness that I shall liberate you then.'

'Oh, aunt! have pity! Forgive me! I cannot endure it – let me be punished some other way! I shall be killed if—'

'Silence! This violence is almost repulsive:' and so, no doubt, she felt it. I was a precocious actress in her eyes: she sincerely looked on me as a compound of virulent passions, mean spirit, and dangerous duplicity.

Bessie and Abbot having retreated, Mrs Reed, impatient of my now frantic anguish and wild sobs, abruptly thrust me back and locked me in, without further parley. I heard her sweeping away; and soon after she was gone, I suppose I had a species of fit: unconsciousness closed the scene.

[from Chapter 2]

How does Brontë make you feel so sorry for Jane at this moment in the novel?

Or **8** How does Brontë make Grace Poole such a mysterious character?

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ANITA DESAI: *In Custody*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

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

Nur sat hunched, listening, while he picked his teeth and occasionally spat into the tin spittoon under the divan. Then, raising his shaggy head so that it looked severe and granolithic, he interrupted the babble to say, 'Wrong, wrong, for thirty years you have been wrong. It is not a matter of Pakistan and Hindustan, of Hindi and Urdu. It is not even a matter of history. It is time you should be speaking of but cannot – the concept of time is too vast for you, I can see that, and yet it is all we really know about in our hearts,' he pressed his hand to his chest and there was comparative silence now for him to speak into. In that silence, Deven's heart gave a series of knocks. It gave him a sense of victory and triumph that Nur had so effectively stopped the raucous babble around him and placed the whole argument in perspective. That, he saw, was the glory of poets – that they could distance events and emotions, place them where perspective made it possible to view things clearly and calmly. He realized that he loved poetry not because it made things immediate but because it removed them to a position where they became bearable. That was what Nur's verse did – placed frightening and inexplicable experiences like time and death at a point where they could be seen and studied, in safety. His joy at this recognition made his heart beat a tattoo inside his chest so that it was a minute or two before he could calm himself and listen to Nur again. Looking up, he saw to his alarm Nur pointing at him as if he had all along been aware of him in that dark corner. 'He has come to speak for me,' Nur said. 'Through his throat, my words will flow. Listen and tell me if my poetry deserves to live, or if it should give way to – that fodder chewed by peasants, Hindi?' he spat at the man who had disparaged his vocation.

Deven responded with such an expression of terror that those who noticed laughed. He felt as if Nur had noticed his childish moment of satisfaction and decided maliciously to wreck it. All his joy and the regard and the honour he had accorded Nur dispersed as if over the ledge into the night. Nur was inviting him to join the fray, allowing the sublime concept of time to dwindle into the mere politics of language again. He could not possibly have opened his mouth or uttered a word. He knew he ought not to have stayed, listening to this kind of talk, he a Hindu and a teacher of Hindi. He had always kept away from the political angle of languages. He began to sweat with fear.

'What is the matter?' Nur mocked, glaring at him with small bloodshot eyes. Why did he choose to pick on Deven, the only one who had remained silent and not expressed any opinion at all? 'Forgotten your Urdu? Forgotten my verse? Perhaps it is better if you go back to your college and teach your students the stories of Prem Chand, the poems of Pant and Nirala. Safe, simple Hindi language, safe comfortable ideas of cow worship and caste and the romance of Krishna. That is your subject, isn't it, professor?' He threw back his head and cackled with laughter but the rest fell silent. They all stopped talking and arguing and laughing and turned to look at Deven with a curiosity they had not felt before.

'I am no poet, only a teacher,' Deven mumbled, but no one heard.

[from Chapter 3]

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How does Desai vividly reveal Deven's thoughts and feelings at this moment in the novel?

Or **10** How far does Desai make it possible for you to have any sympathy for Imtiaz Begum?

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CHARLES DICKENS: *Hard Times*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

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

'Why, you see,' replied Mr Bounderby, 'it suits my disposition to have a full understanding with a man, particularly with a public man, when I make his acquaintance. I have only one thing more to say to you, Mr Harthouse, before assuring you of the pleasure with which I shall respond to the utmost of my poor ability, to my friend Tom Gradgrind's letter of introduction. You are a man of family. Don't you deceive yourself by supposing for a moment that *I* am a man of family. I am a bit of dirty riff-raff, and a genuine scrap of tag, rag, and bobtail.'

If anything could have exalted Jem's interest in Mr Bounderby, it would have been this very circumstance. Or, so he told him.

'So now,' said Bounderby, 'we may shake hands on equal terms. I say, equal terms, because although I know what I am, and the exact depth of the gutter I have lifted myself out of, better than any man does, I am as proud as you are. I am just as proud as you are. Having now asserted my independence in a proper manner, I may come to how do you find yourself, and I hope you're pretty well.'

The better, Mr Harthouse gave him to understand as they shook hands, for the salubrious air of Coketown. Mr Bounderby received the answer with favour.

'Perhaps you know,' said he, 'or perhaps you don't know, I married Tom Gradgrind's daughter. If you have nothing better to do than to walk up town with me, I shall be glad to introduce you to Tom Gradgrind's daughter.'

'Mr Bounderby,' said Jem, 'you anticipate my dearest wishes.' They went out without further discourse; and Mr Bounderby piloted the new acquaintance who so strongly contrasted with him, to the private red brick dwelling, with the black outside shutters, the green inside blinds, and the black street door up the two white steps. In the drawing-room of which mansion, there presently entered to them the most remarkable girl Mr James Harthouse had ever seen. She was so constrained, and yet so careless; so reserved, and yet so watchful; so cold and proud, and yet so sensitively ashamed of her husband's braggart humility – from which she shrunk as if every example of it were a cut or a blow; that it was quite a new sensation to observe her. In face she was no less remarkable than in manner. Her features were handsome; but their natural play was so locked up, that it seemed impossible to guess at their genuine expression. Utterly indifferent, perfectly self-reliant, never at a loss, and yet never at her ease, with her figure in company with them there, and her mind apparently quite alone – it was of no use 'going in' yet awhile to comprehend this girl, for she baffled all penetration.

From the mistress of the house, the visitor glanced to the house itself. There was no mute sign of a woman in the room. No graceful little adornment, no fanciful little device, however trivial, anywhere expressed her influence. Cheerless and comfortless, boastfully and doggedly rich, there the room stared at its present occupants, unsoftened and unrelieved by the least trace of any womanly occupation. As Mr Bounderby stood in the midst of his household gods, so those unrelenting divinities occupied their places around Mr Bounderby, and they were worthy of one another, and well matched.

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'This, sir,' said Bounderby, 'is my wife, Mrs Bounderby: Tom Gradgrind's eldest daughter. Loo, Mr James Harthouse. Mr Harthouse has joined your father's muster-roll. If he is not Tom Gradgrind's colleague before long, I believe we shall at least hear of him in connexion with one of our neighbouring towns. You observe, Mr Harthouse, that my wife is my junior. I don't know what she saw in me to marry me, but she saw something in me, I suppose, or she wouldn't have married me. She has lots of expensive knowledge, sir, political and otherwise. If you want to cram for anything, I should be troubled to recommend you to a better adviser than Loo Bounderby.'

To a more agreeable adviser, or one from whom he would be more likely to learn, Mr Harthouse could never be recommended.

[from Book 2, Chapter 2]

In what ways does Dickens make this first meeting between Bounderby and Harthouse so memorable?

Or **12** Explore the ways in which Dickens makes the relationship between Louisa and Sissy so moving.

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ZORA NEALE HURSTON: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

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

He was lying on his side facing the door like he was expecting somebody or something.

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Janie gave them peace on his breast, then she studied his dead face for a long time.

[from Chapter 8]

How does Hurston make this such a powerful moment in the novel?

Or **14** What striking impressions does Hurston create of life 'on the muck' in the Everglades?

JOHN KNOWLES: *A Separate Peace*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

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

'I don't really hate Brinker, I don't really hate him, not any more than anybody else.' Leper's swimming eyes cautiously explored me. The wind lifted a sail of snow and billowed it past us. 'It was only—' he drew in his breath so sharply that it made a whistling sound—'the idea of *his* face on a *woman's* body. That's what made me psycho. Ideas like that. I don't know. I guess they must be right. I guess I am psycho. I guess I must be. I must be. Did you ever have ideas like that?'

'No.'

'Would they bother you if you did, if you happened to keep imagining a man's head on a woman's body, or if sometimes the arm of a chair turned into a human arm if you looked at it too long, things like that? Would they bother you?'

I didn't say anything.

'Maybe everybody imagines things like that when they're away from home, really far away, for the first time. Do you think so? The camp I went to first, they called it a 'Reception center,' got us up every morning when it was pitch black, and there was food like the kind we throw out here, and all my clothes were gone and I got this uniform that didn't even smell familiar. All day I wanted to sleep, after we got to Basic Training. I kept falling asleep, all day long, at the lectures we went to, and on the firing range, and everywhere else. But not at night. Next to me there was a man who had a cough that sounded like his stomach was going to come up, one of these times, it sounded like it would come up through his mouth and land with a splatter on the floor. He always faced my way. We did sleep head to foot, but I knew it would land near me. I never slept at night. During the day I couldn't eat this food that should have been thrown away, so I was always hungry except in the Mess Hall. The Mess Hall. The army has the perfect word for everything, did you ever think of that?'

I imperceptibly nodded and shook my head, yes-and-no.

'And the perfect word for me,' he added in a distorted voice, as though his tongue had swollen, 'psycho. I guess I am. I must be. Am I, though, or is the army? Because they turned everything inside out. I couldn't sleep in bed, I had to sleep everywhere else. I couldn't eat in the Mess Hall, I had to eat everywhere else. Everything began to be inside out. And the man next to me at night, coughing himself inside out. That was when things began to change. One day I couldn't make out what was happening to the corporal's face. It kept changing into faces I knew from somewhere else, and then I began to think he looked like me, and then he …' Leper's voice had thickened unrecognizably, 'he changed into a woman, I was looking at him as close as I'm looking at you and his face turned into a woman's face and I started to yell for everybody, I began to yell so that everyone would see it too, I didn't want to be the only one to see a thing like that, I yelled louder and louder to make sure everyone within reach of my voice would hear—you can see there wasn't anything crazy in the way I was thinking, can't you, I had a good reason for everything I did, didn't I—but I couldn't yell soon enough, or loud enough, and when somebody did finally come up to me, it was this man with the cough who slept in the next cot, and he was holding a broom because we had been sweeping out the barracks,

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but I saw right away that it wasn't a broom, it was a man's leg which had been cut off. I remember thinking that he must have been at the hospital helping with an amputation when he heard my yell. You can see there's logic in that.' The crust beneath us continued to crack and as we reached the border of the field the frigid trees also were cracking with the cold. The two sharp groups of noises sounded to my ears like rifles being fired in the distance.

I said nothing, and Leper, having said so much, went on to say more, to speak above the wind and crackings as though his story would never be finished. 'Then they grabbed me and there were arms and legs and heads everywhere and I couldn't tell when any minute—'

'*Shut up!*'

Softer, more timidly, '—when any minute—'

'Do you think I want to hear every gory detail! Shut up! I don't care! I don't care what happened to you, Leper. I don't give a damn! Do you understand that? This has nothing to do with me! Nothing at all! I don't care!'

I turned around and began a clumsy run across the field in a line which avoided his house and aimed toward the road leading back into the town. I left Leper telling his story into the wind. He might tell it forever, I didn't care. I didn't want to hear any more of it. I had already heard too much. What did he mean by telling me a story like that! I didn't want to hear any more of it. Not now or ever. I didn't care because it had nothing to do with me. And I didn't want to hear any more of it. Ever.

[from Chapter 10]

How does Knowles make this conversation between Leper and Gene so disturbing?

Or **16** Gene describes Finny as 'noble'. How far does Knowles persuade you that this judgement is fair?

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GEORGE ORWELL: *1984*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

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

It was nearly eleven hundred, and in the Records Department, where Winston worked, they were dragging the chairs out of the cubicles and grouping them in the centre of the hall, opposite the big telescreen, in preparation for the Two Minutes Hate. Winston was just taking his place in one of the middle rows when two people whom he knew by sight, but had never spoken to, came unexpectedly into the room. One of them was a girl whom he often passed in the corridors. He did not know her name, but he knew that she worked in the Fiction Department. Presumably – since he had sometimes seen her with oily hands and carrying a spanner – she had some mechanical job on one of the novel-writing machines. She was a bold-looking girl, of about twenty-seven, with thick dark hair, a freckled face and swift, athletic movements. A narrow scarlet sash, emblem of the Junior Anti-Sex League, was wound several times round the waist of her overalls, just tightly enough to bring out the shapeliness of her hips. Winston had disliked her from the very first moment of seeing her. He knew the reason. It was because of the atmosphere of hockey-fields and cold baths and community hikes and general clean-mindedness which she managed to carry about with her. He disliked nearly all women, and especially the young and pretty ones. It was always the women, and above all the young ones, who were the most bigoted adherents of the Party, the swallowers of slogans, the amateur spies and nosers-out of unorthodoxy. But this particular girl gave him the impression of being more dangerous than most. Once when they passed in the corridor she had given him a quick sidelong glance which seemed to pierce right into him and for a moment had filled him with black terror. The idea had even crossed his mind that she might be an agent of the Thought Police. That, it was true, was very unlikely. Still, he continued to feel a peculiar uneasiness, which had fear mixed up in it as well as hostility, whenever she was anywhere near him.

The other person was a man named O'Brien, a member of the Inner Party and holder of some post so important and remote that Winston had only a dim idea of its nature. A momentary hush passed over the group of people round the chairs as they saw the black overalls of an Inner Party member approaching. O'Brien was a large, burly man with a thick neck and a coarse, humorous, brutal face. In spite of his formidable appearance he had a certain charm of manner. He had a trick of re-settling his spectacles on his nose which was curiously disarming – in some indefinable way, curiously civilised. It was a gesture which, if anyone had still thought in such terms, might have recalled an eighteenth-century nobleman offering his snuff-box. Winston had seen O'Brien perhaps a dozen times in almost as many years. He felt deeply drawn to him, and not solely because he was intrigued by the contrast between O'Brien's urbane manner and his prizefighter's physique. Much more it was because of a secretly-held belief – or perhaps not even a belief, merely a hope – that O'Brien's political orthodoxy was not perfect. Something in his face suggested it irresistibly. And again, perhaps it was not even unorthodoxy that was written in his face, but simply intelligence. But at any rate he had the appearance of being a person that you could talk to, if somehow you could cheat the

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telescreen and get him alone. Winston had never made the smallest effort to verify this guess: indeed, there was no way of doing so. At this moment O'Brien glanced at his wristwatch, saw that it was nearly eleven hundred and evidently decided to stay in the Records Department until the Two Minutes Hate was over. He took a chair in the same row as Winston, a couple of places away. A small, sandy-haired woman who worked in the next cubicle to Winston was between them. The girl with dark hair was sitting immediately behind.

The next moment a hideous, grinding screech, as of some monstrous machine running without oil, burst from the big telescreen at the end of the room. It was a noise that set one's teeth on edge and bristled the hair at the back of one's neck. The Hate had started.

[from Part 1]

How does Orwell create striking impressions of Julia and O'Brien at this moment in the novel?

Or **18** In what ways does Orwell make Mr Charrington and his shop such a memorable part of the novel?

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ALAN PATON: *Cry, the Beloved Country*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

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

The next morning, after they had eaten at the Mission House, Msimangu and Kumalo set off for the great wide road where the buses run.

– Every bus is here the right bus, said Msimangu.

Kumalo smiled at that, for it was a joke against him and his fear of catching the wrong bus.

– All these buses go to Johannesburg, said Msimangu. You need not fear to take a wrong bus here.

So they took the first bus that came, and it set them down at the place where Kumalo had lost his pound. And then they walked, through many streets full of cars and buses and people, till they reached the bus rank for Alexandra. But here they met an unexpected obstacle, for a man came up to them and said to Msimangu, Are you going to Alexandra, umfundisi?

– Yes, my friend.

– We are here to stop you, umfundisi. Not by force, you see – he pointed – the police are there to prevent that. But by persuasion. If you use this bus you are weakening the cause of the black people. We have determined not to use these buses until the fare is brought back again to fourpence.

– Yes, indeed, I have heard of it

He turned to Kumalo.

– I was very foolish, my friend. I had forgotten that there were no buses; at least I had forgotten the boycott of the buses.

– Our business is very urgent, said Kumalo humbly.

– This boycott is also urgent, said the man politely. They want us to pay sixpence, that is one shilling a day. Six shillings a week, and some of us only get thirty-five or forty shillings.

– Is it far to walk? asked Kumalo.

– It is a long way, umfundisi. Eleven miles.

– That is a long way, for an old man.

– Men as old as you are doing it everyday, umfundisi. And women, and some that are sick, and some crippled, and children. They start walking at four in the morning, and they do not get back till eight at night. They have a bite of food, and their eyes are hardly closed on the pillow before they must stand up again, sometimes to start off with nothing but hot water in their stomachs. I cannot stop you taking a bus, umfundisi, but this is a cause to fight for. If we lose it, then they will have to pay more in Sophiatown and Claremont and Kliptown and Pimville.

– I understand you well. We shall not use the bus.

The man thanked them and went to another would-be traveller.

– That man has a silver tongue, said Kumalo.

– That is the famous Dubula, said Msimangu quietly. A friend of your brother John. But they say – excuse me, my friend – that Tomlinson has the brains, and your brother the voice, but that this man has the heart. He is the one the Government is afraid of, because he himself is not afraid. He seeks nothing for himself. They say he has given up his own work to do this picketing of the buses, and his wife pickets the other bus rank at Alexandra.

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– That is something to be proud of. Johannesburg is a place of wonders.

– They were church people, said Msimangu regretfully, but are so no longer. Like your brother, they say the church has a fine voice, but no deeds. Well, my friend, what do we do now?

– I am willing to walk.

– Eleven miles, and eleven miles back. It is a long journey.

– I am willing. You understand I am anxious, my friend. This Johannesburg – it is no place for a boy to be alone.

– Good. Let us begin then.

So they walked many miles through the European city, up Twist Street to the Clarendon Circle, and down Louis Botha towards Orange Grove. And the cars and the lorries never ceased, going one way or the other. After a long time a car stopped and a white man spoke to them.

– Where are you two going? he asked.

– To Alexandra, sir, said Msimangu, taking off his hat.

– I thought you might be. Climb in.

That was a great help to them, and at the turn-off to Alexandra they expressed their thanks.

– It is a long journey, said the white man. And I know that you have no buses.

They stood to watch him go on, but he did not go on. He swung round, and was soon on the road back to Johannesburg.

– Huh, said Msimangu, that is something to marvel at.

It was still a long way to Twenty-Third Avenue, and as they passed one avenue after the other, Msimangu explained that Alexandra was outside the boundaries of Johannesburg, and was a place where a black man could buy land and own a house. But the streets were not cared for, and there were no lights, and so great was the demand for accommodation that every man if he could, built rooms in his yard and sub-let them to others. Many of these rooms were the hide-outs for thieves and robbers, and there was much prostitution and brewing of illicit liquor.

[from Book 1, Chapter 8]

In what ways does Paton make this conversation between Stephen and Msimangu so revealing?

Or **20** How does Paton make Absalom's trial so compelling?

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from *Stories of Ourselves*

Remember to support your ideas with details from the writing.

Either **21** Read this passage from *Secrets* (by Bernard MacLaverty), and then answer the question that follows it:

He could hear his aunt's familiar puffing on the short stairs to her room. He spread the elastic band wide with his fingers. It snapped and the letters scattered. He pushed them into their pigeon hole and quickly closed the desk flap. The brass screeched loudly and clicked shut. At that moment his aunt came into the room.

'What are you doing, boy?' she snapped.

'Nothing.' He stood with the keys in his hand. She walked to the bureau and opened it. The letters sprung out in an untidy heap.

'You have been reading my letters,' she said quietly. Her mouth was tight with the words and her eyes blazed. The boy could say nothing. She struck him across the side of the face.

'Get out,' she said. 'Get out of my room.'

The boy, the side of his face stinging and red, put the keys on the table on his way out. When he reached the door she called him. He stopped, his hand on the handle.

'You are dirt,' she hissed, 'and always will be dirt. I shall remember this till the day I die.'

Even though it was a warm evening there was a fire in the large fireplace. His mother had asked him to light it so that she could clear out Aunt Mary's stuff. The room could then be his study, she said. She came in and seeing him at the table said, 'I hope I'm not disturbing you.'

'No.'

She took the keys from her pocket, opened the bureau and began burning papers and cards. She glanced quickly at each one before she flicked it onto the fire.

'Who was Brother Benignus?' he asked.

His mother stopped sorting and said, 'I don't know. Your aunt kept herself very much to herself. She got books from him through the post occasionally. That much I do know.'

She went on burning the cards. They built into strata, glowing red and black. Now and again she broke up the pile with the poker, sending showers of sparks up the chimney. He saw her come to the letters. She took off the elastic band and put it to one side with the useful things and began dealing the envelopes into the fire. She opened one and read quickly through it, then threw it on top of the burning pile.

'Mama,' he said.

'Yes?'

'Did Aunt Mary say anything about me?'

'What do you mean?'

'Before she died – did she say anything?'

'Not that I know of – the poor thing was too far gone to speak, God rest her.' She went on burning, lifting the corners of the letters with the poker to let the flames underneath them.

When he felt a hardness in his throat he put his head down on his books. Tears came into his eyes for the first time since she had died and he cried

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silently into the crook of his arm for the woman who had been his maiden aunt, his teller of tales, that she might forgive him.

What does MacLaverty's writing make you feel as you read the ending to the story?

Or **22** Explore the ways in which Bradbury powerfully builds tension in *There Will Come Soft Rains*.

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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.

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1

Morris captures a single, ordinary moment, a father slapping his small son, and opens it up so that we feel two very different kinds of hurt at once. The boy's pain is loud, physical and immediate; the father's is silent, hidden and far more complicated. What makes the poem so powerful, I think, is the way Morris lets us see the scene first through the child's eyes and then slowly reveals the man behind "that mask", so that by the end our sympathy is divided and deepened.

The opening sentence is a long, breathless accumulation of the boy's symptoms. Morris addresses the child directly as "you", which gives the poem an intimate, tender tone even while it describes rage. The "mouth contorting in brief spite and / Hurt" captures how quickly a three-year-old's feelings change, and the enjambment that leaves "Hurt" stranded at the start of the next line makes the real emotion beneath the spite land with a jolt. The word "metamorphosed" is striking: laughter does not simply stop but is transformed into "howls", an animal word that suggests how completely the child is overtaken. The contrast between a frame "so recently relaxed now tight" shows the suddenness of the change, and the "bright eyes / Swimming tears, splashing your bare feet" is almost comic in its exaggeration. Those "bare feet" make him seem small and vulnerable, and the sense of tears splashing to the floor gently mocks the drama while still taking it seriously. Yet Morris also shows the child's cunning: he stands "angling" for "a moment's hint / Of guilt or sorrow". The fishing metaphor suggests a deliberate attempt to hook the father's conscience, so the boy is not merely a victim but a little strategist.

The middle of the poem moves inside the boy's imagination, and here Morris is

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both funny and moving. To the child the father has become "The ogre", "that grim giant", "a colossal cruel". The heavy alliteration of hard "g" and "c" sounds makes the father loom monstrously, and the use of "cruel" as a noun turns him into a fairy tale villain rather than a person. The allusion to Jack and the Beanstalk, "Chopping clean the tree he's scrambling down", shows the child's fantasy of revenge, and the pleasure he takes in the ogre being "dead / At last" is both shocking and perfectly true to how small children feel. The pause created by the line break before "At last" lets us hear his satisfaction.

The turn comes with "You cannot understand, not yet". The phrase "not yet" is quietly loving, implying that one day, perhaps as a father himself, he will. Morris then reverses the imagery of pain: the boy's "easy tears" can "scald" his father. The verb suggests burning water, so the tears that seem harmless are actually what wound the adult most. The father's "wavering" lies "hidden behind that mask", and the word "mask" reveals that the "grim giant" is a performance. Morris calls him "This fierce man", but the fierceness is immediately undercut by what he "longs" to do: "lift you, curb your sadness / With piggy-back or bull-fight, anything". The list of games and the desperate "anything" show how badly he wants to undo the slap. His restraint, because he "dare not ruin the lessons you should learn", presents discipline as a painful act of love rather than cruelty.

The final line stands alone: "You must not make a plaything of the rain." It sounds like the very rule the boy broke, perhaps playing in a storm, but it also works as a metaphor. "Rain" echoes the tears, so the father may be warning the child, and himself, not to use crying as a game. The calm, firm monosyllables end the poem with authority, yet after everything we have learned, we hear the effort and tenderness behind that voice. Morris powerfully shows that the person who seems to feel nothing may be feeling most of all.

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2

Millay's sonnet is moving because of the dignity with which the speaker faces the end of a love affair. For twelve lines she refuses pity, insisting that the loss of love is as natural and inevitable as nightfall or the turning tide, and only in the final couplet does she admit the one thing that truly hurts: that her heart cannot keep up with what her mind already knows. The poem's restraint is what gives that late admission its force.

The most striking feature is the anaphora of "Pity me not", repeated three times in the first five lines and continued by the parallel "Nor that" clauses. The repetition sounds proud and controlled, almost like a ritual, as if the speaker is steadying herself by saying it again and again. Yet the very insistence makes us suspect the opposite: someone who needs to repeat that she does not want pity may be closer to grief than she admits. Millay lets us feel the pressure beneath the composed surface.

Each refusal is attached to an image of natural decline. The light of day "no longer walks the sky", a gentle personification that makes daylight seem like a person who has quietly left. "Beauties passed away / From field to thicket as the year goes by" suggests the fading of summer into autumn, while "the waning of the moon" and "the ebbing tide" add cycles of shrinking and withdrawal. The soft sounds, the long vowels and the steady iambic rhythm give these lines a calm, elegiac quality. Crucially, Millay then places human love in the same list: "a man's desire is hushed so soon, / And you no longer look with love on me." The verb "hushed" makes the end of desire quiet and undramatic, and the plain, monosyllabic final line of the octave is heartbreaking in its simplicity. By setting it beside sunset and the seasons, the speaker tries to persuade herself that this, too,

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is just nature.

The sestet opens with a firm statement: "This have I known always". The inverted word order sounds weighty and wise, and the colon introduces her definition of love, which "is no more / Than the wide blossom which the wind assails". The phrase "no more / Than" diminishes love, yet the images she chooses are beautiful and powerful: a "wide" blossom, "the great tide". Love may be temporary, but it was magnificent. The tide "treads the shifting shore", and the alliteration of "sh" sounds creates the hiss of water, while "shifting" reminds us that nothing in love stays fixed. The line "Strewing fresh wreckage gathered in the gales" is the most violent in the poem. "Wreckage" and "gales" suggest storms and destruction, and "fresh" implies that the damage is recent and still raw. Here the calm natural imagery breaks into something more painful, as if her real feelings are breaking through.

The final couplet then turns, as a Shakespearean couplet often does, and overturns everything before it. After all the "Pity me not" lines, she finally asks: "Pity me that the heart is slow to learn / When the swift mind beholds at every turn." The contrast between the "slow" heart and the "swift" mind is the emotional centre of the poem. Intellectually she has always understood that love ends, and the mind "beholds" this truth "at every turn", everywhere in nature. But understanding does not stop her from hurting. This is deeply moving because it is so honest and so universal: most readers will recognise the experience of knowing something to be true and still being unable to accept it.

The sonnet form itself mirrors this struggle. Its tight structure and regular rhyme represent the control she tries to keep, and the rhyming couplet allows the final confession to land with quiet finality. Millay moves us not through outbursts of

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grief but through composure that finally cracks, leaving us with a speaker who is wise, proud and, at last, vulnerable.

3 Jennings writes a hymn to the natural world in which every creature simply and perfectly is what it is, obeying a rhythm of desire and rest. The poem's power comes from the way its words and images build from stillness to a pounding climax and then sink back into calm, before the final line quietly sets man apart. The praise of creation becomes, in the end, a gentle question about our own place in it.

The opening stanza is spare and almost sacred. "That one bird, one star, / The one flash of the tiger's eye" repeats "one" three times, isolating each thing as unique and complete. The images range across air, sky and earth, so that in a few words Jennings suggests the whole of creation. These things "Purely assert what they are", and the adverb "Purely" implies that they have no pretence or self-doubt. The verb "testify" carries religious and legal weight, as if nature were a witness giving evidence of God or of some underlying design, and it is done "Without ceremony", needing no ritual or explanation.

In the second stanza Jennings repeats "Testify" across the stanza break, linking the stanzas as one continuous act of praise, and defines what is being testified to: "order" and "rule". The examples are of timing and pattern: birds that "mate at one time only", a sky "for a certain time, full / Of birds", the moon "sometimes cut thinly". The enjambment of "full / Of birds" lets the line spill over just as the sky overflows, and "cut thinly" is a delicate, precise image of the crescent moon, as if creation were carefully crafted. The tone here is calm and wondering, and the regular rhyme of "rule" and "full" reflects the orderliness she describes.

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The third and fourth stanzas change the energy dramatically. The tiger is "trapped in the cage of his skin", a striking metaphor that suggests his own body and instincts confine him: he cannot be anything other than a tiger. He "rests" but is "Watchful", full of coiled power, waiting "For the blood to pound, the drums to begin". The drums suggest something primitive and ceremonial, and the heavy, plosive sounds of "blood" and "pound" give the lines a physical beat. When "the tigress' shadow casts / A darkness over him", desire arrives as something overwhelming and mysterious. The list "a passion, a scent" moves from emotion to pure sensation. Then the repetition of "turning, turning" makes the whole world seem to spin in the cycle of seasons, and the season "Sieves earth to its one sure element". The image of sieving suggests that nature filters everything down to one essential truth, perhaps the drive to create new life. The stanza climaxes with "the blood beats beyond reason", where the alliteration of "b" sounds is like a heartbeat and "beyond reason" shows that this instinct is not thought but felt.

The final stanza falls into peace with the single word "Then quiet". The birds are "folding their wings", a soft, domestic image of completion, and "the season sinks to satisfied things", where the sibilance creates a hushed, contented sound. The "new moon waiting for years to be stared at here" introduces human watchers for the first time and hints that creation continues long after any individual. Yet the last line is deliberately different: "Man with his mind ajar." It is short and set apart, and its half rhyme with "here" never quite closes, just as the mind itself does not. The image of a mind "ajar", like a half open door, is powerfully ambiguous. It may suggest that humans, unlike the tiger, are not fully satisfied or complete; our reason means we cannot simply "assert what" we are. Or it may suggest openness, a mind left slightly open to wonder and to whatever lies beyond the natural order. Either way, Jennings makes us feel both the beauty of creatures

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that live purely by instinct and the restless, questioning nature of human beings, who can praise creation but never entirely belong to it.

4 Constantine makes a ferry crossing to Piraeus memorable precisely because, in one sense, nothing happens: the dolphins never come. What he conveys is not a sighting but a shared longing, almost religious in its intensity, and the strange, quiet disappointment that follows. The poem's power lies in the way it makes ordinary tourists into pilgrims and then lets the hoped for miracle exist only in the imagination.

The opening is detached and observational. The impersonal "One noticed" keeps the speaker at a distance, and the long, unpunctuated first sentence follows the passengers as they rise "with serious / Looks and no acknowledgement of a common purpose". There is gentle humour in this: everyone is going to the bows for the same reason, yet nobody admits it, as if their hope were slightly embarrassing. Once there, they "lose / Every other wish", a phrase which suggests how completely the desire takes hold. Constantine illustrates this with vivid individual portraits. "Even the lovers / Turned their desires on the sea", which implies that this longing is stronger even than romantic love. The "fat man / Hung with equipment to photograph the occasion" is almost comic, yet he "Stared like a saint, through sad bi-focals". The simile transforms a figure of fun into someone devout, and "sad" hints at a deeper yearning in him. Others, "Hopeless themselves, looked to the children", believing that innocence would grant the vision: "they / Would see dolphins if anyone would."

Constantine captures the agony of waiting through uncertainty and questions. The passengers are "Undecided whether a flat calm were favourable" or whether a

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rougher sea might help, and they wonder "Were gulls a sign". Like people reading omens, they search the world for meaning. The phrase "Every face / After its character implored the sea" is especially memorable: "implored" is a word of desperate prayer, and "After its character" suggests that each person longs in their own way. The religious language then becomes explicit: "All, unaccustomed, wanted epiphany". "Unaccustomed" implies that these are not normally spiritual people, yet here they crave a revelation, "Praying the sky would clang" and the sea "Reverberate with cymbal, gong and drum". The loud, percussive sounds express how badly they want the ordinary world to break open into wonder. The "abused Aegean" adds a darker note, reminding us that this sea has been polluted and exploited, which perhaps makes the hope for something pure even more poignant.

At the "climax of our longing" the speaker shifts from "One" to "We", and the poem becomes communal and conditional. "Had they then / On the waves" come, he imagines them "Smiling, snub-nosed, domed like satyrs", the playful simile linking the dolphins to the mythical creatures of ancient Greece. The breathless "oh" and the long, flowing sentence imitate the joy that "should have" followed: strangers would have "laughed and lifted the children up / Stranger to stranger". The dolphins would have "left their element", "centred / On grace, and heavily and warm re-entered". The words "heavily and warm" are wonderfully physical, giving weight and life to creatures we never actually see. It is a moving paradox that the most vivid part of the poem describes something that did not happen.

Then reality returns abruptly with "But soon". The ferry is "among the great tankers, under their chains / In black water". The industrial images and the darkness of "black water" contrast harshly with the imagined grace, and "chains" suggests a world of commerce that binds rather than frees. The short, blunt sentence "We had not seen the dolphins" is devastatingly plain. They "woke,

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blinking", as if the whole voyage had been a dream. The ending mirrors the beginning: just as there was "no acknowledgement" of their purpose, there is now "no admission of disappointment", and with "Eyes cast down" they disperse into the city. This circular structure makes the experience memorable because it is so human: a brief moment in which strangers shared a hope for something beautiful, and then politely pretended it had never mattered.

5 Duffy creates a vivid and comic portrait of the Head of English entirely through her own voice. The poem is a dramatic monologue in which the speaker introduces a visiting poet to her class, and while she believes she is being gracious and authoritative, every line reveals her snobbery, insecurity and hostility to the very thing she is supposed to celebrate. The impression is so sharp because she condemns herself without ever realising it.

From the start her welcome is double edged. "Today we have a poet in the class. / A real live poet with a published book." The phrase "real live" sounds as if the poet were an exotic animal on display, and the short, end-stopped sentences give her speech a brisk, managerial rhythm. She invites the girls to "Notice the inkstained fingers", treating the poet as an object, and the cliché "verse hot from the press" suggests a rather old fashioned, romantic idea of what poets are. Her uncertainty about modern writing is clear in the dismissive "Who knows."

Duffy shows her controlling nature through a stream of imperatives. The girls must show appreciation "by clapping. Not too loud." The immediate qualification undercuts the praise, as if enthusiasm itself were dangerous. "Sit up straight and listen" belongs to a classroom of discipline rather than creativity. Her comment that "not all poems, / sadly, rhyme these days" is especially revealing. The

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enjambment isolates "sadly", and the clipped "Still. Never mind." sounds like a sigh of grudging tolerance, implying that she believes the poet's work is inferior to traditional verse.

Her pettiness and materialism appear when she reminds the girls to "raise some questions. / After all, we're paying forty pounds." The rhyme of "bounds" with "pounds" is almost comic, making her obsession with value for money sound neat and self satisfied.

The speaker's insecurity becomes most obvious when she tries to compete with the guest. "Season of mists and so on and so forth" quotes the opening of Keats's "To Autumn" but trails off carelessly, suggesting a superficial, textbook knowledge of poetry. She then boasts, "I've written quite a bit of poetry myself", and adds that she is "doing Kipling with the Lower Fourth". Kipling represents a traditional, patriotic, rhyming poetry, and the reference shows how conservative her taste is. There is something both funny and slightly pitiable here: she seems to feel threatened by a real poet and needs to assert her own status.

Her fear of new ideas is captured in one of the poem's sharpest jokes: "Open a window at the back. We don't / want winds of change about the place." The literal request for air turns into a metaphor, and the phrase "winds of change" reveals that she sees the poet as a dangerous influence who might unsettle her pupils. The final line of that stanza, "Convince us that there's something we don't know", is spoken almost as a challenge, rhyming neatly with "Off we go", and suggests that she does not believe the poet has anything to teach her.

The last stanza shows her reaction after the reading. "Well. Really." The two single word sentences suggest disapproval or shock, implying that the poet's work has

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offended her. She dismisses the girls with "Run along now", and her comment that the reading gave "an insight to an outside view" sounds like a polite way of saying the poet does not belong. The flat "Applause will do" contrasts with the earlier request for clapping, as if she is now rationing gratitude. Most tellingly, she offers "Lunch / in the hall?" and then withdraws it at once: "Unfortunately, / I have to dash. Tracey will show you out." The empty courtesy and the delegation to a pupil complete the picture of a woman who wants the poet gone as quickly as possible.

Duffy creates a speaker who is pompous, defensive and narrow minded, yet also human in her insecurity. Through tone, broken rhythms and ironic detail, the poem exposes how teachers who should nurture a love of poetry can stifle it, and we laugh at the Head of English while recognising how much she reveals.

6 In The 'Darling' Letters Duffy explores how old love letters preserve passion that has since died, and how rereading them exposes the distance between who we were and who we have become. The poem is moving because it treats these letters both as embarrassing relics and as something we cannot bear to destroy, so that the change in relationships over time is felt as a kind of bereavement.

The opening establishes secrecy and pain. "Some keep them in shoeboxes away from the light", as though the letters were fragile or shameful, and the "sore memories blinking out as the lid lifts" suggests memories that have been kept in darkness and now flinch at exposure. The adjective "sore" implies a wound that has never fully healed. The letters have "their own recklessness written all over them", a clever idiom that is also literal: the past passion is visible in the handwriting itself. Duffy then begins to weave fragments quoted from the letters into the poem, starting with "My own", whose trailing ellipsis leaves the endearment

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incomplete, as though the possessiveness of love has been cut off.

Duffy next shows how intimacy loses its meaning over time. "Private jokes, no longer comprehended, pull their punchlines, / fall flat in the sad gaps between endearments." The jokes are personified as failing performers, and the plosive "p" sounds in "Private", "pull" and "punchlines" create a deflating effect. The "sad gaps" are both the white space between words on the page and the emotional gaps that have grown between the lovers. The quoted lines "What / are you wearing?" and "Don't ever change." become painfully ironic: the flirtatious question now seems absurd, and the plea for permanence is exactly what time has refused. Everything has changed.

The poem then traces the typical shape of such relationships with brutal economy: "They start with Darling; end in recriminations, / absence, sense of loss." The semicolon marks the split between beginning and end, and the list moves from anger to emptiness, as if the relationship fades out word by word. Yet Duffy immediately shows that feeling survives: "the fist's bud flowers / into trembling". The image of a clenched hand opening like a flower suggests both tenderness and vulnerability, while "trembling" reveals that the reader is still affected. The fingers "see / the future then", an idea that is especially poignant because the future imagined in the letters never arrived. "Always" stands as another broken promise.

Duffy then deepens the imagery of death. "Nobody burns them, / the Darling letters, stiff in their cardboard coffins." The shoeboxes have become coffins, and "stiff" suggests a corpse, so that the relationships are presented as dead but unburied. The refusal to burn them shows how we cling to the past even when it hurts. The pet name "Babykins" is deliberately cringeworthy, and Duffy captures the shame of remembering such names: they "make us blush, as though we'd

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murdered / someone, under an alias, long ago." This surprising simile is both funny and dark. The person we were in love seems like a stranger with a false name, and perhaps we did "murder" something, the love itself or our former selves. The quotation "I'll die / without you" is then answered by the bleak single word "Die." Placed at the end of a sentence and repeated, it mocks the melodrama of the original promise, since the writer did not die, yet it also hints that something did.

The final lines are the most moving. "Once in a while, alone, / we take them out to read again". The word "alone" emphasises that the shared love has become a solitary memory, and the shift to "we" includes the reader in this universal ritual. The poem ends with "the heart thudding / like a spade on buried bones." This simile completes the extended metaphor of burial: rereading is like digging up a grave. The heavy, monosyllabic rhythm imitates the heartbeat and the strike of the spade, and the alliteration of "b" in "buried bones" makes the ending resonate. Duffy suggests that although relationships change and die, the feelings they created remain buried inside us, painful and alive whenever we return to them.

7 Brontë makes us feel intensely sorry for Jane in this passage because we experience the terror of the red-room from inside the mind of a frightened ten year old child, and then watch the adults who should comfort her respond with suspicion, disgust and cruelty. The contrast between the depth of her suffering and the coldness of those around her makes her seem utterly alone and powerless.

The passage begins with a heartbreaking hope. Jane "never doubted" that if Mr Reed "had been alive he would have treated me kindly". The insistent repetition of "doubted not" and "never doubted" shows how desperately she clings to the idea that someone, somewhere, would have loved her, and it is painful that the only

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kind relative she can imagine is a dead man. Her imagination then turns this comfort into horror. The setting is oppressive: the "white bed and overshadowed walls" and the "dimly gleaming mirror" towards which she turns "a fascinated eye" create a gothic atmosphere. She recalls stories of the dead "revisiting the earth to punish the perjured and avenge the oppressed", and the alliteration of "p" sounds gives the idea a solemn, ritual weight. We feel sorry for her because she sees herself as one of "the oppressed", and the narrative has given us every reason to agree.

Brontë shows a child struggling bravely to control her fear. She "wiped my tears and hushed my sobs", fearful that grief might "waken a preternatural voice to comfort me". The paradox that comfort itself would be "terrible if realised" is deeply sad: Jane is so starved of kindness that even pity from a ghost would terrify her. Her efforts to be "firm", to lift her head and "look boldly round the dark room", show courage, which makes her eventual collapse more pitiable.

The moment of the light is narrated with great skill. The older narrator calmly explains that it was "in all likelihood, a gleam from a lantern", but the child, "prepared as my mind was for horror", reads it as "a herald of some coming vision from another world". This dual perspective lets us understand the rational explanation while still feeling the child's terror. The rhythm then accelerates through a series of short clauses separated by semicolons: "My heart beat thick, my head grew hot; a sound filled my ears". The physical details, "oppressed, suffocated", and the climax "endurance broke down" make her panic overwhelming and real. Her "wild, involuntary cry" is not a trick but a genuine breakdown.

Our sympathy grows as the adults arrive. Bessie at least asks whether she is "ill" and does not "snatch" her hand away, a small kindness that shows how little Jane

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is used to receiving. Abbot, however, instantly accuses her: "She has screamed out on purpose", "I know her naughty tricks." The injustice is obvious because we have just witnessed her real terror. Mrs Reed's entrance, "her cap flying wide, her gown rustling stormily", makes her seem like a gathering storm. Her language is cold and formal: "I abhor artifice", "it is my duty". The idea that she will release Jane only "on condition of perfect submission and stillness" reveals a desire to crush the child's spirit. Jane's desperate plea, "Oh, aunt! have pity! Forgive me!", is broken off with the single word "Silence!", and the interruption of "I shall be killed if" emphasises that her voice is literally cut short.

The older narrator's reflection that she was "a precocious actress in her eyes" and a "compound of virulent passions, mean spirit, and dangerous duplicity" shows how completely she has been misjudged. The adverb "sincerely" is fair to Mrs Reed, but it makes the situation even sadder: there is no hope of being understood. Finally Mrs Reed "abruptly thrust me back and locked me in, without further parley", and the harsh verbs convey physical violence. The passage ends with "unconsciousness closed the scene", a theatrical metaphor that ironically echoes the accusation of acting. Brontë leaves us with a child who has been pushed beyond endurance, and we pity her deeply because her suffering is real, unseen and unjustly punished.

8

Brontë makes Grace Poole mysterious by presenting her almost entirely through Jane's limited and mistaken point of view. Grace is a figure who seems to explain the strange events at Thornfield and yet never quite fits them, so that for much of the novel she is both the answer to the mystery and its most puzzling part. Her ordinariness, set against the extraordinary things attributed to her, is what keeps the reader uneasy.

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Grace first appears in connection with a sound. When Mrs Fairfax shows Jane the third storey, Jane hears a laugh that she describes as "distinct, formal, mirthless", and the strange contrast between a laugh and the word "mirthless" creates an eerie effect. Mrs Fairfax calmly calls out for Grace, and the woman who emerges is disappointingly plain: a square, solid, red haired servant with a hard face, who might be the least romantic figure imaginable. Brontë deliberately creates a gap between the gothic sound and the dull appearance of the person blamed for it. Mrs Fairfax's casual explanation that Grace sews and helps the housemaid sounds reasonable, but the reader, like Jane, senses that it does not account for what has been heard. Over the following weeks Jane hears the laugh again and sees Grace come and go with a pot of porter, which adds to the impression of something hidden and secretive on the upper floor.

The mystery deepens dramatically on the night of the fire in Rochester's room. Jane hears a "demoniac" laugh outside her door, finds Rochester's bed curtains ablaze and saves his life. Rochester, after visiting the third storey, seems to accept that Grace was responsible, and asks Jane to say nothing. Brontë then creates one of the most unsettling scenes in the novel. The next day Jane finds Grace calmly sewing rings onto new curtains, perfectly composed, with no sign of guilt. Grace even questions Jane about whether she heard anything and advises her to bolt her door at night. This is mysterious in two ways. Her calmness seems almost sinister if she is guilty, yet her ordinary, practical manner makes guilt seem impossible. Jane is baffled that Rochester keeps such a dangerous woman in his house, and this leads her to wild speculation, even wondering briefly whether Grace has some secret hold over him from the past, before dismissing the idea when she remembers Grace's plain face. Brontë uses Jane's confusion to keep the reader guessing.

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The gossip of the servants adds a further layer. Jane overhears Leah and the cook discussing how well Grace is paid, and hinting that her post is one few people could fill, as though she holds a secret that others are not trusted with. This suggests that Grace is not simply a seamstress, and her high wages become a clue the reader can try to decode. When Mason is attacked and bitten during his visit, Rochester again blames Grace, and when the wedding veil is torn in the night, Rochester once more insists that it must have been Grace Poole. Each time the explanation is given, it becomes less convincing, and Brontë builds suspense through repetition.

The final revelation, when the wedding is halted and Rochester takes everyone to the third storey, transforms Grace completely. She is not the source of the violence but Bertha's keeper, a woman paid to guard Rochester's secret wife. Her calmness now looks like professional steadiness, and her habit of drinking explains how Bertha sometimes escapes, which is also how the fire that later destroys Thornfield happens. In retrospect, Brontë has used Grace as a decoy: a plausible, solid figure onto whom the novel's gothic horrors could be displaced.

Grace remains mysterious even after the truth is known, because we learn so little about her inner life. She is loyal, secretive and silent, a woman who shares Rochester's burden without explanation. By keeping her at the edge of the story and filtering her through Jane's suspicion, Brontë turns an ordinary servant into the most enigmatic presence in Thornfield.

9

In this passage Desai takes Deven on an emotional journey from rapturous joy to humiliating terror in the space of a few moments. She reveals his thoughts and feelings vividly by moving closely inside his mind, by charting his physical

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reactions, and by contrasting the elevated world of poetry he longs for with the coarse, political quarrel he finds himself trapped in. The effect is both comic and painful, and it captures the timid, idealistic nature at the heart of his character.

At first Deven is a silent observer, and Desai makes us see Nur through his admiring eyes. Nur's "shaggy head" appears "severe and granolithic", a striking adjective that suggests something monumental and carved in stone, as though Deven sees him as a figure of ancient, enduring greatness. When Nur dismisses the argument about "Pakistan and Hindustan, of Hindi and Urdu" and speaks instead of "time", Deven is thrilled. Desai describes how his "heart gave a series of knocks", and he feels "a sense of victory and triumph", as if Nur's success were his own.

Desai then lets us follow Deven's thoughts as they develop into a moment of genuine insight. The free indirect style, "That, he saw, was the glory of poets", brings us close to his excitement. He realises that he loves poetry "not because it made things immediate but because it removed them to a position where they became bearable". This is a revealing self discovery: Deven is a man who fears the rawness of life, and poetry offers him a safe distance from "frightening and inexplicable experiences like time and death". The phrase "in safety" tells us much about his timid temperament. His joy makes "his heart beat a tattoo", a vivid image of drumming that conveys how physically overwhelmed he is by this intellectual pleasure.

The turning point is sudden and shocking. Deven looks up to see "to his alarm Nur pointing at him", and the sense that Nur "had all along been aware of him in that dark corner" makes him feel exposed, as if he had been hiding. Nur's words, "Through his throat, my words will flow", are grandiose and possessive, turning

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Deven into a mere vessel. Deven's response is "such an expression of terror that those who noticed laughed", and the laughter of the crowd adds humiliation to his fear.

Desai then reveals his inner collapse. He feels that Nur "had noticed his childish moment of satisfaction and decided maliciously to wreck it". The word "childish" shows Deven's own embarrassment at his earlier joy, while "maliciously" suggests his sense of betrayal. In a powerful image, "All his joy and the regard and the honour he had accorded Nur dispersed as if over the ledge into the night." The long, accumulating list followed by the image of falling into darkness makes the loss feel complete and irretrievable. Deven is distressed that the "sublime concept of time" has been allowed "to dwindle into the mere politics of language again", and the contrast between "sublime" and "mere" reveals how much he values the ideal over the practical.

His fear is sharpened by his awareness of his own position. He thinks that he "ought not to have stayed", being "a Hindu and a teacher of Hindi", and that he "had always kept away from the political angle of languages". The short, blunt sentence "He began to sweat with fear" makes his terror physical and undignified.

Nur's mockery intensifies his humiliation. The "small bloodshot eyes" make Nur seem menacing, and the rapid questions, "Forgotten your Urdu? Forgotten my verse?", attack Deven's loyalty. The sneering list of "Safe, simple Hindi language, safe comfortable ideas" turns the very safety Deven had just celebrated in poetry into an insult.

The passage ends with Deven's feeble reply: "I am no poet, only a teacher". The verb "mumbled" and the final words "but no one heard" are painfully apt. Desai

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leaves us with a man whose voice is literally lost, which captures his feelings of inadequacy and anticipates his role throughout the novel as someone who longs to be close to greatness but is never quite heard.

10 For much of the novel Desai seems to invite us to share Deven's distaste for Imtiaz Begum. Because we see her almost entirely through his eyes, she first appears as a shrill, scheming intruder in Nur's household, the woman who drags the great poet away from his art. Yet Desai quietly undermines this view, and by the end I found that my sympathy had shifted a long way towards her, because the novel exposes how unfairly she has been judged by the very men who claim to love poetry.

Our first impressions are deliberately unflattering. Deven learns that Imtiaz Begum was once a dancing girl, a courtesan from the bazaar, and the respectable, timid lecturer from Mirpore cannot think of her without a shudder of disapproval. She is presented as loud, demanding and theatrical, quarrelling with Safiya Begum, Nur's first wife, so that the house echoes with the jealous noise of two women competing for a fading man. When she lies on her bed complaining of illness and calling for attention, Desai lets us suspect, as Deven does, that she is performing, and her constant appetite for money and admirers makes her seem a parasite on Nur's reputation. At this stage it is hard to feel much for her at all.

The scene of her own poetry recital, held in Nur's house, is the turning point, although Deven does not recognise it as one. Her admirers crowd round her and applaud, while Nur sulks, drinks and is ignored. Deven sees only vulgarity and the humiliation of his hero, and he assumes that her success must be a fraud bought with charm. Desai, however, allows the reader to notice what Deven cannot: that

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Imtiaz Begum is herself a poet, who has had to fight for an audience in a world that will grant one to an ageing male master but treats a woman with a past as a curiosity. The irony is sharp. Deven worships Urdu poetry as something sacred and dying, yet when a living Urdu poet stands in front of him he refuses to listen because she is a woman.

It is her letter near the end of the novel that most powerfully earns our sympathy. Writing to Deven, she enclosed her own poems and challenged him to read them, accusing him of seeing her only as Nur's disreputable wife and of never once imagining that she might have talent. The letter is angry, bitter and proud, but its accusations are hard to dismiss, because everything we have watched Deven do confirms them. Desai gives her, at last, a voice that is not filtered through his prejudices, and the effect is to make us reread the whole novel. Her shrillness now seems less like vanity than the desperation of a gifted woman who has been dismissed all her life. Deven's reaction, in which he feels guilty yet still cannot bring himself to take her work seriously, implicates him, and perhaps the reader too, in her neglect.

Desai does not, however, turn her into a simple victim. Imtiaz Begum can be manipulative and cruel, and her treatment of Nur, whom she exploits for status even as she resents his fame, is not admirable. Her letter is also partly self-serving, and she can be as mercenary as Safiya Begum in her dealings with Deven. This complexity is important: Desai seems less interested in making us like her than in making us understand how a woman with no secure place in a male literary culture might become hard, loud and grasping in order to survive.

How far, then, do we sympathise? At first very little, because Desai traps us inside Deven's narrow perspective. Yet by revealing her poetry and her grievances,

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Desai shows that Deven's contempt says more about him than about her. I finished the novel feeling considerable sympathy for Imtiaz Begum, not because she is good, but because she is one of the few characters who tells Deven the truth about himself, and because her talent, like Urdu itself in the novel, is left unheard.

11 Dickens makes this first meeting memorable by setting two utterly opposed kinds of hypocrisy side by side: Bounderby's loud, boastful false humility and Harthouse's smooth, idle insincerity. The comedy of their exchange is delicious, but it darkens as soon as Louisa enters, because Dickens makes us see her, for the first time, through the eyes of a man who regards her as an interesting new amusement.

Bounderby's speech is a masterpiece of self-display. He insists on "a full understanding" with Harthouse, which really means forcing his own legend on him, and his self-description as "a bit of dirty riff-raff, and a genuine scrap of tag, rag, and bobtail" is so extravagant that it becomes a boast. The alliteration and the comic list make his humble origins sound like a trophy. Dickens exposes the contradiction through repetition: "I am as proud as you are. I am just as proud as you are." The insistence betrays insecurity, and the pompous phrase "asserted my independence in a proper manner" turns a simple greeting into a little speech. The comedy peaks when, after all this, he finally comes to "how do you find yourself", as if ordinary politeness can only be reached after a lecture on his own greatness.

Harthouse, by contrast, barely speaks, and Dickens makes his silence sinister. His interest in Bounderby is "exalted" by the boast, "Or, so he told him", and that dry final sentence quietly reveals that everything Harthouse says is performance. His answers are reported indirectly, which makes them seem weightless, and his

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flattery is effortlessly absurd: he praises the "salubrious air of Coketown", the smoke-filled town that the novel elsewhere presents as choked with soot. When Bounderby offers to introduce his wife, Harthouse replies, "you anticipate my dearest wishes", an exaggerated courtesy that is both mocking and, we may suspect, ominously true. Dickens calls him "Jem", a casual nickname that suits his careless, gentlemanly ease.

The portrait of Louisa is the emotional centre of the passage. Dickens builds it from a chain of paradoxes: "so constrained, and yet so careless; so reserved, and yet so watchful; so cold and proud, and yet so sensitively ashamed". The balanced, repeated "and yet" mirrors the division inside her, a woman whose feelings have been trained out of her by her father's system but have not quite died. Her shame at her "husband's braggart humility" is felt physically, "as if every example of it were a cut or a blow", a simile that hints at how painful her marriage is. Her face is "so locked up" that her expression cannot be guessed, and she "baffled all penetration". This is memorable partly because Harthouse treats her as a puzzle to solve, and the slang "going in" suggests a hunter or gambler sizing up a challenge. The reader, who knows how lonely Louisa is, feels uneasy at the danger she is in.

Dickens then turns to the room itself, and the description becomes satirical. There is "no mute sign of a woman", no "graceful little adornment", and the furniture is "boastfully and doggedly rich". The personification of the room, which "stared at its present occupants", makes Bounderby's wealth seem aggressive and joyless, and the mock-religious image of his "household gods", "unrelenting divinities" that are "worthy of one another", suggests that he worships his money. The house reflects a marriage in which Louisa has left no trace of herself.

The passage ends with Bounderby's crudest remark, "my wife is my junior. I don't

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know what she saw in me", spoken in front of her as if she were another possession, and with his boast of her "expensive knowledge", which reduces her education to a price. Harthouse's final thought, that he could not be recommended to "a more agreeable adviser", is a sly irony that hints at his intention to seduce her. The meeting is so memorable because it is both very funny and quietly menacing: two vain men, one blustering and one languid, stand in a cold room over a woman neither of them understands.

12 The relationship between Louisa and Sissy is one of the most moving in Hard Times because Dickens makes it a quiet contest between two educations: Louisa's, crammed with facts and starved of feeling, and Sissy's, rooted in love and imagination. What moves me most is that the relationship begins in distance and coldness and ends in tenderness, so that Sissy becomes, almost without anyone noticing, the means of Louisa's emotional rescue.

From the start Dickens sets them in contrast. In the first schoolroom scene Sissy, the circus girl, is "girl number twenty" and cannot define a horse, while the Gradgrind children are models of fact. When she is taken into Stone Lodge, Louisa is curious about her, and their early conversation is touching because it is the first time Louisa shows any longing for a life of feeling. Sissy confesses her failures at school with innocent honesty: asked about a nation's "natural prosperity", she can only wonder whether she herself is prosperous, and when told of the many people who starved she thinks only of how hard it must be for those who starved. Dickens uses this comedy to make a serious point: her "mistakes" are signs of compassion. Louisa's wistful questions about Sissy's father, and whether he loved her, reveal how little love she herself has known. The scene is moving because the girl who knows everything envies the girl who seems to know nothing.

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The relationship then cools painfully. When Louisa agrees to marry Bounderby, Sissy looks at her with pity and wonder, and Dickens notes that from that moment Louisa becomes cold and proud towards her. This change is moving because we understand it: Sissy's compassion is a silent judgement on a marriage Louisa has entered without love, and Louisa cannot bear to be seen so clearly. For much of the middle of the novel they are separated, and Sissy's goodness is visible only in small ways, such as her loyalty to the memory of her father and her care of the younger children.

The climax comes in Book 3, after Louisa flees from Harthouse and collapses at her father's feet. When she wakes, it is Sissy who is beside her. Louisa at first turns away, resentful, but Dickens slowly breaks down her resistance, and her cry, "Forgive me, pity me, help me!", is one of the most emotional moments in the novel because Louisa has spent her life suppressing exactly these words. Sissy's answer is simple and physical: she invites Louisa to lay her head upon her. The image of the two young women embracing reverses the opening of the novel, as the pupil Gradgrind despised now teaches his daughter the lesson he never could. Dickens's sentimental style here is not merely decorative; it makes the triumph of the heart over the system feel like a release.

Sissy's love then becomes active. In a memorable scene she goes alone to Harthouse's hotel and, without anger or fear, simply tells him that he must leave and never return. Dickens makes it clear that Harthouse, the cynical gentleman, is completely defeated by her plain honesty, and the irony is pleasing: the "uneducated" girl succeeds where all of Gradgrind's facts failed. She protects Louisa's reputation as a sister might. Later it is Sissy who thinks of sending Tom to Sleary's circus, using the world of fancy she came from to help the Gradgrind

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family in its disgrace.

The ending is perhaps the most moving part of all, because it is bittersweet. Dickens tells us, in a series of glimpses into the future, that Louisa will never again be a wife or have children of her own, but that she will be loved by Sissy's happy children, and will learn from Sissy how to soften the hard lives of others. The relationship, then, does not cure everything: Louisa's lost childhood cannot be restored. Yet through Sissy, Dickens suggests that it is never too late for feeling to grow. Their bond moves us because it is patient, unequal at first, and finally redemptive, a quiet answer to the cold philosophy of fact.

13 Hurston makes Joe Starks's death so powerful because it is not only the end of a man but the moment when Janie finally speaks the truth she has swallowed for twenty years. The deathbed scene turns the conventional reconciliation on its head: instead of soft farewells, Janie confronts the husband who silenced her, and the passage moves from bitterness to a surprising, painful pity.

The opening image is quietly unsettling. Joe is "lying on his side facing the door like he was expecting somebody or something". The vague, doubled phrase "somebody or something" hints that he is waiting for Death itself, which Hurston personifies elsewhere in the chapter as a strange, remote figure in the West, and it also suggests his fear of Janie, the person he has tried to keep out of his sickroom. The powerful mayor, who once dominated the porch and the store, is reduced to a helpless body, watching a door he can no longer control.

The heart of the passage is Janie's speech. For years Joe has told her to keep quiet, forbidden her to join the talk on the porch and made her tie up her hair in

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a head-rag, so it is deeply striking that she now refuses to be silenced. She tells him plainly that he is not the man she ran off down the road with, that the young Jody who promised her the horizon died long ago, and that he has spent their marriage demanding that she submit and never letting her be herself. Hurston writes this in Janie's own vernacular voice, and that choice matters: the voice Joe tried to crush becomes the voice that judges him. His feeble attempts to stop her, and his anger that she should speak to him like this while he is dying, only show how much he still needs to command her, even at the end.

What makes the moment so powerful, rather than simply cruel, is the mixture of feelings Hurston gives Janie. Her words are harsh, yet she does not gloat. As Joe struggles, she feels sorrow for him, recognising that he too has been trapped by his need to be big and admired. Hurston allows us to see Joe not only as a tyrant but as a lonely man who built a town and a fine house yet never learnt how to love. The reader, like Janie, is caught between the satisfaction of seeing her finally speak and the pity of watching a proud man die afraid.

The death itself is handled with great restraint. After Joe's final struggle, the short sentence telling us that Janie "gave them peace on his breast" is gentle and almost tender: she settles his body with a care he rarely showed her. The phrase "studied his dead face for a long time" slows the narrative right down, as though Janie is trying to read the whole of their marriage in that face. The word "studied" is important, because it suggests she is no longer the passive wife being looked at but the one doing the looking and judging.

Structurally, the moment is a turning point in the novel. Janie's marriage to Logan Killicks taught her that marriage does not create love; her marriage to Joe has taught her that status and comfort cannot replace freedom. Joe's death frees her,

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and shortly afterwards she will let down her hair, a symbol of the self she has hidden, before going on to find a more equal love with Tea Cake. Hurston therefore makes the scene powerful by combining grief and liberation: it is the death of a husband, but also the rebirth of Janie's voice.

14 Hurston presents life "on the muck" as a world of extremes: richer, louder and freer than anything Janie has known, yet also harsh, violent and finally deadly. The Everglades are where Janie comes closest to the horizon she has longed for since the pear tree, but Hurston never lets the reader forget that this paradise rests on hard labour, uneasy social tensions and the overwhelming power of nature.

The first and strongest impression is of abundance. To Janie's new eyes everything in the Everglades seems huge, from the lake to the beans to the cane and even the weeds. Hurston's repetition of the idea of bigness gives the place an almost mythical quality, as if Janie has stepped out of the cramped, gossiping porch life of Eatonville into a land where everything can grow without limits. The rich black soil itself becomes a symbol of fertility and of the new life Janie is beginning with Tea Cake. Even the people who flood in for the season are described as a great, restless wave of migrant workers, which conveys the scale and energy of the place.

Life on the muck is also full of music and pleasure. When the workers arrive, the jooks come alive with gambling, dancing and the blues, and Hurston captures this in vivid, rhythmic prose, describing pianos working so hard they seem to live three lifetimes in one. Tea Cake is at the centre of it all, playing guitar, telling stories and drawing crowds to their house, so that Janie, once the silent ornament of Joe Starks's store, becomes part of a lively community. Crucially, she is allowed to join

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in. She learns to shoot, goes hunting with Tea Cake and even works beside him in the bean fields, which scandalises nobody and delights him. The muck therefore offers Janie a freedom of speech and action that Joe always denied her, and the sense of shared work and shared play makes it the happiest period of her life.

Hurston does not, however, romanticise it. The work is backbreaking and seasonal, and the workers are poor, transient people living for the moment. There is also prejudice within the community itself. Mrs Turner, who admires Janie's light skin and despises darker people, tries to persuade Janie to leave Tea Cake for her brother, and Hurston uses her to expose the damaging idea of colour hierarchy, presenting her worship of whiteness as almost a religion. Tea Cake's response is disturbing: he beats Janie to show Mrs Turner and the others that he is in control, and the other men envy him for it. This episode creates a troubling impression that even in this freer world, a woman's body can still be claimed as a man's possession, and the reader is left uneasy about the limits of Janie's liberation.

The most overwhelming impression comes with the hurricane. Hurston builds tension as the Seminoles and animals leave, while the workers, trusting the white bosses and wanting their wages, choose to stay. As the storm approaches, the people sit in their shacks staring at the darkness, and Hurston gives us the novel's title at this moment: their eyes were watching God. The phrase captures human helplessness before nature and the fragile faith of people who have no power over their own lives. The lake breaks its dikes, and the muck that was so fertile becomes a place of drowned bodies and chaos. Tea Cake's bite by a rabid dog while saving Janie turns the paradise into tragedy, and the aftermath, in which Tea Cake is forced to bury the dead and to sort white corpses from Black ones, exposes the racism that persists even in death.

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Overall, Hurston makes life on the muck vivid because it holds all the novel's themes at once: love and freedom, community and violence, the beauty and terror of nature. It is the setting where Janie truly lives, and the fact that it ends in destruction gives her later return to Eatonville its quiet, hard-won wisdom.

15 Knowles makes this conversation so disturbing because it forces Gene, and the reader, to face what war really does to a mind, at the very moment when Gene is least able to bear it. Leper's broken, rambling confession is horrifying in its images, but what disturbs me even more is Gene's response: his silence, his violent refusal to listen, and his desperate insistence that it has "nothing to do with me".

The first source of disturbance is Leper's voice. Knowles captures his breakdown through repetition and self-contradiction: "I guess I am psycho. I guess I must be. I must be." The sentences shrink and circle, as though he is trying to persuade himself of a diagnosis he cannot accept, and his anxious questions, "Did you ever have ideas like that?", show how badly he needs someone to say he is not alone. Physical details make his distress vivid: his "swimming eyes", his breath drawn in so sharply it makes "a whistling sound", and later a voice that "had thickened unrecognizably", as though his own body is being taken over.

Leper's account of army life is disturbing because the details are so ordinary and yet so nightmarish. The new uniform "didn't even smell familiar", a small sensory detail that conveys how completely he has been stripped of home. The man in the next bunk has a cough that seems as if his stomach might come up through his mouth and "land with a splatter on the floor", a grotesque image that Leper fixates on, showing how his fear has turned everyday reality into horror. He bitterly notes that "The army has the perfect word for everything", and the label

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"psycho" becomes another of those words. His question, "Am I, though, or is the army?", is one of the most unsettling moments in the novel, because it suggests that the war itself is insane and Leper is merely its honest victim.

The motif of things turning "inside out" structures his speech. He cannot sleep in bed or eat in the Mess Hall; the coughing man is "coughing himself inside out"; and finally faces dissolve and change. The hallucinations escalate: the corporal's face turns into faces he knows, then into his own, then into a woman's. The most shocking image is the broom which he saw was not a broom but "a man's leg which had been cut off". Knowles delivers this with flat, matter-of-fact syntax, and Leper's pleading insistence, "You can see there's logic in that", makes it even worse, because he clings to reason while describing complete collapse. For readers who remember Leper as the gentle boy who skied quietly and collected snails, the change is painful.

The setting reinforces the menace. The snowy field is bleak and hostile, the wind "lifted a sail of snow", and the frozen trees crack with cold. Knowles then makes the noises sound to Gene "like rifles being fired in the distance", so that even this peaceful New England landscape becomes a battlefield. The war has followed Leper home, and now it is reaching Gene.

Gene's reaction is the final and deepest disturbance. Throughout, he says almost nothing; he "imperceptibly nodded and shook my head, yes-and-no", a gesture that captures his paralysis and evasion. Then he explodes: "Shut up!" and "I don't care!" The exclamations and repetitions of "nothing to do with me" are so insistent that they betray the opposite. Leper's account of violence and of an army that "turned everything inside out" comes uncomfortably close to Gene's own guilt about the tree, and Leper has, a few pages earlier, hinted that he knows what Gene did to

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Finny. Gene's "clumsy run" away from Leper, leaving him "telling his story into the wind", is both cowardly and pitiful.

The closing paragraph, with its obsessive repetition of "I didn't want to hear any more of it" and the final one-word sentence "Ever.", shows a narrator trying to shut out a truth he cannot escape. Knowles makes the conversation so disturbing because it exposes two kinds of damage at once: Leper's mind broken by war, and Gene's conscience refusing to face its own darker war.

16 Gene's description of Finny as "noble" is, I think, largely fair, but Knowles makes us question it at every stage, because the judgement comes from a narrator whose envy and guilt distort everything he sees. Finny's nobility lies in his generosity, his loyalty and his innocent refusal to recognise hatred, yet Knowles also shows that this innocence can be a kind of blindness, and that Gene's admiration may be partly an act of penance.

Much of the evidence for Finny's nobility comes from the summer session at Devon. He is a natural leader who breaks the rules out of sheer high spirits rather than malice, wearing the pink shirt as an emblem to celebrate the bombing of Central Europe, and using the school tie as a belt yet talking his way out of punishment through charm and honesty. He invents blitzball, a game in which everyone is the enemy of the ball carrier, and founds the Super Suicide Society of the Summer Session, centred on the jump from the tree into the river. These inventions show his joy in physical freedom, but also his generosity: everything he creates is meant to be shared. Most revealing is the swimming record. When Finny breaks the school record for the hundred yards freestyle in front of Gene alone, he refuses to try again officially and asks Gene not to tell anyone. For Finny the

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achievement is enough in itself, and this lack of vanity is the purest example of his nobility.

The beach trip deepens this impression. Finny tells Gene openly that he is his best pal, a brave and simple admission in a world of boarding-school reserve, and Gene cannot reply. Gene's silence, and his growing conviction that Finny is secretly competing with him, make Finny seem even more noble by contrast, because the reader can see that Finny has no such rivalry in him at all. Gene's later realisation that Finny had never been jealous of him, and that he was incapable of the envy Gene felt, is a crushing moment that confirms the judgement.

Finny's response to his fall from the tree is perhaps the strongest test of his nobility. When Gene visits him at home and confesses that he jiggled the branch deliberately, Finny refuses to believe him and becomes angry, as though accepting it would destroy his whole view of friendship. Back at school, rather than resenting Gene, he channels his lost athletic dreams into training Gene for the Olympics, and he organises the Winter Carnival, a glorious burst of fun in the middle of a grim wartime winter. His insistence that there is no war, that it is all invented by old men, is comic, but it also reflects a mind that cannot accept a world built on hatred.

Yet Knowles complicates the judgement. Finny's refusal to face the war can be read as denial rather than nobility; it is only after Leper's breakdown that he admits the truth, and even then he does so with pain. At the mock trial, when Brinker and the others force the truth into the open, Finny's response is not forgiveness but flight: he rushes out of the Assembly Room, falls on the marble stairs and breaks his leg again. In the hospital he finally accepts what Gene did, offering his own explanation that it must have been a blind impulse rather than

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hatred. This act of understanding is noble, but it comes at the cost of his life, since he dies when marrow from the broken bone enters his bloodstream. Some readers might feel that Finny's nobility is too perfect, a symbol of innocence rather than a real boy.

Ultimately, the novel's ending endorses Gene's view. Looking back years later, Gene says that his war ended before he ever wore a uniform, because he "killed my enemy" at school, and that only Phineas never hated anyone. The judgement is therefore fair, but Knowles makes it bittersweet: Finny's nobility is real, yet it belongs to a peace that cannot survive in a world of war, and Gene's admiration is inseparable from his own remorse.

17 Orwell creates striking impressions of Julia and O'Brien by filtering them entirely through Winston's fear, suspicion and hope. Both characters are introduced as unknowns, and the irony, which the reader only appreciates later, is that Winston misreads each of them completely: the girl he fears as a spy will become his lover, and the man he trusts instinctively will become his torturer.

Julia is presented first as an object of dislike. Orwell gives a vivid physical picture: "a bold-looking girl" with "thick dark hair, a freckled face and swift, athletic movements". These details suggest energy and vitality, qualities that contrast sharply with the grey, exhausted figure of Winston. The most striking detail is the "narrow scarlet sash, emblem of the Junior Anti-Sex League". Its colour is vivid in a drab world, and its position, wound tightly enough "to bring out the shapeliness of her hips", is quietly ironic: the badge of chastity draws attention to her body. Orwell is hinting that Julia's orthodoxy is only a surface.

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Winston's reaction reveals as much about him as about her. He dislikes her because of the "atmosphere of hockey-fields and cold baths and community hikes and general clean-mindedness", a list that mocks the wholesome, collective enthusiasm the Party encourages. His generalisation that young women are "the swallowers of slogans, the amateur spies and nosers-out of unorthodoxy" is bitter and prejudiced, and the vivid, insulting nouns show how the Party has poisoned ordinary human relations. Her "quick sidelong glance which seemed to pierce right into him" fills him with "black terror", and he imagines she might be "an agent of the Thought Police". The mixture of "fear" and "hostility" he feels is striking because it suggests something stronger than indifference; the reader may sense an attraction Winston cannot admit.

O'Brien, by contrast, provokes awe and longing. His arrival creates "a momentary hush", showing the power of the Inner Party's "black overalls". Orwell builds his portrait on contrast: "a large, burly man with a thick neck and a coarse, humorous, brutal face", yet with "a certain charm of manner". The adjectives pull against each other, so that he seems both amiable and dangerous, and the word "brutal" is a chilling hint of what he will become. His habit of resettling his spectacles is "curiously disarming", "curiously civilised", and the simile of "an eighteenth-century nobleman offering his snuff-box" makes him seem like a figure from a gentler, more cultured past. The word "disarming" is ironic, since O'Brien is precisely the person Winston should be most on guard against.

Orwell then shows how Winston's longing shapes his perception. He is drawn to O'Brien by "a secretly-held belief", then corrects himself: "or perhaps not even a belief, merely a hope". This self-correction reveals how fragile Winston's resistance is, built on guesses rather than evidence, and the narrative keeps qualifying itself: "perhaps it was not even unorthodoxy that was written in his face, but simply

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intelligence." The idea that O'Brien is "a person that you could talk to, if somehow you could cheat the telescreen" captures Winston's loneliness and his desperate need for a companion. The admission that "there was no way" of verifying it makes his trust seem dangerously naive.

The seating arrangements add a final touch of tension. O'Brien sits "a couple of places away" and the dark-haired girl "immediately behind", so that Winston is placed between the two figures who will decide his fate, one watching from behind and one beside him. The passage then ends abruptly with the "hideous, grinding screech" of the telescreen, "as of some monstrous machine running without oil". This harsh sound breaks into Winston's private thoughts and reminds us that the Party's noise overwhelms individual feeling.

Orwell's impressions are striking because they are so deceptive. Julia seems a fanatic and O'Brien a secret ally, and Winston's misjudgements prepare for the novel's tragedy, in which his hopes are turned against him.

18 Mr Charrington and his shop are memorable because Orwell turns them into a symbol of everything Winston longs for, the past, privacy and beauty, and then reveals that this refuge was a trap from the start. The shop is one of the few warm, gentle places in the novel, which makes its betrayal one of the most shocking moments in the story.

Orwell first presents the shop as a fragile survival from before the Revolution. It is a dingy junk shop in a prole district, full of old, useless objects, and it is here that Winston buys the beautiful blank book with its creamy paper that becomes his diary. In a society where the past is constantly rewritten, simply owning such an

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object is an act of rebellion, and the shop becomes associated with Winston's first crime of thought. When he returns and buys the glass paperweight with the piece of coral inside, Orwell gives him a symbol of the fragile, lovely world he wishes he could enter. Its uselessness is part of its appeal: it belongs to a time when people valued things for their beauty rather than for their use to the Party.

Mr Charrington himself is carefully drawn to seem harmless. He is an elderly man, frail and stooping, with white hair, thick spectacles and an old velvet jacket, and he speaks in a soft, cultured voice. He seems a gentle relic, a widower who lives among memories. He takes Winston upstairs to show him the room above the shop, with its old-fashioned furniture, the big bed and the engraving of St Clement's church, and he teaches Winston fragments of the nursery rhyme "Oranges and lemons". These details suggest continuity with a lost London, and Winston clings to them. The rhyme is especially memorable because it is incomplete, like Winston's knowledge of the past, and because its final lines about a chopper coming to chop off your head carry a sinister undertone that the reader may not notice at first.

The rented room becomes the centre of Winston and Julia's love affair. Orwell describes it as a private world, a place where they can be themselves, eat real food, drink real coffee and lie together while the prole woman sings outside in the yard. Winston comes to see the room itself as a kind of world inside the paperweight, sealed off and preserved. Orwell builds dramatic irony here, since Winston believes there is no telescreen in the room and that Mr Charrington is discreet, and the reader shares his relief. The shop therefore represents hope: hope that the past survives, that love is possible and that the Party can be escaped.

That hope is destroyed in the arrest scene. As Winston and Julia stand by the

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window, an iron voice behind the engraving repeats their words, "You are the dead", and the picture falls to reveal the telescreen that has been there all along. Black-uniformed men pour in, the paperweight is smashed on the hearthstone, and the coral, Winston notices, is tiny, a heartbreaking image of how small and breakable his dream really was. Most memorably, Mr Charrington enters transformed. His white hair has become black, his stoop has gone and he appears to be a man of about thirty-five, sharp-featured and cold. Winston realises he is a member of the Thought Police. The kindly old shopkeeper was a disguise, and the room was a stage set designed to catch them.

This revelation makes Charrington memorable because it shows the total reach of the Party. Even the past, which Winston thought was the one thing the Party could not reach, has been turned into bait, and the warmth he found in the shop was manufactured. The completion of the nursery rhyme during the arrest is the cruellest touch, as the threat hidden in the old song becomes literal.

In conclusion, Orwell makes Mr Charrington and his shop memorable by giving them a double role. For most of the novel they offer Winston the past, privacy and love; at the climax they reveal that nothing in Oceania is free from surveillance. Charrington's transformation is a perfect image of the Party's deception, and the shattered paperweight is the end of Winston's hope.

19 What makes this conversation so revealing is that a simple journey to look for Absalom becomes, in Paton's hands, a lesson for Kumalo and for the reader. Through the gentle talk between Stephen and Msimangu, and the voices of Dubula and the white driver who interrupt it, Paton reveals the characters of the two priests, the hardship and courage of ordinary black people in Johannesburg, and

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the strange, divided city that has swallowed Kumalo's son.

The passage begins with warmth and humour. Msimangu's remark that "Every bus is here the right bus" is "a joke against" Kumalo, and the fact that Kumalo "smiled" shows the trust that has already grown between them. The joke is affectionate rather than mocking, and it quietly reminds us of Kumalo's vulnerability: he is a country priest who has already "lost his pound" to a trickster on his arrival. Paton lets us see Msimangu as the guide who teases in order to comfort, and Kumalo as a humble man willing to laugh at his own fear.

The conversation with Dubula is perhaps the most revealing moment of all, because it shows how both priests respond to a cause larger than their own. Msimangu admits, "I was very foolish," confessing that he "had forgotten the boycott". It is moving that a man as capable as Msimangu can be so honest. Kumalo's reply, "Our business is very urgent," is spoken "humbly", and Dubula's polite answer, "This boycott is also urgent," places one father's private grief beside the suffering of a whole people. I find the precise figures very powerful here: "sixpence", "thirty-five or forty shillings", "Eleven miles". The plain arithmetic makes the injustice concrete. The long, piled list of walkers, "women, and some that are sick, and some crippled, and children", and the image of men starting at "four in the morning" with "nothing but hot water in their stomachs", make the reader feel the exhaustion of the daily march. Kumalo's simple "We shall not use the bus" reveals his decency: although he is old and anxious, he chooses solidarity over comfort.

What follows between the two priests is equally revealing. Kumalo's admiring "That man has a silver tongue" leads Msimangu to explain that Dubula is "the one the Government is afraid of, because he himself is not afraid". The balanced phrasing

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suggests that true power lies in selflessness: he "seeks nothing for himself". Msimangu's gentle aside, "excuse me, my friend", when he compares Dubula's "heart" with John Kumalo's mere "voice", is tactful and kind, yet it reveals a judgement on Stephen's brother that Stephen must accept. Msimangu's speaking "regretfully" about people who say the church has "a fine voice, but no deeds" is also striking, since it shows a priest honestly troubled by the church's failure to act.

Kumalo's answer, "I am willing to walk," and his anxious explanation that Johannesburg "is no place for a boy to be alone", bring the conversation back to its painful centre. The repetition of "I am willing" shows the stubborn love that drives the whole novel, and the reader senses, with dread, what he may find.

Paton then widens the picture through the white driver. The rhythmic list of streets, "up Twist Street to the Clarendon Circle", and the cars that "never ceased" make the journey seem endless, so the unexpected kindness of the white man who turns round and goes back is all the more surprising. Msimangu's "that is something to marvel at" is revealing in its quiet irony: such generosity is so rare that it seems a wonder. Finally, Msimangu's description of Alexandra, with streets "not cared for" and rooms that are "hide-outs for thieves and robbers", prepares us for what Absalom may have become.

The conversation is therefore revealing on every level. It shows us two good men, one humble and fearful, one wise and honest, and through their talk Paton reveals a city of courage, cruelty and occasional kindness, where the search for one lost boy is bound up with the fate of a whole people.

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Paton makes Absalom's trial compelling not because its outcome is uncertain, since Absalom has already confessed to his father that he fired the shot that killed Arthur Jarvis, but because the courtroom becomes the place where private grief and public injustice meet. The trial forces two fathers, and the reader, to watch a frightened young man judged by a law that the whole society has made, and Paton uses its slow, formal procedure to draw out unbearable tension and deep moral questions.

Paton begins by making the court itself compelling. Before any evidence is heard, the narrator reflects on the judge: he does not make the law, it is the people who make it, and if the law is unjust the judge must still uphold it. This reflective, almost sermon-like passage is unsettling, because it reminds us that the court which will judge Absalom is part of the same system that has broken his tribe and his family. The careful separation of seating for Europeans and non-Europeans makes the same point visually. I find it chilling that a place devoted to justice reproduces the divisions of the city outside it, so that the reader enters the trial already doubting whether justice is possible.

The trial is also compelling because of Absalom himself. Paton presents him in court as quiet, honest and pitiful rather than monstrous. Under questioning he tells a simple story: he carried the revolver because Johannesburg was dangerous, and when Arthur Jarvis came upon the burglars he fired because he was afraid. The repeated emphasis on fear links him to the novel's great theme, that fear rules the land, and invites the reader to see him as a product of the city as much as a criminal. When he insists that his companions were there, and refuses to protect himself with lies, we feel both his new honesty and the cruelty of his position, since that honesty will not save him.

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Paton heightens the drama through the contrast with Matthew Kumalo and Johannes Pafuri. John Kumalo has hired a clever lawyer for his son, and their defence is simply to deny being present. The reader knows the truth, so there is painful dramatic irony as their lawyer casts doubt on Absalom's account. The acquittal of the two other young men while Absalom is condemned is deeply unjust in human terms, and it exposes John Kumalo's self-interest, setting up the bitter break between the brothers after the trial.

The silent watchers in the court make the trial even more compelling. Stephen Kumalo sits through the evidence in anguish, and James Jarvis, whose son lies dead, sits on the other side of the divided room. Paton gives us little of their speech here, and that restraint is powerful: the reader imagines what each father feels as the details of the killing are repeated. Their presence turns a legal case into a tragedy that belongs to both families and to both races.

Structurally, Paton increases suspense by breaking away from the courtroom before the verdict. The narrative turns to the excitement over the discovery of new gold, with white South Africans celebrating wealth that will be dug by black miners. This interruption is ironic and compelling, since it shows the society that profits from the very conditions that produced Absalom, while we are left waiting to learn his fate.

The climax is the judge's long, measured judgement. His language is calm, logical and humane, and he recognises the social conditions the defence has described, yet he insists that the law must be applied, finds no grounds for mercy and passes the sentence of death. The quiet dignity of the procedure makes the outcome more terrible, not less. Paton then focuses on Kumalo's grief and on the people leaving the court, so the reader feels the human cost of a verdict which is

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legally correct yet morally troubling.

Overall, Paton makes the trial compelling by refusing to let it be merely a matter of guilt. Through reflective narration, careful structure, irony and the silent suffering of two fathers, he turns a single sentence of death into an indictment of a whole country, leaving the reader to share his grief for the beloved land.

21 As I read the ending of Secrets, MacLaverty makes me feel a mixture of shock, guilt and profound sadness. The passage moves from the violent moment when the boy is caught to the quiet scene after Aunt Mary's death, and this shift leaves me with a painful sense of a relationship broken by a single act and a secret lost for ever.

The opening is tense, and I share the boy's panic. The "familiar puffing" of his aunt on the stairs is an ordinary, almost affectionate detail, yet now it becomes a threat. MacLaverty uses short, hurried sentences: the elastic band "snapped and the letters scattered", he "quickly closed the desk flap". The harsh sound of the brass that "screeched loudly and clicked shut" seems to announce his guilt to the whole house. When the aunt opens the bureau and "The letters sprung out in an untidy heap", it feels as if the secret itself bursts out to betray him.

The aunt's reaction is shocking because it is so unlike the gentle woman the boy has known. Her first words are "snapped", but the accusation "You have been reading my letters" is said "quietly", which I find more frightening than shouting. The physical details, her mouth "tight with the words" and her eyes that "blazed", show a fury held under pressure, and then she strikes him. I feel sympathy for the boy, whose face is "stinging and red", yet I also understand her: he has intruded

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on the most private part of her life, the love she lost. The final words, "You are dirt", "hissed" at him, are brutal, and the repetition of "dirt" with "always will be" makes the insult feel permanent. Her vow, "I shall remember this till the day I die", is especially painful because, as the reader realises, she does die without forgiving him.

MacLaverty then shifts abruptly to after her death, and the calm, domestic tone makes the loss feel even greater. There is something unsettling in the detail that there is a fire "Even though it was a warm evening", lit so that her "stuff" can be cleared. The casual word "stuff" and the plan that her room will become "his study" suggest how quickly a life can be swept away.

The burning of the papers fills me with frustration and sorrow. The mother glances "quickly" at each card and "flicked it onto the fire", and the image of the papers building "into strata, glowing red and black" suggests layers of a life, like rock, being reduced to ash. I feel the dramatic irony sharply when the boy asks, "Who was Brother Benignus?" and his mother answers, "I don't know". Only the boy knows the truth from the letters, and he cannot say it without confessing what he did. The mother even saves the elastic band "with the useful things", while the letters themselves are destroyed, a quietly bitter irony about what people value.

The boy's question, "Did Aunt Mary say anything about me?", is full of hope and fear. His mother's reply, that she was "too far gone to speak, God rest her", closes the possibility of forgiveness for ever. The repeated image of the poker lifting the letters "to let the flames underneath them" makes the destruction seem deliberate and complete.

The final paragraph is deeply moving. The "hardness in his throat" and the fact

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that he cries "silently into the crook of his arm" show a private grief he cannot share. For the first time since her death he weeps, and the list "his maiden aunt, his teller of tales" reminds us of the love and storytelling between them. The closing words, "that she might forgive him", leave me with an ache of regret, because we know she never can. MacLaverty makes me feel that the real secret of the story is not only the aunt's lost love, but the boy's guilt, which, like her letters, will now remain hidden inside him.

22 Bradbury builds tension in There Will Come Soft Rains in an unusual way, because there are no living human characters to fear for. Instead, the tension comes from a growing, unspoken question: where are the people, and what has happened to them? By making a house carry on its cheerful routines in a dead world, Bradbury creates an eerie suspense that slowly turns into horror, and then into a desperate struggle as the house itself fights for its life.

From the opening, Bradbury unsettles the reader through the voice clock. Its sing-song rhyme, "Tick-tock, seven o'clock, time to get up", is childish and comforting, yet the repetition echoes through an empty house. The clock announces the date, and the precise time stamps that head each section make the story feel like a countdown. I find this structure tense because the reader senses that the hours are leading towards something, even though we do not yet know what.

Tension grows as the house prepares breakfast that nobody eats, reminds the family of bills and birthdays, and opens the garage for a car that never leaves, as if nothing were wrong. The comic efficiency of the machines, especially the little robot mice that scurry out to clean, contrasts with the silence, and this gap

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between busy activity and total absence becomes increasingly disturbing. Bradbury then reveals the truth gradually. The west side of the house is burned black except where a man, a woman, two children and a ball left their silhouettes, frozen in the moment of the blast. This is one of the most chilling images in the story: we realise the family were destroyed instantly by a nuclear explosion, and that the city around the house is a ruin giving off a radioactive glow at night. The house's careful self-protection, shutting its windows and drawing its blinds against even a bird, now seems absurd and pitiful.

The arrival of the dog sharpens the tension. Thin and covered in sores, it comes home looking for its owners, and the reader briefly hopes for some sign of life. Instead it runs frantically through the rooms, smells food it cannot reach, and dies. The machines simply clean it away and dispose of it, and this indifference is shocking. Bradbury suggests that technology, which once served people, now carries on with no feeling at all.

In the evening the house reads Sara Teasdale's poem, chosen because it was Mrs McClellan's favourite. Its lines, "And not one will know of the war, not one / Will care at last when it is done", create a terrible irony: nature will carry on without humanity, and the house is reading a prophecy that has already come true. The calm, lyrical poem is placed just before the story's violent climax, which makes the turn even more dramatic.

Bradbury's most powerful tension comes in the fire. A falling branch smashes the kitchen window, a bottle of cleaning solvent breaks over the stove, and the flames spread. Bradbury personifies both the fire and the house. The fire is cunning and greedy, feeding on the rooms and attacking the attic, while the house fights back with water and chemicals and its many voices cry out warnings. Short sentences,

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lists and rapid shifts between rooms create breathless pace, and the nursery's painted jungle animals seem to run in panic as the flames spread. The cruel irony is that the house's voices continue their routine tasks, reading and announcing, even as it burns, so the scene becomes a kind of mad chorus of machines dying.

The ending releases the tension into an eerie stillness. In the morning only one wall is left standing, and a single voice repeats "Today is August 5, 2026" over and over. This broken repetition is haunting, because it echoes the cheerful clock of the opening but now speaks to nobody among the ruins.

Bradbury therefore builds tension through structure, contrast, irony and personification. By making us anxious for a house rather than a person, he leaves the reader with a powerful warning: if humanity destroys itself, even its cleverest creations will not survive, and no one will be left to care.